

Doraditas de Masa Verde con Queso Oaxaca

Crisped Cactus and Corn Masa Turnovers Stuffed with Oaxacan String Cheese

- Masa for fresh tortillas made with juiced cactus paddles instead of water. Other vegetables may also be used to color and flavor masa such as spinach, beets or achiote. The tradition for this food dates back many centuries. In pre-Columbian Mexico the Aztecs would color and flavor their tortillas. In fact they would use achiote and other spices to paint patterns or use corn cobs to make designs in tortillas used for ceremonies.
- Using raw masa and frying it to crispness already stuffed makes a “turn over” or parcel that is sumptuous! Doraditas means “little golden ones”.
- Timing the cooking of the masa is the key as ideally the *doraditas* are stuffed, fried and eaten in short order as they are when eaten at food stalls in Mexico’s plazas.

Serves 6, 12 Doraditas

Cheese

2 cups shredded Queso Oaxaca or other melting cheese

Masa dough

1 1/2 cups powdered *masa harina*

2 cups nopal cactus paddles, thorns removed

Or substitute 3 cups of washed and dried spinach leaves

½ teaspoon salt

3 cups corn or vegetable oil for deep frying

½ cup crema mexicana for garnish

½ cup guacamole for garnish

1. Mix salt and *masa harina*.
2. Trim of ½ inch of the stem end and then remove thorns from nopal cactus in the following manner. Using a glove or plastic bag over your hand hold the paddle from the top of the leaf. Slide a potato peeler across the surface being careful to only remove the thorns and not the cactus skin. Rinse and pat dry.
3. Cut the cactus into 1 inch cubes and place in a blender. Add water as needed to make up to 2 cups of liquid. Blend until liquefied.
4. Place masa and salt in a large bowl. Make a well in the center and pour in the cactus juice half a cup at a time to form dough that is moist but not sticky. The dough will be a brilliant green color!
5. Cut a plastic shopping bag into 2 10” circles to press the dough between to make thin tortillas for stuffing.

6. Divide your dough in to 12 balls approximately 2 inches in diameter. Press each ball between the two sheets of plastic. A tortilla press may be used but the resulting tortilla may be too thin to stuff when uncooked. Instead, use two small cutting boards and press down evenly to spread the dough out into a tortilla that is about ¼ inch thick.
7. Remove one sheet of plastic and place 1 rounded tablespoon of the cheese in the middle. Fold the tortilla in half and pinch the edges together forming a half moon shaped turn over. Make sure that the tortilla makes a tight seal around the filling.
8. Place on a baking sheet and cover with a wet towel. The turnovers should be fried as soon as possible but may be kept under a moist towel for up to one hour if needed.
9. Heat oil in a deep skillet on medium heat until a small ball of *masa* sputters when placed in the oil. Fry the turnovers 3 at a time, turning as each side crisps.
10. Place on a plate and garnish with a dollop of crema and guacamole. Serve with salsas de mesa such as *Salsa de Chile Serrano* or *Salsa Tapatía*.