

Questa Del Rio News

QUESTA • RED RIVER • CERRO • COSTILLA • AMALIA • LAMA • SAN CRISTOBAL



In this month's edition of Enchanted Eats, we present some local holiday flavors. Nothing says holidays to many northern New Mexicans like a warm tamale! Unwrapping the tamale is like unwrapping a little present. Tamales are very time intensive and are often made in large batches for special occasions. And, what better way to end your holiday meal than with a biscochito? The biscochito is New Mexico's official state cookie, as declared by the New Mexico Legislature in 1989. Celebrate the holiday spirit by making the treats below with friends and family!



Pressure Cooker Red Chile Pork Tamales

Courtesy
Sunny Beckley, Questa

INGREDIENTS

Meat

- 5 to 6 lbs boneless pork shoulder or butt (trimmed and cut into large chunks)
- 1 white onion cut in quarters
- 1 T cumin
- 1 T salt
- 2 t (4 cloves) minced garlic
- 1 t ground black pepper
- 1/2 t cayenne pepper
- 1 cube chicken bouillon (crushed)
- 3 bay leaves
- 4 c water

Red Chile Sauce

- 6 guajillo chiles, seeded & stemmed
- 3 ancho chilies, seeded & stemmed
- 3 pasilla chilies, seeded & stemmed
- 1 small white onion cut into quarters
- 4 garlic cloves

Masa

- 1 lb (2 c) pork lard
- 4 c pork broth (reserved)
- 1/2 c red chili sauce (reserved)
- 1 T baking powder
- 1 T salt
- 5-1/2 c Maseca Tamal Instant Corn Masa mix

INSTRUCTIONS

Prepare corn husks

1. Place one pound bag of corn husks, rinsed, submerged in hot water at least 2 hours or overnight. Drain and squeeze excess water, place in a colander before use.

Cook the meat

2. Trim the fat off and discard from the pork. Cut into large chunks.
3. Place the pork chunks into the pressure cooker along with water and seasonings (onion, cumin, salt, minced garlic, ground black pepper, cayenne pepper, and a crushed chicken bouillon cube). Add 3 bay leaves on top.
4. Close the lid on the pressure cooker and lock into place. Move the steam release handle to the "sealing" position. Pressure cook on high pressure for 90 minutes. Once down, allow the pressure to naturally release for 10 minutes, and then do a quick release by moving the steam release handle to the "venting" position.
5. Carefully open the lid after all pressure has been released. Remove the bay leaves and onion and discard.
6. Using a slotted spoon, remove pork (reserving the broth) and place in a heat-proof bowl. Shred with 2 forks. Stir in 1/2 cup of reserved pork broth and salt to taste, if needed. Cover until you're ready to assemble the tamales. (You can do this step a day or two ahead and put it into the refrigerator until ready).
7. Lay a mesh strainer on top of a heat-proof bowl. Pour the remaining (reserved) pork broth from the Instant Pot liner through the strainer and into the bowl. Cover until ready to make the masa. (Can also be stored in the refrigerator but you will need to warm it before using in the masa).

Make the Red Chili Sauce

8. Remove the stems and seeds off the guajillo, ancho and pasilla chilies. Rinse them to remove dirt and dust.
9. Pour a cup or so of reserved broth back into the pressure cooker and add chilies, onion (cut into 4 chunks), and garlic cloves.

10. Cook over medium-high heat for 15 minutes.
11. Once cooked, remove from heat and allow to cool to room temperature.
12. Using a slotted spoon, remove chilies, onion, and garlic and place in a blender along with 1/2 cup of liquid from the pot. Puree until smooth and then pour through a fine mesh strainer using the back of your spoon to push it through back into your pressure cooker.
13. Use the saute function on med-low to simmer puree for about 15 min and then add salt to taste.
14. Add 1 cup of the chili puree into the shredded pork and stir. Place remaining chili sauce and pork into the refrigerator to save for later.

Make the Masa

(Masa is easiest to spread when fresh, so try to make it right before you're ready to assemble the tamales.)

15. Add lard to the mixing bowl of a stand mixer and, using a paddle attachment, beat on speed level "4" for 5 minutes. Lard should look creamy and fluffy when done.
16. Turn mixer off and scrape the sides of the mixing bowl down with a spatula. Add pork broth, red chili sauce, baking powder, salt, and 1 cup of Maseca Tamal. Turn mixer on speed level "2" and mix until incorporated. Slowly add 4-1/2 more cups of Maseca Tamal, 1 cup at a time, until completely incorporated (scrape sides down with a spatula as needed). Masa should have the consistency of smooth peanut butter.

- Test to make sure the masa is ready by dropping a dollop of dough into a glass of water. If it floats, your masa is ready. If it sinks, add 1/4 cup more broth or water, mix for 2 more minutes, and then retest. Repeat until dough floats.

Assemble Tamales

- Take one corn husk and on the wide end of the corn husk, spread a thin layer of masa (about 1/4" thick) using the back of a spoon or a small spatula.
- Spread masa over half the length of the husk and about 1/2" away from the long edges. Add 1 to 2 tablespoons of pork in a line down the middle of the masa.
- Trifold the long sides of the corn husk over the filling. (Fold one long side in over the meat filling and the other long side in over that.) Then, fold the corn husk in half so that both ends meet together (or close to it).
- Repeat until desired or you run out of ingredients. (should make up to 3 dozen)

Cook Tamales

- Add 2 cups of water to the bottom of the pressure cooker and insert the steamer basket.
- Place tamales inside vertically with open ends pointing up. Make sure they are tight enough in there to prevent them from falling over while cooking. Close the lid and lock into place.
- Move the steam release handle to the "sealing" position and pressure cook on high pressure for 35 minutes. Once done, allow pressure to naturally release for 10 minutes, and then do a quick release by moving the steam release handle to the "venting" position.
- Carefully open the lid at an angle to prevent moisture from dripping inside the tamales. Allow to cool for at least 15 minutes before serving.

Biscochitos

Courtesy

Angelina Vialpando, Taos

- 4 sticks softened butter (2 c)
 1/2 c lard
 4 eggs, room temperature
 2 c sugar
 3 t anise (crushed)
 3 t pure vanilla extract
 7-10 c flour
 7 t baking powder
 Pinch of salt
 1/4 c wine, orange juice, or water
 Cinnamon sugar, in shallow bowl, to coat (1 c granulated sugar to 1 T cinnamon) **Colorful round sprinkles can be used instead of cinnamon.
- In a large bowl, mix about 8 cups flour, baking powder, and salt. Set aside.
 - In a separate large bowl, beat butter and lard until creamy and pale in color. Add sugar and mix until combined. Add egg one at a time, mixing well after each addition. Add vanilla and anise and mix well. Stir in dry ingredients, alternating with 1/4 cup liquid of choice, until dry mixture is gone (the remaining 2 cups of flour can be added if the masa is too sticky). Masa should be easily workable without sticking to your hands or the rolling pin.
 - Preheat oven to 375°. Roll out masa on a floured surface, about 1/4 inch thick. Use cookie cutters of your choice. ** If using sprinkles instead of cinnamon sugar, place on cookies before baking.
 - Bake 8-10 minutes, remove from oven, and coat entire cookie in cinnamon sugar while cookies are still very warm (use a spatula). Makes about 12-15 dozen.

Homemade Eggnog

Courtesy KRQE News Staff

- 6 large egg yolks
 1/2 c granulated sugar
 1 c heavy cream
 2 c milk
 1-1/2 t freshly grated nutmeg
 Pinch of salt
 1/4 t vanilla extract
 rum, optional
- In a medium bowl, whisk together the egg yolks and sugar until light and creamy.
 - In a saucepan, bring the cream, milk, nutmeg and salt to a bare simmer, stirring often. Slowly ladle in 1/2 cup or so of the hot milk to the egg mixture, whisking vigorously. Ladle in another 1/2 cup, continuing to whisk vigorously the entire time. Do this until all the hot milk has been added to the eggs and the mixture is well combined.
 - Pour the tempered egg mixture back into the saucepan of milk on the stove, whisking quickly, and cook the mixture, stirring constantly, until it reaches 160 degrees F on a thermometer.
 - Remove from the heat and stir in the vanilla and rum (if using).
 - Pour the eggnog into a bowl and cover with plastic wrap. Refrigerate until thoroughly chilled.

