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Poblano and Cheese Tamales

Makes 16 -20 tamales

Ever had a dry tamale? We have . . . and it's pretty disappointing. We're here to help you cross the dreaded 'dry tamale' hurdle so you'll only be left with trying to decide if you have room for another! We break down the process for making these delicious little packets while providing helpful tips for preparing flavor-packed tamales that you can enjoy all week long.

Ingredients:

1 package corn husks
1-1/3 cup butter
1-1/2 teaspoons salt
1-1/2 teaspoons baking powder
4 cups masa harina
2-1/2 cups vegetable broth
6 medium Poblano peppers
1 lb Monterey Jack cheese

Directions:

1. **PREP THE HUSKS:** Separate out medium and large husks from smaller husks. Soak the husks by placing the husks in a large bowl filled with warm water for 4 hours.
2. **ROAST THE POBLANOS:** Preheat the oven to 425°F and roast whole poblanos in a baking dish for 30-40 minutes until they begin to brown and bubble. Remove them from the oven and let them cool to room temperature. Once cooled, remove the seeds, peel, and slice into long strips.
3. **SLICE THE CHEESE:** Slice the cheese into similarly sized strips as the poblanos and set aside.
4. **MIX THE MASA:** In a mixer on medium-high speed, whip the butter, salt and baking powder until light and fluffy, about 1 minute. With the mixer on low, continue beating and add the masa flour and broth, alternating one cup at a time until the masa is the consistency of cake batter. The Float Test: To ensure your dough will be fluffy and light, place a teaspoon of the masa mix in a bowl of water. If it floats, it's ready and will be tender and light! If it doesn't float - place the dough in the refrigerator for 15 minutes and then whip it again.

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5. **FILL AND WRAP:** Select a medium corn husk and tear it into strips lengthwise and set aside. Remove the first large husk from the water and pat it dry. Working on a clean surface, place the large end of the husk closest to you. Using the back of a spoon, spread 2-3 tablespoons of the masa on the smooth side of the husk working from the right side to the left side, leaving $\frac{1}{4}$ of the left side of husk bare. Make sure husks aren't too wet -- this will result in the masa sliding off. Place the strips of cheese and poblano in the center of the masa and fold the right side of the masa and husk about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way over to enclose the filling. Continue folding once more to close the tamal. Fold the bottom 'tail' up, and loosely tie the end fold securely with a strip of husk (or kitchen twine if you'd rather).

6. **STEAM THE TAMALES:** Fill the base of a steamer pot with water, ensuring that the water doesn't seep into the top pot. Stand each the tamal upright, folded side down, inside the steamer basket insert. Wrap the rest of the tamales until the masa and filling are gone. Line the pot with tamales standing them upright and secure, but are not packed tightly. Cover the tamales with a layer of leftover corn husks and cover the pot with a lid. Steam for 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours and until the masa easily separates from the corn husks. Occasionally check the water level to make sure the water doesn't boil away. Add more water when necessary. Covering the batch with extra husks will help avoid condensed water from dripping into the tamales.