



Guatemalan Tamales Colorados: A Culinary Tradition

Key Ingredients for Guatemalan Tamales

- 1.Corn-based dough (masa): The heart of the tamal, made from corn flour mixed with water and lard.
- 2.Filling: Typically pork or chicken, paired with a tomato-based sauce known as recado.
- 3.Garnishes: Sweet red peppers and green olives add color and flavor.
- 4.Wrapping: Banana leaves give the tamales their signature presentation and earthy flavor.



For the Dough (Masa)

- 2 lbs of instant corn flour (e.g., Maseca)
- 4-6 cups water
- 1 ½ lbs lard (or substitute: 1 stick butter + ½ cup vegetable oil)
- 4 tbsp salt

For the Filling

- 2 lbs boneless pork or chicken (drumsticks, thighs, or breast)
- 1 oz lard
- Salt and pepper to taste

For the Recado (Tomato-Based Sauce)

- 18 ripe tomatoes
- 8 tomatillos (small green tomatoes)
- 3 red bell peppers
- 1 onion
- 2 garlic cloves
- 2 guajillo peppers (or other dried chilies)
- 1 pasilla pepper (found in mexican stores)
- 2 jalapeños
- 1 tsp black pepper
- 3 allspice seeds
- 2 oz lard

For Wrapping and Garnish

- 40 banana leaves (20 large, 20 small)
- String or cooking twine
- 20 green olives
- 2 sweet red peppers (cut into strips)

1. Prepare the Dough (Masa):

Mix the corn flour with water, salt, and lard until smooth. Add water as needed to create a soft, pliable dough.

2. Cook the Filling:

Cut the pork or chicken into pieces, season with salt and pepper, and sauté in lard until cooked.

3. Make the Recado Sauce:

Boil the tomatoes, tomatillos, peppers, onion, and garlic until soft. Peel the tomatoes and blend everything with black pepper and allspice until smooth.

Simmer the sauce with lard until it thickens slightly. Add a touch of corn flour to thicken, if necessary.

4. Prepare the Banana Leaves:

- 1.Cut the leaves into rectangles (12×8 inches). Soften them by boiling briefly or passing them over a flame.

5. Assemble the Tamales:

- 1.Lay a large banana leaf flat, place a smaller one crosswise on top, and scoop a portion of dough in the center.
- 2.Flatten the dough and create a small indent. Add a piece of meat, a tablespoon of sauce, an olive, and a strip of red pepper.
- 3.Fold the leaves tightly to form a package and tie with string.

6. Steam the Tamales:

- 1.Line a large pot with banana leaves, add a steam basket, and pour in water without submerging the tamales.
- 2.Stack the tamales, cover them with more leaves, and steam for 60-90 minutes until the dough separates easily from the leaves.