



## Garden Fresh Tex-Mex Tamale Pie

By Dylan Sabuco

**Prep Time** 20 / **Cook Time** 20 / **Serves** 4 - 6

### Fun-Da-Mentals Kitchen Skills

**bake:** to cook food with dry heat, as in an oven.

**dice:** to cut foods into small pieces of equal size so that the food is cooked evenly or looks uniform and pleasant when used in the recipe.

**knife skills:** Bear Claw (growl), Pinch, Plank, and Bridge (look out for trolls).

**measure:** to calculate the specific amount of an ingredient required using a measuring tool (like measuring cups or spoons).

**mix:** to thoroughly combine two or more ingredients until uniform in texture.

**pour:** to cause liquid, granules, or powder to stream from one container into another.

**sauté:** to cook or brown food in a pan containing a small quantity of butter, oil, or other fat.

### Equipment

- Oven
- Oven-safe pot or pan (like a cast-iron skillet)
- Mixing bowls
- Cutting board
- Kid-safe knife
- Can opener
- Dry measuring cups
- Measuring spoons

- Liquid measuring cup
- Wooden spoon
- Whisk
- Knife or toothpick to test for doneness

## **Ingredients**

### Garden Fresh Tex-Mex Tamale Pie

- 1 yellow onion
- 1 green bell pepper
- 1 C frozen corn
- 1 4-oz can green chiles or Anaheim chiles (or other similar canned chiles)
- 1 T vegetable oil \*\*
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 2 tsp mild chili powder
- 2 tsp ground cumin
- 1 14-oz can tomatoes, drained and rinsed
- 1 15-oz can black beans, drained and rinsed \*\*(for LEGUME ALLERGY sub 1 C chopped button mushrooms)\*\*
- 1/3 C water
- Cornbread batter:
  - 1 C all-purpose flour \*\*(for GLUTEN ALLERGY sub gluten-free/nut-free all-purpose flour)\*\*
  - 1 C fine yellow cornmeal
  - 1 tsp salt
  - 1 1/2 tsp baking powder
  - 1/3 C vegetable oil \*\*
  - 1 large egg \*\*(for EGG ALLERGY sub 1 T ground flaxseeds + 1/4 C water, stirred)
  - 1 C water

## **Food Allergen Substitutions**

## Garden Fresh Tex-Mex Tamale Pie

**Legume:** For 1 15-oz can black bean, substitute 1 C chopped button mushrooms.

**Gluten/Wheat:** Substitute gluten-free/nut-free all-purpose flour.

**Egg:** For 1 large egg, substitute 1 T ground flaxseeds + 1/4 C water. Stir and soak flaxseeds in warm water for 5 minutes or until fully absorbed and thickened.

**Soy:** Substitute canola oil or other nut-free oil for vegetable oil.

## Instructions

### Garden Fresh Tex-Mex Tamale Pie

#### intro

Tamale pie isn't actually a Latin American tamale at all. The classic tamale is corn flour dough, seasoned and often filled with meats or veggies, then wrapped in corn husks to steam in the oven. Tamale pie comes from the southwestern border of the United States and is loosely inspired by the classic tamale. In this recipe, you will combine seasoned vegetables and water to make a warm and delicious chili. Meanwhile, you will also create a cornbread batter to pour over the top of the chili. The batter will become a thick cornbread blanket over your chili! It's so delicious!

#### dice + measure

Start by dicing **1 yellow onion** and **1 green bell pepper**. Then, scrape them into a large bowl. Into the same bowl, measure **1 cup frozen corn**, **1 can green chiles**, **1 tablespoon vegetable oil**, **1/2 teaspoon salt**, **2 teaspoons mild chili powder**, and **2 teaspoons cumin**. Then, drain and rinse **1 can of tomatoes** and **1 can of black beans** and pour them in.

#### sauté + stir

Pour the mixture of spices and veggies into a large, oven-safe pot or cast-iron skillet over medium heat. Sauté for 5 minutes or until the onion is becoming translucent. Then, measure and pour in **1/3 cup of water**. Stir a few times and reduce the heat to low.

#### superstar food spotlight

Corn is a grass, not a vegetable! It's part of the Poaceae family, the same family as wheat, rice, and bamboo. Corn can grow in different colors. While most people are familiar with yellow corn, it can come in various colors, including red, blue, purple, and even black! The colorful varieties are often used for decorative purposes or in products like blue corn chips. The kernels can "POP!" Corn is the only grain that "pops" when heated. The water inside the kernels turns to steam, and the pressure causes them to burst open. This happens because popcorn kernels have a hard outer shell that traps steam until it builds up enough pressure to pop! Corn can grow really tall. The world record for the tallest corn plant is about 45 feet, taller than most trees!

### measure + mix

Now we need to make the cornbread batter to pour over the top of the chili. In a bowl, measure **1 cup flour, 1 cup fine yellow cornmeal, 1 teaspoon salt, 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder, 1/3 cup vegetable oil, 1 large egg**, and **1 cup water**. Whisk until there are no lumps.

### preheat + bake

Preheat your oven to 375 F. Turn the heat off on the stovetop. Pour the batter over the chili in as even a layer as possible. Slide the entire pan into the oven. Bake for 20 minutes or until the cornbread on top is fully cooked. You can test its doneness by inserting a knife or toothpick. If it can be removed clean of batter, the tamale pie is finished.

### serve + devour

Serve a heaping scoop of the tamale pie to everyone at your table! Since this recipe comes from cowboy and cowgirl country, instead of "bon appetit," let's all say "yee-haw!!" before we dig in! Enjoy!

## Featured Ingredient: Corn!

Hi, my name is Maizy, and I'm an ear of corn!

"I'm pretty close to my dad—his name's Pop Corn. (I know, my humor can be kind of corny ... but, that's me!) I'm great to eat on the cob, either boiled or grilled, especially at summer picnics. If you buy me in a store, make sure my husk is still on and pull it back just a bit. My kernels should look fresh, plump, and juicy! (A kernel might just squirt liquid when poked or eaten!) So, how do you eat corn on the cob? Across, down, or both?"

### History

Corn was first cultivated by indigenous people in southern Mexico anywhere from 7 to 10,000 years ago. Corn is unique: most vegetables and fruits we eat today are domesticated versions of wild plants humans discovered long ago. Corn is a human invention and did not exist in the wild first, although it did start from a wild grass called "teosinte." Teosinte didn't look like modern corn on the cob looks today. The kernels were much smaller and further apart.

Corn was known as "maize" by Native Americans in South and North America, and they eventually depended upon this crop for food. Over time, maize was selected to have more kernels, bigger cobs, and more kernel rows.

Many Native American tribes tell the story of the origin of corn. Tribes preserved their tales and retold them over many generations. They passed down stories through oral tradition, writing down only some of the stories. According to Native American lore, corn came to Earth by various routes.

When Spanish explorers arrived in the Americas, they had never seen corn before, among many other things the indigenous people showed them.

Corn is produced on every continent in the world except Antarctica! As a result, corn and cornmeal are

staple foods of many regions.

Native Americans used to braid corn husks to make masks, moccasins, sleeping mats, baskets, and dolls. Today, corn is in many products we use daily. Cornstarch is used to thicken sauces, to strengthen the fabric used to make clothing, and to bind books. Soft drinks are sweetened with corn syrup, chickens and cows are fed corn, and the ink in pens is made from corn oil. Corn is used to make glue, shoe polish, marshmallows, ice cream, and makeup. Corn is also used to produce ethanol—a liquid biofuel used to power cars.

Corn comes in many colors, including black, blue-gray, purple, green, red, white, and yellow.

The six main types of corn are: "Sweet" corn is the kind we eat. "Dent" corn is fed to cows and chickens. Another variety is "Popcorn," a popular snack food. Its hard kernels inflate and burst open when heated. "Flint" or "Indian" corn is multicolored and often used for Thanksgiving decoration, although it's also used to make popcorn and blue and red corn chips and tortillas. "Pod" corn (or wild maize) is a mutated type of corn that grows glumes (leaf structures) around each kernel and is used for ornamental purposes. Finally, "Flour" corn is mainly used to make corn flour (that makes sense!).

The early settlers to North America considered corn so valuable they used it as currency to trade for other products such as meat and furs.

## Anatomy & Etymology

Corn is a tall plant grass that has large ears with many seeds or kernels.

Most corn plants have a single stalk. The stalk grows vertically up from the ground, and the variety of corn and the plant's environment will determine how tall it grows.

Corn plants have both male and female parts—the name for this type of plant is "monoecious." The male part, the tassel, emerges at the top of the plant when all the leaves have formed. The tassel contains many branches that house many small male flowers. The female part of the corn plant is the silk that grows out of the ear. The immature ear consists of a cob, eggs that develop into kernels after pollination, and silks. One corn plant will produce more than one ear of corn, with the ear at the top of the plant usually growing the largest.

According to the USDA, corn can be used as a grain or a vegetable, depending on when it is harvested. If corn is fully mature and becomes dry, it is considered a grain. It can then be ground into cornmeal or corn masa, which you'll find in corn tortillas, cornbread, etc. Popcorn kernels are also whole grains that are harvested when mature. Corn on the cob and the corn kernels found in frozen or canned corn are picked when the kernels are soft and full of water. In these forms, corn is considered a starchy vegetable.

One ear of corn has, on average, as many as 800 kernels in 16 rows! Corn will always have an even number of rows on each cob. Each kernel can potentially become a new plant!

The word for "corn" that is used by most of the world is "maize," which comes from the Spanish word "maiz."

## How to Pick, Buy, & Eat

Fresh corn on the cob is seasonal during July and August. Choose ears of corn with yellow or white niblets and inspect each ear of corn before buying. Avoid any corn that has dark or dried spots. Store fresh corn in the fridge until ready to use.

Frozen corn is a great alternative when fresh corn isn't in season. You don't have to thaw frozen corn before adding it to baked recipes, soups, pasta, chili, or risotto! However, if adding frozen corn to sautéed recipes, run a colander of frozen corn under warm water to thaw it out a bit first.

Sauté frozen corn rather than boiling it—boiling will destroy all the flavor! Butter, salt, and pepper are all you need. When sautéing corn, add the salt right at the end. Since salt draws out moisture, salting too soon will dry out your corn.

Frozen corn tastes fresher than canned corn. Many grocery stores even sell frozen cobs of corn. Frozen corn will keep for months.

## Nutrition

Phosphorous is a mineral the body uses to build strong bones. Phosphorus also helps the body to produce energy. Starches in corn also provide you with long-lasting energy.

Fiber helps to keep our inner pipelines clean and clear. Drinking plenty of water helps move fiber through our intestines to clean them out! Vegetables, fruit, and grains have the most fiber of any food. Fiber is also important for our hearts! Leaving on the edible peels of vegetables and fruits also helps us to eat more fiber.

Potassium helps balance water in the body when eating salty foods by maintaining normal fluid levels inside our cells. Salt or sodium regulates the fluid outside of our cells. It is also necessary for proper muscle contraction, nerve transmission, and better blood pressure.