

BASIC TORTILLA Flour

YIELD: 12-16 TORTILLAS, DEPENDING ON SIZE

While corn tortillas are traditional in Mexico, flour tortillas are used in Baja California and along the U.S. border. When homemade, they can be delicious. The amount of water needed will vary with different types of flour. The dough should be firm and not sticky, like Play-Doh.

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- ¼ cup vegetable shortening or lard, cut into pieces
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¾ cup warm water

1. In a bowl, using two knives or a pastry blender, mix the flour, shortening, baking powder, and salt until it resembles fine meal. Add the water, a little at a time, and mix until the liquid is incorporated.
2. Form the dough into a ball and knead on a floured surface until the dough is smooth and elastic. Divide and make 12 smaller balls. Cover and let stand for at least 30 minutes.
3. Roll out each ball of dough on a floured surface to make 7-inch tortillas. Place on a preheated griddle or cast-iron skillet and cook until slightly golden on both sides and cooked through.
4. To make ahead: Remove the tortillas to a basket lined with a cloth towel, or put them between towels until cool. After the tortillas have cooled completely, store them in a plastic bag. Rewarm on a grill or griddle for a few seconds before serving.

BASIC TORTILLA

Masa

YIELD: 12-16 TORTILLAS, DEPENDING ON SIZE

At the center of any Mexican meal are corn tortillas.

They are quick and easy to make, and Mexicans use them to turn anything into a taco.

1¾ cups masa harina
1½ cups hot water

1. In a medium bowl, mix together the masa harina and water until completely blended. Turn the dough onto a clean surface and knead until smooth. If the dough is too sticky, add more masa harina. If too dry, sprinkle with water. Cover the dough tightly with plastic wrap and let it stand for 30 minutes.
2. Preheat a cast-iron skillet or griddle to medium heat.
3. Divide the dough into walnut-sized balls. Using a tortilla press, a rolling pin, two heavy books, or your hands, press each ball of dough flat between two sheets of plastic wrap.
4. Place a tortilla in the preheated pan and cook for approximately 30 seconds, or until slightly browned. Turn the tortilla, cook the second side for about 30 seconds, and then transfer to a plate. Repeat the process with each ball of dough.
5. Keep the tortillas covered with a towel to stay warm and moist until you're ready to serve.