

LUCKY PEACH

Street Food
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VIVA MASA **MEXICO**



FOOD FIGHT



DONAAAAS!

STREET



FOOD



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SAUSAGE PARTY



CHAT WALLAHS

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AND NOW WE COOK THE MASA

**CORN
UCO-
RIA**

with
Mary Sue
Milliken

CHEESE AND GREEN CHILI TAMALES

MAKES 12 TO 16 TAMALES

For their tortillas, Border Grill employs instant masa harina—usually referred to by the misnomer Maseca, the most ubiquitous brand of dehydrated masa. But for tamales, they use fresh ground stuff. “It’s mostly a texture thing. In Mexico, we fell in love with the pronounced flavor of deep yellow corn masa harina for our tortillas,” Milliken explains. “But fresh ground masa has a lot more coarseness to it and a much nuttier, earthy flavor.”

She warns that these days if you go to a Latin market looking for fresh masa for tamales, you’ll likely find a premixed blend of fresh masa, lard, and stock. Insist on

unseasoned masa and whip it yourself at home for best results. The proof is in the pudding. When Border Grill first opened, Milliken says, “One of the critics said our tamales were like a cloud, and I was so happy.”

These tamales are ideal for the masa purist. The filling is simple and lets the corn hog the spotlight. They’re vegetarian, too, if you substitute shortening for the lard. “In southern California, people really have their dietary shit going on,” Milliken says. “But they are our customers and we love them.”

—CHRIS YING

