

## Tamales

### Ingredients:

1- 8oz. package	Dried corn husks
3 ½ cups	Masa harina (fine ground corn flour)
1 ½ tsp.	Baking powder
2 tsp.	Salt
2 ¼ cups	Water, hot
8oz.	Lard or vegetable shortening, soft
1 ½ cups	Chicken stock, warm
2-3 cups	Assorted fillings (see Chef's Note)

### Method of Preparation:

1. Sort through corn husks and discard any torn or shredded husks, setting aside whole husks. Place whole corn husks in a large bowl and cover with boiling water; weigh husks down with a plate. Let sit in water for approximately 2-3 hours or until tender and pliable.
2. In another large bowl, whisk together the masa harina, baking powder and salt. Using a hand-held beater, slowly add in the hot water to make a thick batter. In two or three additions, add the lard and beat until light and fluffy. Slowly add the chicken stock in two or three increments until the batter resembles soft cake batter but not runny. Let sit for 5 minutes. Get all fillings ready to form the tamales.
3. To form the tamales: Lay out one of cornhusks with the tapering end toward you. Top each husk with about ¼ cup of dough and form it into a 4-inch square, leaving at least a 1 1/2-inch border on the side toward you and a 3/4-inch border along the other sides. Spoon about 1 1/2 tablespoons of the chosen filling down the center of the dough. Pick up the two long sides of the cornhusk and bring them together (this will cause the batter to surround the filling). If the husk is too small, wrap the tamale in a second husk. Finally, fold up the empty 1 1/2-inch section of the husk and secure it in place by loosely tying one of the strings or strips of husk around the tamale. Don't tie the tamales too tightly or pack them too closely on the steam tray. They will need room to expand slightly.
4. Lay all formed tamales out on a steam tray and cover loosely with one or two layers of husks. Steam for 1-1 ¼ hours or until tender; the husk should peel away from the masa dough easily. Let cool slightly before eating. Makes about 26-28 tamales.

Chef's Note: Suggested assorted filling used in tamales could be black beans and roasted squash, sautéed mushrooms with roasted corn and cotija cheese or pork/chicken in chile sauce.