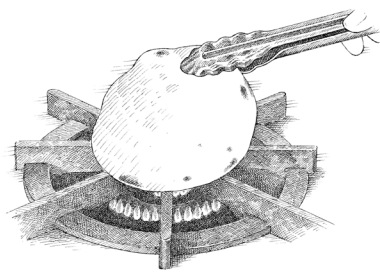


## SERIOUS TACOS

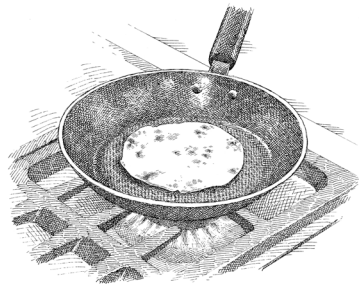
### Three Ways to Warm Tortillas

Warming tortillas not only makes them more pliable but can also add flavorful toasty char, depending on the method. Wrap the tortillas in foil or clean dish towels to keep them warm until serving.



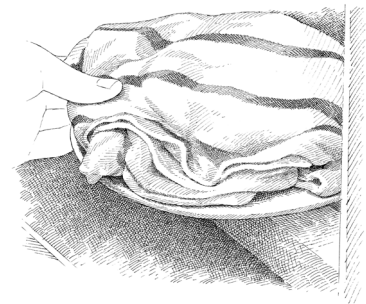
#### Gas Flame

Using tongs, place tortilla directly over medium flame of gas burner until lightly charred, about 30 seconds per side.



#### Skillet

Toast tortilla in dry nonstick skillet over medium-high heat until softened and spotty brown, 20 to 30 seconds per side.



#### Microwave

Wrap up to 6 tortillas in damp, clean dish towel and microwave until warm, 30 to 45 seconds.

## Mexican-Style Pickled Vegetables (Escabèche)

#### MAKES ABOUT 2 CUPS

For less spicy pickled vegetables, remove the seeds from the jalapeño.



- ½ **teaspoon coriander seeds**
- ¼ **teaspoon cumin seeds**
- 1 **cup cider vinegar**
- ½ **cup water**
- 1½ **teaspoons sugar**
- ¼ **teaspoon salt**
- 1 **red onion, halved and sliced thin**
- 2 **carrots, peeled and sliced thin**
- 1 **jalapeño chile, stemmed and sliced thin into rings**

Toast coriander seeds and cumin seeds in medium saucepan over medium heat, stirring frequently, until fragrant, about 2 minutes. Add vinegar, water, sugar, and salt and bring to boil, stirring to dissolve sugar and salt. Remove saucepan from heat and add onion, carrots, and jalapeño, pressing to submerge vegetables. Cover and let cool completely, 30 minutes. (Cooled vegetables can be refrigerated for up to 1 week.)

## SERIOUS TACOS

### Different Types of Maize

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Making your own tortillas from scratch requires some masa know-how.

*Masa Harina*



Masa and masa harina are both made from hominy, which is dried corn that has been soaked or cooked in an alkaline solution of water and calcium hydroxide to remove the germ and hull. This process, called nixtamalization, imparts a distinctive flavor that differentiates masa-based products from other forms of dried corn like polenta and cornmeal.

Masa is a moist dough made from finely ground hominy. It can be flattened into thin rounds to make corn tortillas or enriched with other ingredients to make tamales (small, moist corn cakes wrapped in corn husks) and pupusas (thick tortillas filled with cheese or meat and beans). Highly perishable fresh masa is difficult to find outside Mexico and the Southwest.

*Yellow Hominy*



More commonly available masa harina is made by drying fresh masa and processing it into a flour. It can be cooked with water and used in place of fresh masa to make tortillas, tamales, or pupusas, but it has a less intense corn flavor.

Unlike masa and masa harina, masarepa, a form of instant precooked corn flour, has not been treated with calcium hydroxide. In the test kitchen, we found that it had the weakest flavor of the three products. Masarepa is typically mixed with cold water to make arepas, corn cakes that are split and filled like a sandwich, and then grilled, fried, or baked.

### Shredding Chicken

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It's easy to shred chicken for chicken tacos, pulled chicken sandwiches, casseroles, or soups. Hold one fork in each hand with the tines facing down. Insert the tines into the chicken and gently pull the forks away from each other, breaking the meat into pieces.

