

TAMALES GISO

Tamales giso is not difficult to make – it's just time consuming. I boil and soak the corn in lime on day 1. The next day, I clean, dry, and grind the corn. Once the ground corn, or masa, is made, it can be kept in the fridge for a couple of days before you make the tamales mixtures. The final red and white mixtures must be refrigerated until it is completely cooled. So if you have a little bit of time here and there, you can divide the process over a span of a week. It's much easier this way. And, once you wrap the mixtures in foil, you keep it in the freezer until you are ready to eat some. Because the tamales are frozen, you will have to steam for 75 minutes. You may also steam the same day you wrap the tamales, but that will only take 50 minutes.

Also, it makes preparation so much easier if you have two bowls and two paddle attachments for your electric stand mixer.

I've not made this using the masa harina in the bag. I don't recommend substituting the freshly ground corn for masa harina. See if your nearest Mexican grocer carries fresh masa from white corn that doesn't have anything else added (fat, salt, other). You just want plain, ground masa.

There will be a little bit of extra red mixture so you will have some packets with just the red part.

Full recipe yields about 2 dozen. Mixtures can be halved.

RED

INGREDIENTS

Set 1

Half a stick of unsalted butter

1 cup chopped, uncooked, regular flavor bacon*

Set 2

3 boneless, skinless chicken thighs

Set 3

¼ cup minced onions

4 cloves garlic, minced

Set 4

8 cups hot chicken stock

Set 5

¼ cup cornstarch mixed with ¼ cup water

Set 6

3 cups freshly ground white-corn masa

1 teaspoon salt

½ teaspoon ground black pepper

¼ cup oil mixed with 2 packets of achote powder

¼ cup + 2 tablespoons thick coconut milk

Optional: hot pepper to taste

*No fruitwood-smoked or maple sugar flavored bacon

Tools: large rimmed cookie sheet lined with foil, medium pot, rubber spatula, two medium bowls, stand mixer with bowl and paddle attachment

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit.
2. Spread the ground masa in a thin layer on a foil-lined cookie sheet and bake for 10 to 12 minutes. Spread the mixture around the sheet again. Bake for 10 to 12 more minutes. Masa should be lightly browned and toasted. If you only have a small baking sheet, you may have to bake a few more minutes for the masa to color and become toasted. Remove from oven and set aside to cool. Once cooled, rub masa between palms to break apart clumps. Set aside.
3. In a medium pot, heat the butter just under medium heat.
4. Add chopped bacon. Sautee till cooked, but not crisp.
5. Move everything to one side of pot then brown the chicken thighs on one side for three minutes. Flip chicken over to brown the other side for three minutes.
6. Add onions and garlic. Sautee until softened.
7. Add 2 cups of hot chicken stock to the pot and simmer until the chicken is cooked through, about 5 minutes.
8. Remove chicken from the pot then cut thigh crosswise, against the grain of the muscle, into thirds.
9. Shred the thirds with two forks. Return chicken back to the pot. Add remaining hot stock.
10. Add all of the dry ingredients. Stir to combine well, and until the mixture has slightly thickened.
11. Add the coconut milk and combine thoroughly.
12. Add the achote powder mixed with oil. Stir to incorporate well.
13. Cook for several more minutes until the mixture resembles thickened oatmeal.
14. Add the cornstarch slurry then cook for 2 minutes.
15. Remove from heat and pour into a medium bowl. Cool overnight in the fridge.
16. Clean the pot and use to make the white mixture.

****The next day when the mixtures are cold****

17. Remove from the fridge then whip half of the mixture in an electric stand mixer using the paddle attachment. Place on medium speed, about #4 on a Kitchen Aid, and beat for 10 minutes. Pour whipped mixture into the other medium bowl and repeat with the remaining half.
18. Mixture should look fluffy and light compared to the way it looked before you started beating it.

WHITE

INGREDIENTS

Set 1

- ¼ cup coconut oil
- ¼ cup minced onions
- 4 cloves garlic, minced

Set 2

- ¼ cup cornstarch mixed with ¼ cup water (replace water with room temperature chicken stock if you have any left)

Set 3

- 4 cups freshly ground white-corn masa
- 1 tablespoon salt
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper

Set 4

- 3 cups hot chicken stock
- 4 cups thick coconut milk (1 can of coconut milk is about 1 ½ cups)

Tools: medium pot from the red mixture, rubber spatula, two medium bowls, stand mixer with a bowl and paddle attachment

DIRECTIONS

1. In a medium pot, heat the coconut oil just under medium heat.
2. Sautee minced onions until translucent. Add garlic and sautee for one minute.
3. Add all of the ingredients immediately followed by the coconut milk.
4. Mix till thoroughly combined.
5. Add the chicken stock and stir on medium heat until the mixture is like thickened oatmeal. Add cornstarch slurry. Stir and cook for two more minutes.
6. Pour into a glass bowl and cool completely overnight in the fridge.

**** The next day when the mixtures are cold ****

7. Remove from fridge and beat half of mixture in electric mixer with paddle attachment on medium speed, about #4 on a Kitchen Aid, for 10 minutes. Mixture should look light and fluffy compared to before your whipped it. Transfer to the other medium bowl. Repeat with remaining half.

PUTTING IT TOGETHER

Tools: steamer basket, pre-cut foil sheets, three kitchen towels

DIRECTIONS

1. Fill steamer pot and place on high to bring to a rolling boil. Use cover only. Keep steamer baskets on counter.
2. Stack two foil sheets (use one layer if it is heavy-duty foil) on your work surface.
3. Use 1/3-cup measuring cup to portion each color adjacently in bottom fold of foil sheet, centered from left to right.
4. Fold foil sheet down toward you. Fold and seal that edge. Make this fold a firm fit against the mixture.
5. Fold each end in so it is a firm fit against the mixture.
6. Try not to press on tamales too hard so as not to deflate the mixtures. Repeat.
7. Once water has come to a boil, lay some tamales flat in the steamer basket. Place kitchen towel over basket then cover. Position prepared baskets on steamer pot. Steam for 50 minutes (75 minutes if frozen).
8. Store remaining, uncooked tamales packets in freezer bags in the freezer.

Recipe courtesy Paula Quinene of www.PaulaQ.com