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Squash, Black Bean & Goat Cheese Tamales

From EatingWell: November/December 2007 (/category/publication/magazine/november/december 2007)

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Tamales are a sign of celebration at holiday gatherings in Mexican households on both sides of the border, especially for occasions like Christmas Eve or New Year's Eve dinner. Here we stuff them with creamy winter squash, black beans and tangy goat cheese.

READER'S COMMENT:

"Being a native New Mexican, I can honestly say that these tamales seduced the palate. We already have plans to make more. "

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Makes: 16 tamales

Active Time: 1 1/2 hours

Total Time: 2 1/2 hours

Nutrition Profile

Diabetes appropriate (/category/health diet considerations/diabetes appropriate) | Low calorie (/category/health diet considerations/low calorie) | Low cholesterol (/category/health diet considerations/low cholesterol) | Low saturated fat (/category/health diet considerations/low saturated fat) | Heart healthy (/category/health diet considerations/heart healthy) | Healthy weight (/category/health diet considerations/healthy weight) | Gluten free (/category/health diet considerations/gluten free)

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Ingredients

Squash, Black Bean & Goat Cheese Tamales

· 4 ounces dried cornhusks, See note

Batter

- 1 3/4 cups masa, See note
- 1 1/4 cups hot water
- 1 1/2 cups part-skim ricotta cheese
- 1/4 cup canola oil
- · 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 2 cups quick-cooking grits, or cornmeal
- 1/2-3/4 cup vegetable broth, or reduced-sodium chicken broth

Filling

- 20 ounces frozen winter squash, thawed (about 2 cups; see Tip)
- 1 15-ounce can black beans, rinsed
- 1 4-ounce can chopped green chiles, drained
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 3/4 cup crumbled goat cheese

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Preparation

- 1. To prepare wrappers: Place cornhusks in a large bowl, cover with hot water and weight with a heavy plate or pan to completely submerge them. Let soak for 30 minutes.
- 2. To prepare batter: Put masa and 1 1/4 cups hot water in a large bowl; stir with a wooden spoon until a soft dough forms. Beat ricotta, oil, baking powder and salt in another large bowl with an electric mixer on medium-high speed for 2 minutes. Reduce speed to low. Add grits (or cornmeal) and mix until combined. Add the ricotta mixture to the masa mixture and stir until smooth. Stir in broth 1/4 cup at a time until the batter is very moist and spreadable, but not runny.
- 3. To prepare filling: Place squash puree in a fine-mesh sieve and gently press on it to extract excess liquid. Transfer to a medium bowl and add beans, chiles and salt; stir until combined.
- 4. To assemble tamales: Drain the cornhusks and pat dry. Sort through and pick out 16 large, unblemished husks to use as wrappers. Cut about 2 dozen thin, long strips from the remaining husks to use as ties (or use kitchen string instead). Cover the husks and ties with a damp towel to keep moist.
- 5. Working on a clean surface, unfold one of the large cornhusks so it's completely flat. Spread 1/3 cup of the batter in the center of the husk in a 4-inch square, leaving a wide border at the top and the bottom. Spoon 2 tablespoons of the filling in a thin strip down the length of the batter. Top the filling with 1 rounded teaspoon goat cheese.
- 6. Bring the two long sides of the cornhusk together, causing the batter to completely surround the filling"but don't fold the sides over the tamale yet. Fold the cornhusk ends in, then fold the sides around the tamale. If a cornhusk splits while you're folding the tamale, just wrap a second husk right over the first and finish rolling. Tie the tamale closed using a thin strip of cornhusk. Repeat with remaining ingredients to make 15 more tamales. (You may have a little batter and/or filling left over.)
- 7. To steam tamales: Fill a large Dutch oven with 1 inch of water. Place a steamer basket in the pot and loosely place the tamales upright in the basket. Cover and steam over medium heat for 1 hour. Check the water level periodically and add more boiling water if necessary. The tamales are done when the batter is firm and easily pulls away from the wrapper.

Tips & Notes

- Make Ahead Tip: The batter (Step 2) and filling (Step 3) will keep, covered, in the refrigerator for up to 2 days. Steamed tamales will keep, covered, in the refrigerator for up to 2 days or in the freezer for up to 3 months. Reheat tamales in a steamer or in the microwave on Medium power.
- **Notes:** Cornhusks are traditionally used as tamale wrappers. They are sold dried and need to be reconstituted in water to make them pliable enough for tamales.
- Masa is ground dried corn treated with lime, sometimes called masa harina or instant masa mix; it is used for making tamales and tortillas. Masa can be found near the cornmeal or flour and dried cornhusks in the produce department of most well-stocked supermarkets or Mexican grocers; both can be found on amazon.com.
- **Tip:** To make your own squash puree, halve and seed one medium acorn or butternut squash. Place, cut-side down, on a lightly greased baking sheet. Bake in a preheated 375°F oven until soft, about 50 minutes. Cool, then scrape out the flesh with a fork. Or simply use frozen (thawed) or canned squash puree. Find frozen squash puree near other vegetables in the freezer section and canned squash near the canned pumpkin.

Nutrition

Per tamale: 232 calories; 7 g fat (3 g sat, 3 g mono); 10 mg cholesterol; 35 g carbohydrates; 8 g protein; 4 g fiber; 612 mg sodium; 130 mg

potassium.

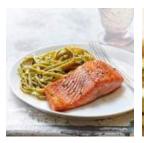
Nutrition Bonus: Vitamin A (25% daily value), Calcium (15% dv)

Carbohydrate Servings: 2

Exchanges: 1 medium fat meat, 1 fat

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