

## Sweet Tamales - *Tamales de dulce*

### Ingredients (for approximately 16 small tamales)

2 cups	white corn flour ( <i>masa harina</i> or tamale flour, not corn starch)
2-3 cups	hot water
¼ cup	unsalted butter, at room temperature
½ cup	non-hydrogenated margarine
2 tsp	baking powder
<b>Add-ins:</b>	
6 tbsp	granulated sugar
1 tsp	ground cinnamon
4-5	drops red food colouring; optional
¼ cup	raisins
¼ cup	pineapple jam, preferably chunky (homemade, or from jar)
Dry corn husks	



**Clean and re-hydrate corn husks:** Rinse in water, carefully separating individual husks and removing stained pieces. Soak in hot water for 20 minutes, then drain in a colander. Set aside.

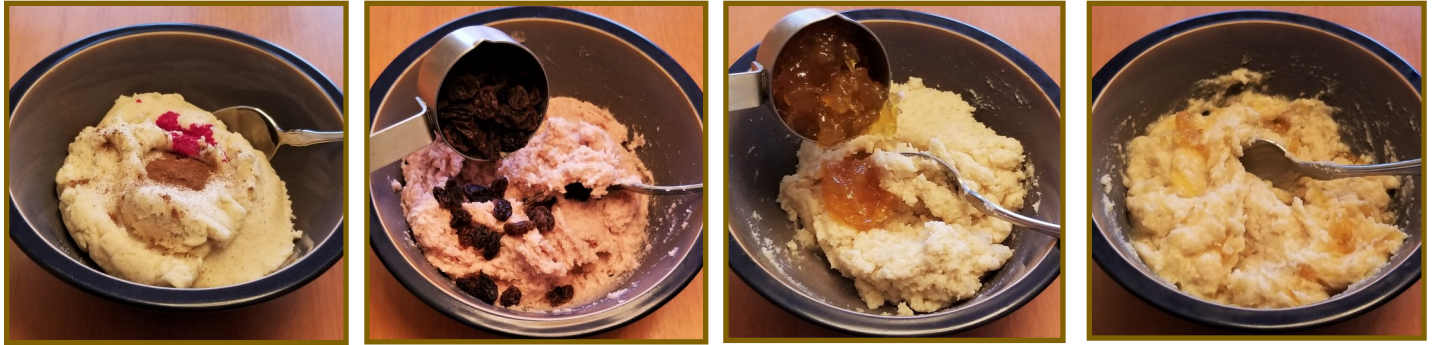
**Prepare sweet tamale paste with flavourings:** Beat butter and margarine together (photo below, left). Once very creamy and fluffy, add tamale flour and baking powder (photo below, centre); mix until it becomes grainy, then gradually add two cups of hot water (photo below, right):



Continue mixing and add about another cup of water, as needed, until a smooth and fluffy consistency is achieved. Set aside.

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To add flavourings, divide the paste in half into two bowls. For the first bowl, add 4 tablespoons of sugar, food colouring (if using), and cinnamon (photo below, left). Mix to incorporate very well, then combine with raisins (second photo below); set aside. For the other half, add 2 tbsp of sugar, and mix thoroughly; incorporate chunky pineapple jam (third photo below). Continue mixing until the jam is evenly distributed in the paste (photo below, right):

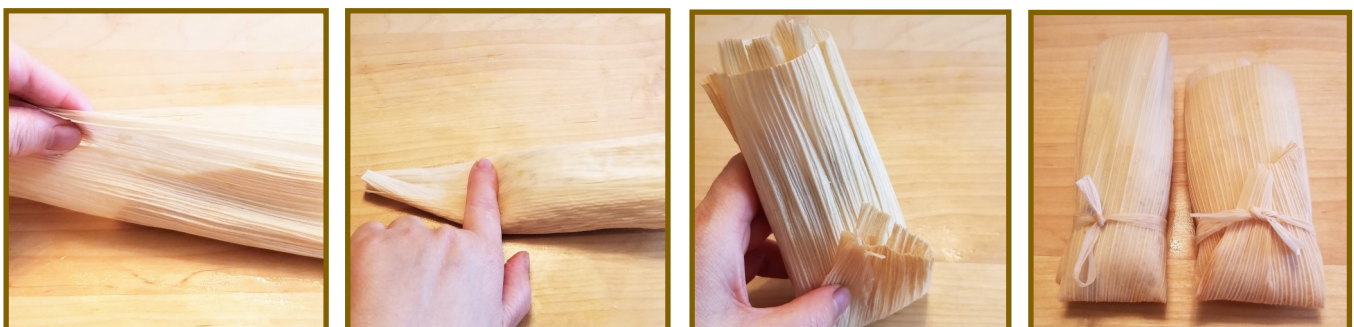


**Prepare steaming pot:** Fill the bottom of a large pot with at least one inch of hot water, then place steamer basket on top (or fit a metal colander), making sure the water does not touch. Set aside.

**Assemble tamales:** Arrange rehydrated corn husks, and prepared bowls of corn paste for assembly. Take a corn husk and scoop about a third of a cup of corn paste, forming a lump the middle (photo below, left, with cinnamon & raisin paste). Do not spread, but simply fold corn husk lengthwise to wrap around the paste (photo below, right, with pineapple paste):



Bring edges of husk together over filling (photo below, left), then roll to form wrap. Press corn paste away from the pointy end (second photo below); finish by folding that end (third photo below). A long strip of corn husk may be tied around the tamale wrap, to keep it from opening, and also to differentiate if cooking with other flavours, especially savoury (photo below, right):



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Continue with all the husks and flavoured corn paste, to make approximately sixteen small tamales. Using leftover husks, line the bottom of the prepared colander/steamer (photo below, left), then arrange tamales vertically, with the open end facing up (second photo below, showing an assortment of savoury and sweet tamales). **Cook tamales:** Cover with more husks (third photo below), then with a clean kitchen towel, tucking over the tamales inside the edge of the basket/colander, so the tamales will not get wet with condensation during steaming. Place lid, completely closing the top (photo below, right):



Place prepared steamer on the stove top, and bring hot water in the pot to a boil over high heat, then reduce to a rolling boil, and let tamales steam for between one hour and one hour and a half. Always check the bottom of the pot halfway through, to make sure it is not drying too fast; if needed, add boiling water. Carefully open the pot and remove one tamale; check doneness by opening husk, the tamale is ready when it separates easily from the husk. Turn off heat; the tamales may be left in the pot for a while until serving time. They keep in the fridge for a few days, or in the freezer for up to three months; reheat in microwave oven or steamer, still in their wraps. Always serve hot.

