

## How to Prepare Ashes from Dry Corn Husks (*Totomoxtle*)

Take dry husks out of their packaging; the husks are generally clean, but discard any with stains or dark spots (probably from mould). Pick a few of the clean husks (photo, right).

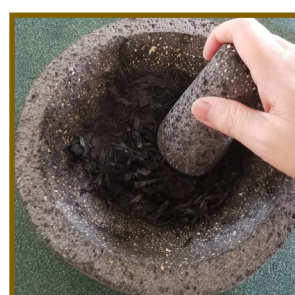


To safely burn the dry corn husks, choose a completely clean (especially no oil) heavy pot, iron skillet or grill, or a stone mortar. This last option is very convenient because later on, the ashes will have to be ground; a *molcajete* (volcanic rock Mexican mortar) is ideal. Place vessel on a non-flammable surface, and remove any objects from around, especially any plastic.

Cut the corn husks into pieces to fit the container (photo below, left). Light with a long match or a wand lighter (photo below, centre). Step back and allow the flames to propagate to all the husks (photo below, right):



Wait until all are burnt, and the fire extinguishes by itself (photo below, left). Crush the ashes with a spoon or the mortar's pestle (photo below, centre). Continue until the ashes are reduced to fine powder, then transfer to a bowl, using a dry kitchen brush, or a clean paper towel (photo below, right):



To prepare mix for coating, add about two tablespoons of sugar for every tablespoon of *totomoxtle* ashes (photo, right); mix until well incorporated (photo, far right):



For grey or black bread, add ashes to the mix when preparing the dough. For a black crust, either brush with egg wash and sprinkle with mix for coating before baking, or brush with melted butter and sprinkle with mix for coating after baking.