

Corn Tortillas

Swick

Makes 12 | Active Time: 30 minutes | Total Time: 1 hour

Chef's Notes

Choose masa harina for tortillas (“masa harina para tortillas”), which is finer than masa harina for tamales.

If you want some assurance of non- GMO masa harina, look for the Certified Organic or Non-GMO Project labels.

Well-hydrated masa will produce moist and tender tortillas. And, the hotter the water, the faster the hydration takes place. If using very hot water, then use a utensil to mix the masa.

The addition of oil and salt to the masa is optional. Try it with and without oil and salt to see how you like it.

The cooking of tortillas takes practice. Be patient! And, make small adjustments to the heat and timing to fine-tune your process. Note that it is generally easier to “puff” the tortillas over an open flame of a gas burner. Well-hydrated masa is helpful, too, because lots of steam is created.

As for the pressing and cooking steps of production, with practice, you will be able to do these simultaneously. This will decrease production time and minimize the chance of the pressed raw tortillas becoming dry.

Feel free to adjust the diameter of the tortillas, as well as the thickness, to suit the occasion.

Step 1: Preparing the Masa

- 2 cups masa harina
- 1 1/2 to 2 cups hot water
- 1/2 tsp oil
- salt (to taste)

In a mixing bowl, combine and mix by hand the masa harina with about 1 1/2 cups of water.

Form the masa into a ball and begin to knead it for a couple of minutes. The masa should be very moist, but not sticky. Adjust the consistency with water or masa harina.

Finish kneading the masa with a drizzle of oil and salt to taste. Cover with plastic wrap and set aside to hydrate.

Step 2: Forming the Raw Tortillas

Roll the masa into 1 1/2 oz (40 g) balls. Set them aside, neatly arranged on a sheet pan. Keep covered with a towel or plastic wrap to prevent drying.

Using a tortilla press lined with plastic, or a clean hard surface and a cutting board lined with plastic, press the masa balls to a thickness of 1/8 inch (3 mm).

Stack the tortillas with parchment paper in between. Once you have pressed all of the masa balls, it's time to cook the tortillas.

Step 3: Cooking the Tortillas

To cook the tortillas, preheat a comal or flat cast iron pan or griddle, or heavy-bottomed stainless steel pan to medium-high heat.

Beginning with one tortilla, add it to the comal and wait for steam to rise at a steady rate from the raw tortilla. It is ready to flip when the edges peel away from the griddle.

Flip the tortilla and let it cook for about 30 seconds. Darker spots should form and they may bubble but they should not break or burn through. If you notice this and the tortilla looks dry, the griddle is too hot. Adjust the heat as needed.

The texture of the cooked tortilla surface should be coarse, but the tortilla should feel soft.

As the tortilla cooks on the second side, carefully press the surface by hand, with a folded cloth towel or a spatula. This will help the tortilla to puff and rise from the steam. The tortilla is now ready.

Keep the tortillas stacked and wrapped in a clean towel or place them in an insulated container to keep them warm.

Extra pressed, raw tortillas can be saved by wrapping them in plastic and refrigerating them. Use them within a couple of days.