

## Layered Bean Tamales – *Tamales de frijol en capas*

### Ingredients

For the corn paste:

- 2 cups corn flour (masa harina, such as Maseca™)
- 1 ½ cups broth (or water, for vegetarian option)
- 6 tbsp lard (or vegetable oil for vegetarian option)
- 1 tsp salt, or to taste

### For the beans:

- 2 cups cooked pinto or black beans
- 2 tbsp lard (or vegetable oil, for vegetarian option)
- ½ tsp salt, or to taste

### To assemble and serve:

- Dry corn husks
- 2 cups prepared red mole (homemade or from jar)



**Prepare husks:** Wash husks under running water, separating them very carefully. Discard pieces with stains or dark spots. Dunk the rest in water and drain a couple of times, then let soak in hot water for at least 20 minutes. Remove from water, gently squeeze excess water and reserve, propped in a colander. **Prepare corn paste:** In a small pot, bring broth (or water) to boil; turn off heat. In a large bowl, mix flour, salt and fat, then carefully pour the hot liquid into the bowl. Incorporate all ingredients into a thick, uniform paste. Allow to rest for a few minutes. Meanwhile, **prepare beans:** Mix beans, fat and salt together, smashing the beans with the back of a spoon or a potato masher. Leave a few beans intact or partially mashed, for texture. **Assemble tamales:** Cut a large rectangle of parchment paper, or open a large freezer bag by trimming the top, then cutting the sides and unfolding into a flat rectangle; set on working surface. Place one quarter of the corn paste on the lining, then flatten with fingers and extend into a thin square, about 8x8 inches; place about one quarter of the smashed beans on top and flatten with fingers; continue flattening and extending beans, until covering most of the corn layer, leaving about one inch edge all around (photo below, left). Roll into a log, lifting the plastic or paper as the layers are rolled (photo below, centre). Slice the log into sections of approximately 2 inches in length; take one corn husk and place one portion of roll in the middle (photo below, right):



Fold sides of husk to wrap roll, then fold tip of the husk to form a pouch (photo below, left). Repeat with the rest of the portions, propping tamales vertically, with the folded side down, in a large steamer basket (or use a large metal colander, as shown in the photo below, centre). Repeat procedure with the rest of the corn paste and beans, to form about 16 tamales. Cover propped tamales with more corn husks, then with a clean kitchen towel (photo below, right):



Pour water at the bottom of the steamer pot (or a large pot where the colander will tightly fit on top), making sure that the water will not touch the tamales. Bring water to boil, then snugly place the basket (or colander) with the tamales on top. Cover with a lid, and more folded kitchen towels as needed, to keep steam from escaping from the pot. Cook for at least one hour, checking that there is always enough boiling water at the bottom of the pot. After one hour, check doneness every fifteen minutes by carefully removing one *tamal* from the pot; open the husk, and when the dough looks firm and it is not sticking to the husk, the tamales are ready (photo below, left). Serve hot, pouring *mole* directly on top of the tamales in the husk (photo below, right):



For a more contemporary option, remove tamales from the husk, slicing in half to show off the rolled layers, and plating on top of a pool of *mole*, as shown at the top of the previous page.