

THE WAY THE COOKIE CRUMBLES



Corn Tortillas (adapted from Serious Eats)

Makes 8 tortillas

I confess I have some specialized tools for tortillas. The cleaning lady at my office gave me the comal; she had two and hates to cook. I'm sure a cast-iron skillet will work just fine. I haven't tried making tortillas without a press, but supposedly you can smash them under a skillet. They won't get as thin, but a thicker fresh tortilla is still better than anything you can buy. The last item isn't so special – just a scale – but I've had much more consistent results with getting the dough to the right hydration with a scale than I did with measuring cups.

4 ounces (about $\frac{3}{4}$ cup) masa harina
5 ounces water
pinch salt

1. In a medium bowl, mix the three ingredients until large crumbles form, then bring the dough together into a ball. Wrap in plastic wrap and set aside for ten minutes. Meanwhile, cut both sides of a gallon zip-top bag. Transfer the bag to a tortilla press with the crease of the bag at the hinge of the press.
2. Heat a not-nonstick skillet (preferably cast iron) over medium-high heat for at least 5 minutes.
3. Divide the dough into 8 equal portions. Roll each portion into a ball.
4. Place a ball onto the plastic-lined tortilla press, slightly off-center toward the hinge of the press. Press the tortilla just until it shows around the edges of the tortilla press. Open the press, peel the plastic wrap off the top of the tortilla, and invert the tortilla, still on the plastic, onto a towel. Slowly peel the plastic off of the tortilla. Replace the plastic in the tortilla press and repeat with the remaining balls of dough.
5. Transfer one tortilla to the hot pan; cook, without moving, until the tortilla bubbles and smokes, 30 seconds to 1 minute. Using a thin spatula, flip the tortilla; cook for another 15 to 30 seconds. Transfer the tortilla to a kitchen towel, wrapping it loosely. Repeat with the remaining tortillas, stacking them in the towel.
6. Let the tortillas sit in the towel to steam for a few minutes after the last tortilla is cooked, then serve. Kept wrapped, the tortillas will stay warm for about half an hour.