

Zacatecas Style Cheesy Sweet *Gorditas* – *Gorditas dulces de queso estilo Zacatecas*

Ingredients (for about 18 pieces)

1 ¼ lb (580 g)	<i>masa</i> (nixtamalized corn dough) or knead into a dough:
2 cups	<i>masa harina</i> (nixtamalized corn flour, such as Maseca™ or Bob's Red Mill™)
1 ½ cups	water
1-1.3 lb (500-600 g)	unripened cheese; any fresh cheese or a combination, such as panela, fresco, requesón, fresh Mozzarella, even ricotta or paneer
½ cup well-packed	brown sugar, or ground <i>piloncillo</i> (unrefined cane sugar)
½ tsp	baking soda
1 tsp	baking powder
18-20	food-grade leaves, such as fresh oak or lemon; washed (or 4-inch (10cm) parchment paper squares)

Grate cheese finely. Place *masa* (corn dough) into a bowl and break up into pieces; add grated cheese, and mix thoroughly. Add baking powder, baking soda and sugar. Continue mixing and kneading, mashing the cheese, until it is almost not visible, and the sugar has been perfectly incorporated. Cover and allow to rest, at least two hours, and up to overnight. When ready to bake, pre-heat oven to 350°F (180°C). Take a portion of dough, about the size of a lemon; roll into a ball then flatten between hands to form a patty. Place patty on a leaf (or paper square), then arrange on a baking sheet. Repeat with the rest of the dough and leaves, until 18-20 patties are formed, distributed amongst two baking sheets. Bake for 30-35 minutes, rotating sheets halfway for even browning. The gorditas will rise, then might slowly deflate as they turn golden brown. Remove from oven, and allow to rest for a couple of minutes. They also grow sideways, as seen below left, from patties touching after baking:



Serve warm or at room temperature, with hot chocolate or *café de olla* (**remove and discard leaf/paper before eating**):

