

Bread is a staple for most cultures around the globe. There was a study a few years ago that recorded peoples' responses while standing in front of a Bread Bakery. They found people were kinder. The correlation between mood and the sensory experience of homemade bread was remarkable. I can still remember my mother awakening each dawn to prepare tortillas for the day. I would awake as soon as I heard the cupboard close, knowing she was about to embark on a daily ritual that produced the best tortillas (obviously biased).

Tortillas are for many Latinos/x's like sliced bread to Anglo Americans. Most of my friends brought peanut butter and jelly or bologna and cheese sandwiches to school. I was embarrassed to pull out a tortilla filled with potatoes, beans, eggs, or on a flush day, seasoned ground beef (we never called it taco meat). Occasionally, I considered myself lucky to trade my "burrito" (we never called them that) for one of the coveted white-bread sandwiches. I vowed one day to pack my lunches like my classmates.

That wish came true when I entered the foster care system. Goodbye beans and tortillas. Hello "American" foods. I accepted the cuisine of this new world. Little did I know how deep my loss would be, until while in college, I went with a friend to pick up another classmate. Walking into the house, tears burst from my eyes as the smell of boiling beans and tortillas filled my heart and mind. HOME! I had not realized the depth of longing and connection that food offered until that moment. Again, I vowed to embrace the foods of my childhood.

Over the years, I tried many recipes in hopes of capturing the taste and texture of my mother's tortillas. Frustrated, I considered YouTube as a source that might offer more authentic recipes. Then it dawned on me, I have a YouTube of my mother making tortillas. Why not try recalling those memories up and following her step-by-step instructions. So, here it is:

Begin by pouring **flour** into a large mixing bowl (about halfway up) add a pinch of **baking powder** (about 1 Tsp, three fingers of **lard**/shortening (about 1 Tbs). Add **warm water** slowly while mixing the dough with one hand until it forms a soft round, slightly sticky mound. Pinch pieces of dough (about 3 inches around) and gently knead (work dough with fingers inward toward palms until it forms a firm dough ball.

Sprinkle flour on a cutting board or clean countertop. Place dough ball onto floured area. Rub **Rolling Pin** with flour and begin rolling dough into a round circle. (Don't worry if it doesn't look perfectly round. Mine first tried resembled maps of the United States). Continue to rub the rolling pin with flour to keep the dough from sticking. When satisfied with shape and thinness, place in a heated **Cast Iron Pan** (any non-stick pan will work, or a stove grill). While it cooks, watch for bubbles. When it rises and bubbles have dark spots, it is done.



Food connects us all!