

Description/Taste

Corn husks are the outer covering of an ear of corn. Commercially bought Corn husks are commonly the whole husk and are sun, air or oven dried. For most applications the Corn husks need to be soaked in hot water in order to become pliable. Corn husks are most commonly used to encase foods to be steamed or baked, imparting a very light corn flavor. Corn husks can be used in the presentation of a dish, but are not edible and should be discarded after use.

Seasons/Availability

Corn husks are available year-round.

Current Facts

A few years ago a new style husk was introduced to the U.S. market called "enconchada". This refers to the conch shaped shell of the stacked husks. The higher quality enconchada style husks usually come in sizes ranging from 7"-9".

Applications

Various meat and vegetable fillings and other savory mixtures can be baked or steamed in Corn husk wrapped tamales. The Corn husks are not edible and are removed before eating. To prepare, soak in warm water just until pliable; remove any silk strands; wash thoroughly. Cover with warm water; let stand two hours or until soft. To store, keep in a cool dry place.

Geography/History

A cuisine tradition, dried Corn husks are especially popular used for wrapping food in Southwestern cooking. In Southern Mexico, tamales are wrapped in banana leaves. But in Northern Mexico, tamales are wrapped in Corn husks. Traditionally, tamales are made with dried Corn husks that have been soaked until pliable. Native to the New World, corn and its derivatives has been a very valuable food crop at least since the Incas first cultivated this staple vegetable. Today's modern corn is actually a tall annual grass and all types of corn are simply varieties of one single species, *Zea mays*.