

HOW TO MAKE TAMALES

Equipment Required

- stand mixer or hand beater
- large pot and steaming rack

Ingredients

Corn husks

Green chili, for serving

For Masa: instant harina, salt, baking powder, shortening, vegetable stock

For Chicken Filling: chicken thighs, poblano peppers, cheddar cheese, cumin, chile powder, chicken stock, salt, pepper

For Corn Filling: corn, cojita cheese, green chilis, chile powder, cumin, salt, pepper

Recipes Included

Masa

Instant Pot Chicken and Poblano Filling

Corn and Cojita Filling

Step 1: Soak Corn Husks

Soak corn husks in very warm water for at least 30 minutes before starting.

Step 2: Make Tamale Fillings

There are so many different ways to fill a tamale. Substitute pork for chicken in the recipe included or make it vegetarian. Or, use up leftovers like chicken enchiladas or carnitas to fill tamales! If you don't have an Instant Pot to cook the chicken, use your slow cooker instead and cook for 6 hours on low, just be sure to account for the extra time, possibly preparing your tamale filling over night so it's ready for the morning.

Instant Pot Chicken and Poblano Filling

Ingredients:

2 lbs boneless, skinless chicken thighs

1/2 cup chicken stock

2 tbsp each; chile powder, cumin

1 tbsp each; salt, garlic powder

1/2 tbsp each; black pepper, onion powder

2 poblano peppers, roasted and finely diced or 1/4 cup diced roasted peppers from a can

1/2 cup shredded cheddar cheese

Directions:

In a small bowl, mix together spices. In the base of Instant Pot, add chicken stock and chicken thighs. Evenly sprinkle seasonings over the top of chicken. Place lid on Instant Pot, and lock in place. Set steam release valve to 'sealing' position. Cook on manual high pressure for 12 minutes. Let steam release naturally for 10 minutes, then naturally release steam.

Remove chicken to a large bowl. Reserve cooking liquid. Shred with two forks. Stir in roasted poblanos and cheese. Cover with about 1/4 cup of reserved cooking liquid - just enough to keep it moist and let cool.

Corn and Cojita Filling

Ingredients:

1 tbsp olive oil
1 1/2 cups corn kernels, frozen and thawed
1 tbsp each; chile powder and cumin
1/2 tsp each; salt, garlic powder
2 tbsp diced roasted green chilis
2 cups crumbled cojita cheese

Directions:

Mix all ingredients together in a large bowl until well combined.

Step 3: Make Masa

While chicken is cooking, make Masa. You will want to make a double batch of this recipe to make BOTH corn and chicken tamales. If you wait, this is a good spot to use up any leftover cooking liquid from the chicken.

Masa

Ingredients:

3 1/4 cups instant masa harina
2 1/2 tsp salt
1 1/2 tsp baking powder
2 1/4 cup vegetable stock
1 cup vegetable shortening

Directions:

In a medium bowl, combine masa harina, salt and baking powder with a fork. In a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, whip lard and 1/4 cup stock until light and fluffy - about 1 minute. Alternate adding remaining stock and dry ingredients until all combined, being sure to end with wet ingredients. Whip for another 1 minute. Let rest 30 minutes.

Step 4: Assemble Tamales

This part takes the longest, and is best done with some help. Prepare an assembly line of your ingredients and get into a groove. When we made them, I filled and folded the tamales, and DJ tied them up. Here's what to do:

1. Lay the soaked corn husk on a flat surface with pointy end facing away from you.
2. Spread masa on the corn husk. About 1/4 cup. Use a spoon or your fingers to spread it out into a rectangle large enough to enclose your filling.
3. Add your filling center of the masa. Add 2-3 tbsp of filling of choice to the center of your masa.

4. Fold the two long sides of corn husk in half vertically. Fold so that the masa form a little tube around the filling.
5. Unfold sides and fold fat end of husk down over filling. Continue folding the corn husk completely over to one side and then the other, like folding a letter.
6. Fold the pointed end up to seal the tamale. Fold the pointy end up towards the filling.
7. Tie the tamale together. Shred a few corn husks into long skinny strips and tie the tamales together. Or, use kitchen twine if you prefer.

Step 5: Steam Tamales

Time to cook up and steam your tamales! Whether it's on the stove top, in your Instant Pot or in your Slow Cooker, you'll be dying to try them.

Stovetop

To steam tamales on your stovetop, you will need a large stockpot with a strainer.

Add 2 cups of water to the bottom of stockpot, and place tamales in steamer. Place steamer in stockpot, cover and steam over medium heat for 35-40 minutes, or until the masa separates easily from the husks.

Slow Cooker

My slow cooker has a steam function which I am able to just place in a steaming basket, and I can use it as a steamer. It's pretty cool. [Click here to check it out and get one for yourself](#) - this slow cooker was probably my best purchase EVER when I worked at William's Sonoma. Anyhow.. back to cooking tamales in the Slow Cooker.

To cook in slow cooker, place tamales, seam side down in base of slow cooker, and stack on top of each other, until slow cooker is full. Cover and cook on high for 4 hours. Tamales will be cooked when masa easily separates from the husk.

Instant Pot

The fastest way to eat your tamales! Add 1 1/4 cups of water to the bottom of Instant Pot, and insert the strainer basket that came with it, add the tamales, place lid on Instant Pot, and lock in place. Set steam release valve to 'sealing' position. Cook on manual high pressure for 20 minutes. Quick release pressure. Carefully remove lid. Tamales will be cooked when masa easily separates from the husks.

Step 6: Serve Tamales

Carefully unwrap tamale and throw away the husk. Top tamale with your favorite toppings and enjoy.

Topping Ideas

green chili

guacamole

red or green salsa

more cojita cheese

sour cream

Leftovers

You're guaranteed to have leftovers. Tamales will keep in the fridge, cooked for 2-3 days, or in the freezer for about 3 months.

To freeze cooked tamales to serve later, wrap each tamale in plastic wrap and freeze in a single layer on a baking sheet. Once frozen, transfer to a labeled ziplock bag.

Reheating Leftovers

Reheating leftovers is easy, and they taste just as good as they did the first day. You can reheat them on the stovetop or in the microwave.

Stovetop

Add 2 cups of water to the bottom of stockpot, and place tamales in steamer. Place steamer in stockpot, cover and steam over medium heat for 20 minutes or so.

Microwave

Unwrap tamales from plastic wrap, and wrap in a damp paper towel. Place 3 tamales on a plate and microwave for 2 minutes, or until warmed through.