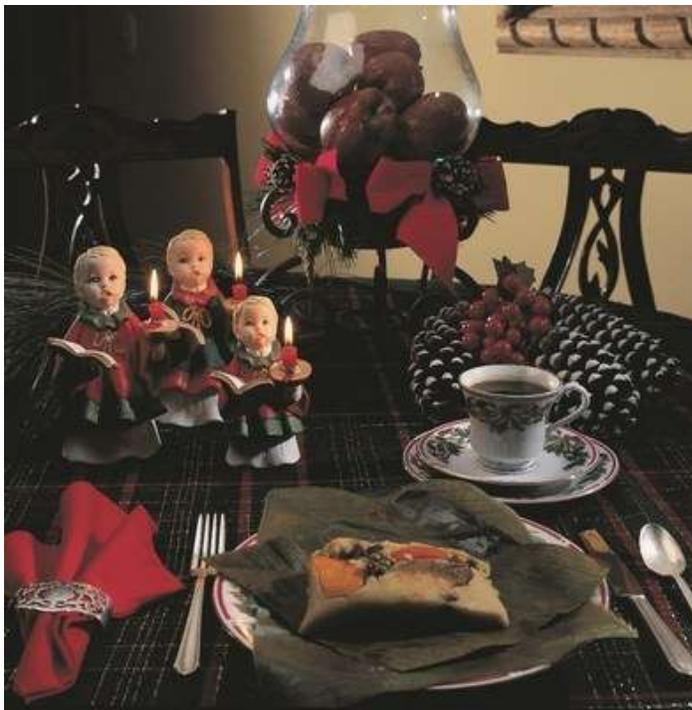


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Traditional Tico Tamales Are a Holiday Food Tradition Worth a Try



SAN JOSE, Costa Rica – December 7, 2017 – Introducing unique traditions from around the world into your family festivities is a fun way to celebrate the holidays. In Costa Rica, *tamales* are a must at Christmastime. Ticos gather days beforehand for a *tamaleada*—an occasion where the whole gang comes together to prepare and cook delicious *tamales*, making for an excellent activity to enjoy with loved ones. Once the *tamales* are ready they are served at holiday parties and shared with other families, friends and neighbors.

While *tamales* are a common dish throughout Central and South America, Ticos have their own twist on the recipe. Authentic Costa Rican *tamales* include rice, garbanzo beans and potatoes. They can also be made with chicken, beef, pork or a combination of these. For a new take on holiday dinner traditions, invite family and friends over, turn on the festive music and give this traditional chicken *tamal* recipe a go.

Costa Rican Chicken Tamales Recipe

The recipe below uses two whole chickens, but can easily be replaced with any meat of your choice.

Ingredients

Meat and stock

- 2 whole chickens, cut into pieces
- 3 bunches celery, cut in large chunks
- 2 red bell peppers, cut in chunks
- 2 onions, cut in slices
- 2 carrots, cut in large pieces
- 1 bunch of cilantro
- 1 bunch of parsley
- Fresh oregano and thyme
- Salt, pepper, Worchester sauce, annatto paste
- 1 garlic head
- Oil

Tamales

- 6 cups ground corn masa
- 6 cups mashed potatoes
- 250 grams base of ground pork rind
- 1 ¼ cups pork lard
- 16 cups stock from the meat
- Salt and pepper
- 3-4 Tbsp complete seasoning
- Powdered hot chili pepper (optional)
- 1 tsp garlic powder

Fillings

- Chicken meat
- Rice cooked with annatto paste
- Stuffed olives
- Capers
- Garbanzo beans
- Sweet whole kernel corn
- Strips of roasted peppers
- Petit pois
- Prunes
- Raisins
- Black beans
- Peeled carrots, cut in julienne strips and cooked al dente with salt and sugar
- Green beans, cut in pieces and cooked al dente with salt and sugar

Wrap

- Clean plantain leaves
- Butcher's twine

Instructions

In a heavy pot, in oil, fry chicken until golden brown. Then add 20 cups of water, which you will bring to a boil. Once boiling, add vegetables, garlic, Worcester sauce, salt and pepper. Cook on low heat, until chicken is tender. This should yield about 16 cups of stock, but you can add more water if necessary. Shred chicken by hand and reserve stock.

Mix ground corn *masa* and mashed potatoes together. In food processor, blend pork rind and pork lard with stock and add to *masa*. Process for a few minutes, until smooth—the consistency should be like a soft porridge. Add complete seasoning.

Cut plantain leaves into 12 inch rectangles. Align the two leaves—one horizontal, the other vertical. In the center of the leaves place a cup of corn *masa*, a piece of cooked chicken, a tablespoon of rice, 2 olives, 4 chickpeas, 1 tablespoon of corn, capers, raisins, one prune, a little petit pois, green beans, carrots, mashed beans and a slit of roasted pepper. For a vegetarian option, *tamales* can instead be filled with mashed potatoes, beans and vegetables.

To close the *tamal*, roll from the center and fold the edges towards the inside. Proceed likewise with the second plantain leaf and securely tie together with butcher's twine. Line the bottom of a large pot with extra plantain leaves. Fill the pot halfway with water, bring to a boil and add salt. Place *tamales* in water and cook for 45-60 minutes. Serve warm.

Traditionally, Costa Rican *tamales* are cooked over a firewood fire to enhance their flavors. Try this method and enjoy your *tamal* with a cup of coffee for a complete *Tico* experience.

For more information on Costa Rica, visit www.visitcostarica.com

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About Costa Rica

Nestled between Nicaragua and Panama, Costa Rica offers visitors an abundance of unique wildlife, landscapes and climates—a trip to this Central American country is anything but run-of-the-mill. The country proudly shelters approximately five percent of the known biodiversity in the world and has become a global leader in sustainable practices. Visitors to Costa Rica enjoy a highly organized tourism infrastructure offering a broad terrain of activities and accommodations.

About Instituto Costarricense de Turismo (ICT)

Established in 1955, the Costa Rica Tourism Board (the ICT), alongside its partners in the private sector, spearheads the vital task of regulating and promoting Costa Rica's extensive tourism offerings.