

Humitas with Zucchini, Black Olives, and Walnuts (“The Splendid Grain” Rebecca Wood)

I first feasted upon humitas in the Indian markets of Bolivia. They're lighter and moister than corn masa tamales. I like to spread the fixings on the table and soon everyone helps form the humitas. They are delicious with refried beans or Black Bean Caviar.

Makes about 20

1 package (6 ounces) dried corn husks
3 medium red potatoes, peeled and quartered
6 Tbsp (3/4 stick) unsalted butter
1 large clove garlic, minced
2 Tbsp chili powder, or to taste
sea salt and black pepper, to taste
3 cups cooked quinoa
1 small onion, diced
2 small zucchini, chopped
3/4 cup walnuts, toasted
1/2 cup chopped pitted black olives

Remove any corn silk from the husks. Soak the husks overnight in cold water or for 1 hour in hot water. Drain and remove any remaining corn silk.

Put the potatoes in a medium saucepan with water to cover. Place over high heat and bring to a boil. Lower the heat, cover and simmer for 20 minutes, or until tender. Drain well. Stir in 5 Tbsp of the butter, the garlic, 1 Tbsp of the chili powder, salt and pepper. Mash together until creamy. Add the quinoa and stir to combine. Set aside.

Heat the remaining Tbsp butter in a medium sauté pan and sauté the remaining chili powder for 1 minute, or until aromatic. Add the onion and zucchini and sauté for 5 minutes, or until soft. Add the walnuts and black olives and set aside.

Take a large husk or overlap 2 small husks. Place 2 Tbsp of the quinoa mixture on the husk or husks and shape into a rectangle, leaving at least 1 inch on one side and 2-3 inches at the top and bottom ends of the husk. Bring the quinoa mixture close to the edge of the husk on the fourth side. Place zucchini filling in the middle of the quinoa mixture. Fold 1 side of the husk over the quinoa and filling to the opposite side, overlapping the 1-inch border. Fold in the ends of the husk and turn the tamale over to hold the husks in place. Tie with long narrow strips of corn husk or with string. Steam for 30-45 minutes in a covered pot. Serve hot or at room tem. To reheat, steam for 5-7 minutes over boiling water.