

Hominy Tortillas

If you always wanted to make tortillas but didn't dare because it looked too unwieldy, here is the recipe to set you free in tortilla land. I got it from the delightful cookbook *The Well-Filled Tortilla* by Victoria Wise and Susanna Hoffman (Workman, 1990). It is a unique and easy-to-work with *masa* corn dough. This technique, as the *Well-Filled* writers acknowledge, was developed by food writer Betty Fussell, using canned or fresh cooked *nixtamal*, or hominy, to moisten the dough. I use canned and it works great. The whole hominy (*nixtamal*) adds a dimension quite like fresh Native-ground doughs and makes an often touchy-handling dough exceptionally malleable. It is now one of my standard tortilla doughs and it is quickly mixed in the food processor, a modern alternative to hand grinding. Do make sure to get some fresh *masa harina*. That is the secret to a great tortilla.

Yield: About twenty 6-inch tortillas

1 1/2 cups (about one 29-ounce can) drained canned hominy, or fresh *nixtamal* (page xx)

1 1/2 cups yellow or white *masa harina para tortillas*, stone-ground, if possible

1/4 teaspoon salt

1 cup hot water

1. Place the hominy in the workbowl of a food processor fitted with the metal blade, and add the *masa harina*, salt, and water until the dough forms a soft, firm ball, about 10 seconds. Cover with a clean, damp dishcloth or plastic wrap and let rest 1 hour at room temperature, and keep covered while pressing or rolling out the tortillas. If using later, wrap the entire ball of dough in plastic wrap and refrigerate up to 24 hours.

2. To shape the tortillas, divide into 20 equal portions about the size of a golf ball. Place one of the portions of the dough between two pieces of plastic wrap or waxed paper. Press in a tortilla press, turning at regular intervals, until the desired thickness, or roll out with a thin rolling pin to a 6-inch round, less than 1/4-inch thick. Often the edges will crack; you can leave like this, or press on the plastic to smooth, or trim with a knife. Leave in the plastic wrap until ready to cook. You will have a pile of tortillas sandwiched between the layers of plastic or waxed paper to prevent sticking and drying out. These may be refrigerated in this form for up to 8 hours before baking, if necessary.

3. To bake the tortillas, heat an ungreased heavy cast-iron skillet, griddle, or *comal* over medium-high heat; a drop of water will dance across the surface. An electric griddle works well too. Peel off both layers of the plastic or waxed paper and place each tortilla onto the hot pan, one at a time, or as many that will fit without touching. Bake for 30 seconds on the first side, turn over and bake for 1 minute, then turn back to the first side and bake for a final 30 seconds; the tortilla will puff up and be speckled with brown spots. The tortillas can be baked in advance, stacked, wrapped in plastic or placed in a thick plastic bag, and refrigerated overnight. Rewarm as needed right before eating.