

Cooking with Kids^{Inc.}

— for a healthy future —

Vegetable Tamales with Red Chile Sauce

Makes 24 tamales

There are many kinds of tamales. Some are wrapped in fresh corn leaves, banana leaves, or avocado leaves. Most tamales have fillings of meat, cheese, or beans, but some have no fillings at all. These vegetarian tamales are smaller than most and take less time to cook. When everyone works together, making tamales is easy and the results are so satisfying.

Wrappers and Masa

4 ounces dried cornhusks
 2¼ cups masa harina de maíz
 ½ teaspoon salt
 ½ teaspoon baking powder
 ¼ cup unsalted butter, melted
 1¾ cups warm water

Tamale Filling

2 mild green chiles (Anaheim), washed, roasted, peeled, and diced
 1 medium zucchini, washed and grated
 1 cup frozen corn kernels
 ½ cup grated Monterey Jack cheese
 1 tablespoon chopped cilantro
 ¼ teaspoon dried oregano
 ½ teaspoon salt

Soak the cornhusks in hot water until soft and pliable. Tear 3 cornhusks into ¼-inch strips to be used to tie the tamales.

Make the masa: Put the masa harina, baking powder, and salt into a bowl and mix together. Stir in the melted butter. Add the warm water and mix well to make a soft dough. In the bowl, knead the dough gently for 1 minute. Cover the masa and let rest for 10 minutes.

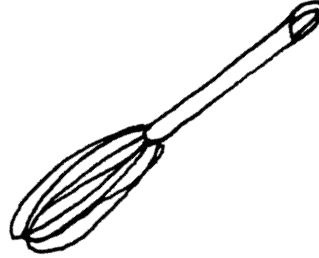
Make the tamale filling: In a bowl, mix together the green chile, zucchini, corn, cheese, cilantro, oregano, and salt. Stir well to combine.

Make the tamales: Lay a softened cornhusk flat on a clean surface. Put a heaping tablespoon of masa in the center of the cornhusk. Flatten masa with fingertips to about ⅛ inch thick. Put a heaping teaspoon of filling into the center of the masa. Roll up and tie the ends of the tamale. Steam for 25 to 30 minutes, until the tamales are firm. Serve with red chile sauce.



Red Chile Sauce

- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 tablespoons unbleached white flour
- ½ cup ground mild red chile
- 2¼ cups water
- ¾ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- ⅛ teaspoon dried oregano



Put the garlic and butter into a saucepan over medium heat. When the butter is melted but not brown, add the flour. Cook for about 30 seconds, whisking constantly. Whisk in the chile and cook only until fragrant. Be careful not to burn the chile or the sauce will taste bitter.

Slowly add the water, a little at a time, stirring constantly. Bring to a boil. Add the salt, pepper, and oregano. Reduce the heat to low and simmer for about 15 minutes, uncovered, until thickened. Remove from the heat and serve with the tamales.