

THE SALTY TOMATO

a sailor navigates the kitchen

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VEGAN TAMALES - MEATLESS MONDAY

MAY 5, 2014 BY LAUREN COSGRAVE



Happy Cinco de Mayo/Battle of Pueblo/Meatless Monday! Wow we have a lot to celebrate today. What could be a better excuse to drink margaritas and eat Mexican food than the American made and glorified holiday of Cinco de Mayo. I learned this week that in Mexico they don't even bat an eye in celebration of Cinco de Mayo. So I guess Cinco de Mayo ranks up there with Valentines Day.

Welcome! I'm Lauren, a sailor navigating a flexitarian kitchen.
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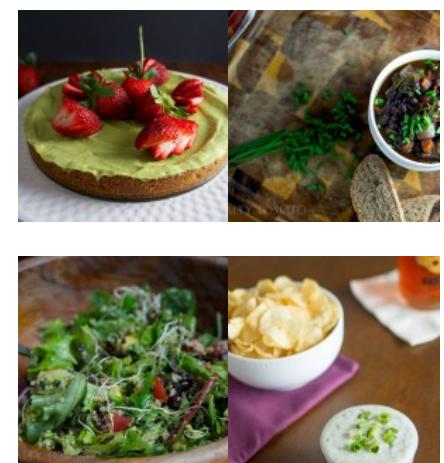


Any way... on to the food! Mexican food is very easy to make vegan. I know you are probably asking yourself "What about the cheese, Lauren?" Mexican food has so many spices and delicious flavors that if you up the spices just a little, you will all but forget the cheese quesadilla. I did use just a tiny bit of vegan cheese in this recipe just to add a little binding to the filling. Tofutti makes an excellent vegan sour cream if you just can't live without it.



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This was my first attempt at homemade vegan tamales and I was really happy with how they turned out. I was never a fan of frozen tamales because the masa was so bland and starchy. I added plenty of spice to the masa mixture to give it flavor and depth. Dried mushrooms worked perfectly to add a meaty texture. The reconstituted mushrooms are chewier but fresh sautéed mushrooms would work too. Tamales take a good long time to make but they are well worth the effort and they freeze really well.



Vegan tamales are a great way to get creative again. I have been on a big sweet potato kick in my Mexican cooking lately. The sweetness of the potato offsets the spice perfectly for me. Here are some other vegan tamale filling ideas:

- Meatless meat
- [Tofu Scramble](#) (Breakfast Tamale!)
- Black Beans and Corn
- Tomatoes and Chiles
- Mushrooms and Onion
- Potato and Roasted Red Peppers

What other filling ideas do you have?

Try these with a **Grapefruit Margarita** or a good Mexican beer.

VEGAN TAMALES

PREP TIME	COOK TIME	TOTAL TIME
1 hour	2 hours 15 mins	3 hours 15 mins

Seasoned masa and spicy vegetables won't make you miss the meat!

Author: Lauren Cosgrave | The Salty Tomato
Serves: 6

INGREDIENTS

- 24-28 dried corn husks
- Sweet Potato and Black Bean Filling**
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup dried mushrooms
 - 4 cups $\frac{1}{4}$ inch peeled and cubed sweet potato (about 1 very large sweet potato)
 - 2 tablespoons olive oil
 - $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon kosher salt
 - $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground black pepper
 - 1 can black beans
 - 2 tablespoons of pickled jalapenos, chopped
 - $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cilantro leaves, chopped
 - 4 ounce can of mild green chiles
 - 1 teaspoon kosher salt
 - $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground black pepper
 - $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon liquid smoke such as [Colgin Liquid Smoke](#)
 - $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon lime juice (about $\frac{1}{2}$ medium sized lime)
 - $\frac{1}{2}$ cup mexican blend vegan cheese such as Follow Your Heart Fiesta Blend Vegan Cheese (feel free to use real cheese too)

Masa

- 2 cups masa harina/corn flour (see notes)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon garlic powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon paprika
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon cumin
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 4 tablespoons cubed vegan butter such as Earth Balance
- 2 cups water
- 2 teaspoons vegan chicken base such as [Better Than Bullion No Chicken Base](#)



PRINT

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Add dried corn husk, remove from heat and let soak for at least 1 hour.
2. In a small bowl cover dried mushrooms with boiling water and let sit for at least 30 minutes until mushrooms have doubled in size and are softened.

Sweet Potato and Black Bean Filling

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a medium bowl coat sweet potato cubes with olive oil, salt and pepper. Turn out sweet potatoes on a baking sheet. Bake for 45 minutes or until sweet potatoes are fork tender and edges are brown.
2. Drain black beans and chiles place in a large mixing bowl. Rough chop reconstituted mushrooms and add to bowl. Add remaining ingredients, baked sweet potatoes, jalapeños, cilantro, salt, pepper, liquid smoke and lime juice. Stir until well mixed. Taste and adjust seasoning.

Masa

1. Place masa harina, baking powder, garlic, paprika, cumin and cayenne in the bowl of an electric mixer fit with a whisk attachment. Mix on low until ingredients are well incorporated. Add cold butter to flour mixture and mix on low until butter is crumbled with flour mixture.
2. Place 2 cups water and no chicken base in a microwave safe bowl. Microwave for 1 minute until no chicken base is dissolved. Briefly stir.
3. With mixer on medium speed very slowly add water and chicken base mixture. Scrape down the sides of the mixing bowl. Whisk on high for an additional 10 minutes. Mixture should be thick enough to coat a spoon.

Tamale Assembly (See notes on size.)

1. Tear 1 or 2 corn husk into 24 strips to tie tamales.
2. Place 1 corn husk on working surface horizontally with the long side facing you. Spread approximately 2 tablespoons of masa mixture 2 inches wide on the third of corn husk that is closest to you leaving $\frac{1}{2}$ inch on either side place 2 tablespoons of sweet potato and black bean mixture in the middle to masa. Top sweet potato and black bean mixture with 1 teaspoon cheese. Fold side closest to you over to envelope sweet potato mixture in masa. Fold in both sides like a burrito and roll closed. Tie tamale roll with a strip of corn husk in a square knot. Repeat process with remaining corn husks.
3. Fill a large pot with 2 inches of water and place a steamer basket or a bamboo steamer section in the bottom. Line the steamer with 2-3 corn husks. Place wrapped tamales standing upright on steamer. Cover pot with a damp dish cloth and cover pot with lid. Steam for 90 minutes checking half way that there is still water in the bottom. Remove tamales and serve immediately.

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4. Cooked tamales will keep in the refrigerator for 4-5 days or can be frozen.
5. Enjoy!

NOTES

-Masa Harina corn flour is very different than cornmeal. It is a much finer grain and often white in color. I recommend [Bob's Red Mills Masa Harina](#). From finest to coarsest, ground corn is Masa Harina, Corn Meal, Polenta.

-The size of your tamales all depends on the size of your corn husks. It might take a few tries to get the size just right. Mine came out about 3 inches long and 2-3 per serving. This recipe makes approximately 24 small tamales.



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[Carrot Mint Salad with Sherry Vinaigrette](#) »

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COMMENTS



Allison @ Clean Wellness says

May 6, 2014 at 11:57 am

I've never made tamales before, but I think I'll need to try to soon. Looks like a fun weekend cooking project! And they're so adorable in their own little packages. Yum!



Lauren Cosgrave says

May 6, 2014 at 8:38 pm

Thanks Allison! Do you have any other filling ideas?



letty Flatt says

May 7, 2014 at 8:30 am

Re: liquid smoke. I wanted to buy some the other day and both bottles at the store had corn syrup! in the ingredient list!.

I would love to find a more natural liquid smoke—is this it—the one you link?

Great vegan tamale recipe I pinned it for later cooking.



Lauren Cosgrave says

May 9, 2014 at 5:41 pm

Letty,

The Colgin liquid smoke does not have corn syrup in it. It has molasses.

Enjoy the tamales!



Shonalika says

May 15, 2014 at 8:10 am

Don't believe I've ever seen dried corn husks in the shops before, but the filling looks/sounds DELICIOUS. I've been meaning to try liquid smoke for ages, so definitely bookmarking this recipe for once I do. I bet these would be just as good wrapped up in any kind of wrap. I'd probably have to restrain myself from just eating the filling the second I'd mixed it up:



Lauren Cosgrave says

May 15, 2014 at 12:07 pm

Shonalika,

You can find dried corn husks at Whole Foods, specialty stores or even on Amazon. Liquid smoke is a vegans best friend! I hope you enjoy these.

TRACKBACKS

Carrot Mint Salad with Sherry Vinaigrette | The Salty Tomato says:

May 8, 2014 at 6:58 am

[...] recipes that make me say YUM are my favorite. I made Carrot Mint Salad the

day after I made Vegan Tamales. The multi step process of tamales had me craving something simple light and fresh. Mint and carrot [...]

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