

## **Tamales**

Should make about 32 tamales

4 lb meat (pork butt roast, country style pork ribs, or pork chops, or boneless skinless chicken thighs, cut into pieces no larger than 2x2x2. Remove any large clumps of fat.  
1 white onion, quartered  
1 large orange, squeeze juice, add it and crushed halves to top of meat  
2 cups chicken broth

Place meat in slow cooker, top with onion and orange, pour over chicken broth. Cover, place kitchen towel on top until simmering. Cook until shreddable, 3 to 4 hours on high or 8 hours on low. Remove meat and allow to cool until easily handled but still warm. Shred, removing any fat, tendons or bones. Strain cooking broth and refrigerate. Once broth is cold remove and discard fat, or use in the masa.

## **Red Chili Sauce**

You can use canned red or green sauces, but homemade is best:

4 dried Pasilla or Ancho chilis, or 2 each Ancho and Guajillo chilis  
1 Roma tomato  
1-1/2 c pork cooking liquid or chicken broth  
1 tsp cumin  
1 large clove garlic  
1/4 tsp pepper  
salt to taste, start with 1/4 tsp

Lightly toast chilis in a frying pan or hot oven until fragrant, about 3 to 5 minutes. You do not want to toast or burn the chilies! If they burn, they'll turn bitter. Just start over! Toast them just enough to draw out their flavor.

Wear gloves and eye protection when working with chilis. Snap off the stem end and pour out the loose seeds. Place in large sauce pan and cover with 1 inch of water. Bring to boil, cover and remove from heat. Allow to set for 30 minutes. Remove from water and add to blender jar. Set soaking water aside.

Add remaining ingredients to blender jar. Blend until smooth. Taste and adjust seasonings. Add hot chili powder or hot sauce if you want more heat.

Place shredded pork in large frying pan. Add enough chili or green sauce to just cover meat. Bring up to simmering, uncovered, and simmer for 30 minutes or more, stirring occasionally and allowing liquid to evaporate until meat is quite wet and just a bit of free standing liquid remains. Add more sauce during cooking if it becomes too dry.

Cool in refrigerator until ready to use, up to 3 days, or freeze.

## **Masa**

Pre-made masa is available at Latino markets, but homemade is better! The recipe is on the Tamal bag, but I've added a few tricks. Make a double batch for about 32 tamales.

4 cups Tamal (near the flour in most supermarkets)  
1 tbsp chili powder  
1 tsp baking powder  
1 Tbsp chicken bouillon granules (or 1 tsp salt)  
4 cups broth (the pork cooking liquid or chicken broth)  
1 cup lard or 1/2 lard 1/2 shortening

Mix dry ingredients in large bowl, add broth, mix well with fingers.

In stand mixer or large bowl beat cold lard (and shortening if used) until very fluffy. This may take 5 to 10 minutes. Add masa mixture 1/2 cup at a time, mixing after each addition. Beat well, masa should be fluffy. Allow to set at least 10 minutes and remix, adding liquid if necessary to loosen if needed. Test using a tamale press or plastic and a rolling pin, you want it to flatten easily but hold its shape.

## **Husks or Wrappers**

What you wrap your tamales in makes no difference in flavor! Use husks, tamale parchment or regular parchment about 9 inches long.

If using dried husks, look for the freshest you can find, and as big as you can find. Separate and place in large pot, turning each husk a 1/4 turn. Cover with hot water, placing weight on top to keep them submerged. (Use a bowl with canned goods stacked up or whatever you have). Soak at least 2 hours but preferably over night.

## **Assembly**

Fill with meat, green chilis, cheese (muenster melts best, or jack cheese) : Meat filling should be very moist.

For each tamal you will need:

1/3 cup of masa (use a trigger release cookie scoop if available),

1 ounce of meat (about a heaping tablespoon)

1/2 green chili (the large cans hold about 15 whole chilis.

3/4 to 1 ounce cheese: Muenster melts best, or use jack or your favorite Mexican cheese.

Pepper jack adds a bit of zing.

Ties: not strictly necessary, but good for storage. Tear 1/2" strips off soaked husks, kitchen string or yarn or embroidery thread. Use different ties to keep track of your fillings.

Place 1/3 cup masa on wrapper. If available flatten with tamale press, or spread to form about 4 inch square toward the wide end of the wrapper.

Add fillings, shaping like a cigar on the masa and running in the wide to narrow direction.

Pick up the wrapper by the sides and match the edges. Lightly seal the masa where joined, and use fingers to work masa down to a more compact shape. Fold wrapper over

(one direction), fold bottom (narrow) side at end of masa and work up masa to tighten the shape. Tie, if desired.

Place open side up in steamer (a regular vegetable steamer works if you don't have a pot.)

Steam until masa falls away from wrapper, about 1 to 1-1/4 hours.

Remove from steamer and allow to cool at least 15 minutes before eating.

Tamales freeze well, reheat about a minute in the microwave.

Wrap in outer parchment (mark outside of wrapper with pencil, do not use marker! Or tie with yarn or ribbon.

### **Sweet Tamales**

Prepared sweet masa is available at Mexican markets. The yellow masa has pineapple added, the pink has strawberries added.

Almost any fruit filling works. I like:

### **Raisin and Apple Filling**

Peel and core 3 large apples. Chop and place in saucepan with 1/2 cup apple juice. Add 1/3 cup of raisins. Bring to simmer, and cook until filling is paste-like (with no surface liquid.)

Assemble and steam the same as with meat fillings.

### Tomatillo Salsa (with Avocado)

2# tomatillos, husks removed, rinsed, quartered

2 garlic cloves, peeled

2 serrano chilies, seeds removed, cut into pieces

1 jalapeno chili, seeds removed, cut into pieces

1/4 white onion, roughly chopped

1 tsp salt

Place tomatillos, chilies and garlic in saucepan, just cover with water, simmer on medium about 10 minutes. Drain (reserving 1/2 cup of cooking liquid).

Place tomatillos, garlic and chilies in blender and puree until smooth. Add onion, salt and cilantro, and process again.

Lightly oil a saucepan, add salsa and reduce over medium heat to desired texture, about 1/2. Cool in refrigerator.

(Optional) before serving, place in blender, process with 1 medium to large avocado until smooth

## Pickled Asparagus

4 lbs	Asparagus, snap off tough ends, cut ends to fit jars
2 1/2 cups	White vinegar
2 1/2 cups	Water
1 Tbsp	Pickling spice
1 Tbsp	Dill weed (or place fresh dill sprigs in jars)
1 Tsp	Ground coriander
1 Tbsp	Salt
2 cloves	Garlic
To taste	Red pepper flakes (optional, start with 1/4 tsp per jar, if desired)

Bring all ingredients except asparagus to boil in saucepan, simmer about 5 minutes  
Sterilize 5-6 quart jars and lids. Pack asparagus (and pieces) tightly into jars.  
Fill jars to within 1/4 inch with liquid. Wipe rims, and seal.  
Process in hot water bath for 10 minutes. Cool, test for seal by pressing center of lids.  
Store in a cool dark place.  
Asparagus will be ready to eat in 2 weeks. Refrigerate once opened.