

Christmas Vegan Tamal Recipe From Chef Adán Medrano

Chef Adán Medrano shares his family recipe for vegan bean tamales, celebrating plant-based traditions of Texas Mexican Cooking

HOUSTON, TX, USA, December 14, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Bean tamales, are traditional all the way from Texas to Oaxaca and the other regions of Mexican cuisine, according to chef and cookbook author, Adán Medrano, who says that bean tamales pre-date the arrival of Europeans. "The indigenous combination of beans and corn, with dried chiles, is both nutritious and delicious," he says.

Pinto beans are prevalent in Texas, but farther south, in Oaxaca and Yucatan, they use black beans. Chef Medrano explains that to prepare the pinto beans, it's essential to not only boil them, but also to roast them stove-top. It's a culinary technique that transforms the protein molecules of the beans into more complex molecules, giving the beans a deep, complex flavor.



Vegan Bean Tamales Roasting on a Comal

Chef Medrano shared his family's recipe for Texas Mexican bean tamales.

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Bean tamales, are traditional all the way from Texas to Puebla to Oaxaca”
Chef Adán Medrano

RECIPE

(excerpted from the cookbook, "[Truly Texas Mexican: A Native Culinary Heritage In Recipes](#)")

Ingredients: (makes 12-16 tamales)
For Masa and Husks:

16 dried tamal husks soaked in hot water for at least 30 minutes.

1 lb fresh masa OR 1 lb masa harina (corn flour like the Maseca or Quaker brands) rehydrated with 2 1/2 to 3 cups water to make a soft masa.

1/2 cup Canola oil For the Chile Paste:

1 garlic clove

3 Chiles Ancho, cleaned, seeded and deveined

3 Guajillo Chiles, cleaned, seeded and deveined

1/2 tsp ground cumin

3/4 cups water

1 Tbsp canola oil

1 tsp salt or to taste

For the Beans:

1/2 lb beans. If you want to, soak the beans overnight so that they will cook more quickly, 1 1/2 hours. If you don't soak them (I never do) cooking time will be 4 hours.

1 tsp salt 4 cups water

Method

Place the corn husks in a large container and cover them with hot water. Let them soak and soften for at least 30 minutes or overnight.

For the Beans:

1. Pick over the beans to remove any small stones or debris. Rinse in a colander.
2. In a large pot, add the beans and salt. Cover the beans with four cups of water, bring to a boil, then turn down the heat and simmer, covered. If the beans have been soaked overnight you will cook them for 1 1/2 hours. If they have not been soaked, it will take 4 hours. Keep checking to make sure you maintain the water level at least 2 inches above the beans. Add additional water as needed.
3. When the beans are completely cooked and soft, heat a deep skillet on medium heat and add the beans and two cups of the liquid.
4. Using a masher, smash the beans until they are smooth and soupy, adding more liquid as needed. Bring them to a boil and continue cooking the beans over medium to low heat, scraping the bottom as the bottom layer of beans roast and become dry. Keep doing this for about 15 minutes so that the beans develop umami flavor.
5. If you've made the chile paste (below), add 3 Tbs chile paste to the beans and blend. If you don't have the paste made, just set the beans aside until you are ready to add the chile paste.
6. After adding the chile paste, cook on low heat, uncovered, until they thicken and make a workable spread for the tamale filling.

For the Chile Paste:

1. To devein the chiles, first lay the chile flat on a cutting board and, using a paring knife or scissors, cut a slit lengthwise. Then break off the stem, open the chile along the slit and take out the seeds and veins (membranes).



Hojas: rehydrating corn husks for tamales

2. In a large saucepan, cover the cleaned chiles with water and bring to a boil. Turn off the heat and let the chiles steep for 15 minutes so that they re-hydrate and become tender.
3. Drain the chiles, discarding the water. Let the chiles cool a bit, then place the chiles in a blender along with the garlic and cumin plus 3/4 cup water.
4. Blend to a very fine paste, adding more water if needed.
5. In a Dutch oven, heat the Tbs Canola oil and fry the chile paste until it begins to change color and most of the liquid has evaporated. There will be splatter, so keep a lid handy to partially cover it. Simmer for about 15 minutes and then adjust the salt. The sauce should coat the back of a spoon.

For the Tamal Masa:

1. In a stand mixer, using the paddle attachment, add 1/4 cup of the chile sauce to the masa and mix thoroughly.
2. In a saucepan heat the oil to the point just before it shimmers.
3. Adjust the mixer to low and SLOWLY pour the hot oil (not warm but hot) into the masa to incorporate. It will sizzle as it makes contact, so be very careful not to allow it to splatter.
4. When the oil is incorporated, turn up the mixer to medium and mix well. Add 1/4 to 1/2 cup water as needed to make a thick batter that you can easily spread onto the corn husk. It's thicker than pancake batter.

To assemble the Tamales:

1. Beginning 3 inches in from the pointed end of the husk, use a small spatula or spoon to spread two Tbs masa on each corn husk.
2. Spoon about 1 1/2 Tablespoon of the bean filling lengthwise on the masa, then curl the husk, enveloping the filling.
3. Fold the pointed tip up laying it on the side opposite the seam. This will keep the seam closed.
4. Stand each tamal, open-end up, in the steamer basket, forming a circle of standing tamales leaning inward. Place some corn husks on top, then a kitchen towel and cover with a tight-fitting lid.
5. Steam on high heat, for 45 to 50 minutes, checking periodically to make sure that the water has not evaporated, and add additional water as necessary. The tamales are cooked when the masa easily falls away from the husk.

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