



el frijol feliz
escuela de cocina

Cooking Classes

Tamales (serves 4 to 6)

- 2 red bell peppers
- 2 guaque (guajillo) chilies (large dry chili, not hot)
- 10 tomatoes
- 1 onion
- 2 tablespoons of dry salted capers
- 2 pounds of boneless chicken breast
- 2 ½ sticks of butter or margarine
- Sibaque or twine/cooking string for wrapping the tamales
- Plantain leaves (about 20)
- 40 “sal” leaves (larger and heavier than plantain leaves)

SAUCE

Take out the seeds of the peppers and chilies and cut the peppers, chilies, tomatoes, and onions into large chunks and place into a pot with a ¼ cup of water and a tablespoon of salt. Simmer for 10 minutes or until everything is soft. Remove from heat and put in blender together with 2 tablespoons of capers. Don't add the water from the tomatoes. Blend well. Return the sauce to the pot and a half stick of butter and cook for 3 more minutes.

CORN FILLING

- 3 cups of corn flour
- 8-10 cups of water
- 1 ½ cups of butter
- 2 tablespoons of salt

Put the corn flour, salt, and water in a pot. Mix until there are no clumps in the mixture. Then cook on low heat for 20 minutes while constantly stirring. When the mixture begins to boil add the butter to the mixture. The mixture is ready when it has a thick consistency. Set the mixture aside to use as filling.

CHICKEN

Cut the chicken breasts into 1" x 2" pieces.

WRAPPERS

Cut the plantains leaves into squares about 12 inches on a side. Put the plantain leaves into boiling water and cook for 10 minutes. In the meantime, take the sal leaves that are much bigger, and take a sharp knife and reduce the thickness of the leaf's stem to allow

it to fold more easily. Try to cut the height of the stem in half without damaging the leaf itself. Then cut off the lower third of the leaf. Repeat this for each of the sal leaves you are going to use. After cutting the sal leaves, wash them. When the plantain leaves are done boiling, drain and set aside. Then cut the sibaque in strings for wrapping the tamales.

ASSEMBLY

To assemble the tamales: Put one sal leaf on the counter and put a plantain leaf on top of it. Wipe dry. Put a large spoonful of corn mixture on the middle of the leaf and flatten into a circle that is about 5 inches in diameter. Put two tablespoons of sauce onto the corn mixture. Top with a piece of chicken and put another spoonful of sauce over the chicken. Hold up one side of the leaf and use a spoon or spatula to fold over the corn mixture to cover the chicken and sauce. Don't worry if some of the sauce leaks out and or if it is a bit irregular in shape. Take the two diagonals and fold together until they are tight around the filling. Fold the ends under and place on the sal leaf. Fold the two long sides of the sal leaf together until tight on the tamal and fold the ends under. Tie with sibaque or string like a package, forming a cross across the center.

TO COOK

Put the tamales in a pressure cooker or a large pot. If using a pressure cooker, add six cups of water and cook at low pressure for 25 minutes. If using a regular pot, fill half way up with water and cover. Cook for 45 minutes. Test one and make sure the chicken is cooked.

TO SERVE

Untie the sibaque/string, open the leaves and fold partially underneath to expose the center and form a bowl-like shape. ENJOY!!

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www.frijolfeliz.com

4a Ave Sur No.1, La Antigua Guatemala, Phone (502) 7832 5274