



Making the Dough for Tamales

Though the amount of salt may seem excessive, a lot of the salt will be lost when the mixture is steamed inside the tamal wrapping. You can reduce the amount somewhat, but remember that the particular flavor of masa in tamales is complemented by salt.

Ingredients

3 pounds fresh masa
Or, if not using fresh masa: 4½ cups masa harina
4–5 cups warm chicken stock

For both fresh masa and reconstituted masa harina versions:

1 pound lard
Chicken stock as needed
2½ tablespoons salt

Preparation

Step 1 - If using fresh masa, skip to next step. If using masa harina, place it in a large bowl and reconstitute by adding 4 cups warm stock. Beat with a wooden spoon or mix with your hands until you have a stiff, smooth dough like a medium-pliable bread dough. Use a little more stock if necessary, but mixture should not be loose.

Step 2 - *Beat lard in the large bowl of an electric mixer on medium speed **until very fluffy and fully aerated**, about 3 minutes.* It may take longer if your mixer is not of the most powerful. (A heavy-duty machine such as a KitchenAid is best.) The best alternative to a mixer is not a spoon but your bare hand: Whip and beat the lard with a rapid folding motion until you feel it lightening and continue to whip until it is fluffy and full of air. It should be as light as butter creamed for the lightest butter cake.

Step 3 - Keeping mixer on medium speed, begin adding masa or reconstituted masa harina to lard a handful at a time. Stop to scrape down sides of bowl with a rubber spatula as necessary. If mixture becomes too stiff to beat, add up to 1 cup tepid chicken stock a little at a time. Alternatively, beat in masa or reconstituted masa harina using your bare hand as a whipping and folding tool, adding up to 1 cup chicken stock as necessary. When all masa or reconstituted masa harina has been incorporated the mixture should be very light and delicate, the texture of buttercream frosting. Beat in salt.

Step 4 - The mixture is now ready to be filled or spread onto corn husks, banana leaves, or other wrappers, and steamed.

Enjoy! *Parmalee* ~ info@santacruzparent.com ~ text 831-713-7026

Food from My Heart: Cuisines of Mexico Remembered and Reimagined by Zarela Martinez.