

Making Flour Tortillas and instructions for success

Original Hernandez Diaz Family Recipe by Nancy Evans

This recipe makes approximately 52 flour tortillas 5 inches in diameter

Ingredients:

6 cups of unbleached all-purpose bread flour

6 teaspoons baking powder

½ teaspoon salt

1 ¾ cups of pure vegetable oil

3 1/3 cups boiling water

Prepare a large cast iron skillet: Put ½ teaspoon pure vegetable oil in the skillet on medium heat. Scrape the cooking surface really well with a turner as you rotate it in all directions; scrape thoroughly. Take the skillet from the heat and wipe out oil (don't pour out) being careful not to burn yourself. After the oil has been removed, continue rubbing the surface to make it very smooth. The paper towels should have some black carbon on them from the rubbing if the skillet is well seasoned; this is good.

Tip 1) Put 5 cups of water on to boil. This quantity of water will insure you have sufficient quantity when you are ready to use it. When water comes to a rolling boil remove from heat and set aside.

Dry mixture:

Thoroughly mix dry ingredients in a large mixing bowl. Make a hole in the middle of the dry mixture. Pour oil into hole and stir in a circular motion using a wooden spoon, dragging more and more of the dry mixture into the oil. When the flour starts absorbing the oil well, start using a fork to mix and finally use your hand; mixing and squeezing the mixture thoroughly. Test: Squeeze a hand full of mixture and open your hand. The mixture should hold a clump form in your hand and not break apart.

Wet mixture:

Once again, make a hole in the center of the mixture and add water you had set aside, one cup at a time and mix with wooden spoon. Add more water until you have put in 3 1/3 cups. At this point turn the mixture out on to a kneading surface and knead, approximately 3 minutes, until the dough ball becomes very elastic/pliable (should not be sticky). Let rest for 3 to 5 minutes.

First step in forming a tortilla:

Pinch off a portion of dough that will make a small biscuit shape. Add or take away dough as needed to arrive at a biscuit form approximately 1 ¾ inches in diameter and 1/2 to 5/8 inch thick. While forming the biscuit it is important to fold the edges into the center and push down with your thumb as you rotate the biscuit. This will make the form round without air bubbles or

creases. Continue to make the entire lot of dough into the biscuit form and collect in the mixing bowl.

Second step in forming a tortilla:

Put one cup of flour in a pile next to your rolling surface. Take one of the biscuit forms and gently push one side into the pile of flour, then turn it over and press that side into the flour. With both sides lightly floured lay the biscuit on the rolling surface and with one forward motion roll the rolling pin almost to the edge of the biscuit but don't roll all the way off the edge. Pick up the tortilla rotate it 90 degrees, always in the same direction, and turn it over. Once again repeat the single rolling motion, stopping short of the very edge of the tortilla. Gently pick up the tortilla turning it over and rotating it 90 degrees as before. This rolling procedure will be done a total of four times which will equal 360 degrees and the result should be a thin round tortilla ready for cooking.

Tip 2) As you roll out each tortilla, drape it over the side of the mixing bowl staggered, as to not drape them directly on top of each other. Touching and over lapping is ok. Handle with care, taking care not to deform.

Tip 3) Put the skillet on medium heat. This can be done while rolling out the final few tortillas so it will be ready when you are. Caution, the skillet must be hot (just prior to smoking) before placing a tortilla to cook and do not put any oil in the skillet. If the skillet is not hot enough the tortilla will come out hard, not flexible.

Tip 4) Save a small portion of tortilla dough, maybe ½ a biscuit, to wipe the surface of the skillet after the skillet is hot and before cooking the first tortilla.

Prepare surface for cooked tortillas:

Prepare a towel covered with paper towels to receive the cooked tortillas. It should accommodate at least 6 cooked tortillas laying side by side. After they cool slightly, they can be stacked on one another.

Cook the tortillas:

Gently take one of the draped tortillas from the mixing bowl placing it flat on your open hand. With a single motion turn your hand over and slap the tortilla into the skillet. It should land flat and start to cook. Watch as it cooks. In a few seconds it should start making bubbles on the surface. As these bubbles start, use a turner to lift and turn on the other side. The bubbles will continue to swell. Cook for a few more seconds and turn over and back to make sure it is cooked well. The bubbles should appear dark brown or slightly burned, when it is done.

After tortillas are cool, you may stack. They can eaten warm with butter (tastes like a biscuit!). You can make tacos or quesadillas or many other things. To store, place in sealed plastic bags. To freeze, put waxed paper between tortillas and put in freezer bags.