

Nicaraguan Nacatamales

- 2 ½ lbs. Boneless pork loin
- 3 large onions
- 2 bell peppers
- 1 cup cider or wine vinegar
- 4 lbs potatoes
- Milk to mash potatoes
- 2 lbs lard or vegetable shortening
- 2 lb corn flour (NOT corn meal)
- Juice of 1 large grapefruit
- 1 bottle of capers

- 1 bunch fresh mint
- 2 large tomatoes, sliced
- ¼ lb UNCOOKED white rice
- Box of pitted prunes
- Jar of pimento-stuffed olives
- Hot pepper/s (Optional)
- 10-15 banana leaves (available in Latin American specialty stores) OR cooking parchment paper
- Butcher's twine

Cut **pork** into small pieces (about 1.5 inch). Sprinkle lightly with salt and place in large bowl with 1 sliced **onion**, 1 sliced **bell pepper**, and **vinegar**. Mix well, cover, and refrigerate overnight.

Peel **potatoes**, setting four aside, and boil the remaining potatoes until tender. Mash potatoes, and add some **milk** until creamy. In a large saucepan, melt **lard or shortening** on low heat. When melted, add **corn flour** and mix well. Add mashed potatoes, salt to taste, and juice of the **grapefruit**. Mix thoroughly, and then press mixture through a large strainer. This is your **masa**.

Spread a banana leaf on your work surface. Place 2-3 tbsp of the **masa** in the middle, spreading until it is only about ½ inch thick. On top of the masa put 2-3 pieces of **pork**, 1 slice **tomato**, 1 slice **raw onion**, ½ tsp **uncooked rice**, 2 or 3 **mint leaves**, a few **capers**, 1 **pitted prune**, 1 or 2 **olives**, and 1 **dried hot pepper** (e.g., chile de arbol, cascabel, or chipotle) Wrap tightly and tie with twine. Place a 1 inch high steamer rack in the bottom of a very large pot. Place **nacatamales** in pot and add water to cover. Bring to a boil, and boil for about 4 hours, adding water as necessary. (Nacatamales should not fill more than about 3/4 of the pot – you may have to boil in more than 1 pot or in successive stages). Place in plate, cut twine, unwrap and enjoy!

Tamales freeze well, and may be reheated by boiling again for about 45 minutes
(NOT micro waved!)