

GORDITAS DE CHICHARRA

THICK MAIZE PANCAKES WITH PORK CRACKLINGS AND BACON

Gordita is Spanish for "little fatty" or "little fat girl". You won't wonder why after you eat these! Packed with scrumptious, crispy bacon and pork rind, *Gorditas de Chicharra* are a meal in themselves. In fact, so hearty are they that they are the preferred food of hunters in the fields of Yucatán who often spend several days in their encampments. And *gorditas* are handed out as strengthening power snacks to the *peregrinos* (pilgrims) who climb the mountain to see the Mexico City shrine of Guadalupe during the cold season of her birthday (12 December). *Gorditas* can be filled with anything – from peas and potatoes to sausage or *picadillo* – but *chicharra* is always the crowd pleaser. Meant to be eaten on the run, *gorditas* are definitely a finger food. But in cities or wherever it is convenient, they may also be served with any of a number of *salsas*. We suggest a cooked tomato sauce or a fresh *X'nipek*.

10 SERVINGS

PREPARE THE PORK

- **1/2 lb. (225 g) pork belly, smoked slab bacon and pork cracklings** (*You may use a combination of all three, or just one or two of the ingredients to total 1/2 lb./225g*)
- **1 lb. (500g) lard**

STEP 1 SLOWLY FRY PORK BELLY AND BACON IN THE LARD

until crispy and browned. The skin of the pork belly should sound hard and crisp when tapped with the point of a knife. Transfer to paper towels to drain, and allow to cool. Allow lard to cool, then strain through a sieve lined with cheesecloth, and reserve for the next step. Coarsely crumble the cracklings, then finely chop. Finely chop the other meats and set aside.

PREPARE THE MASA

- **2 lbs. (1 k) masa**
- **1 3/4 oz. (50 g) flour**
- **1 tsp. (5 ml) baking powder**
- **1 Tbs. (15 ml) powdered chicken bouillon**, mixed with 2 Tbs. (30 ml) hot water
- **2 cloves garlic, finely chopped**
- **1 chile habanero, finely chopped**
- **2 tsp. (10ml) salt or to taste**
- **1/2 cup (125ml) reserved lard** (*The remaining lard is excellent for use in other Los Dos recipes that call for lard.*)

STEP 2 PLACE INGREDIENTS AT LEFT in the bowl of an electric mixer. Beat at high speed for 5 minutes until blended and lightened. Remove from mixer; add meat mixture and knead with hands to incorporate.

SHAPE AND FRY GORDITAS

STEP 3 PREHEAT A DRY GRIDDLE, COMAL OR CAST IRON SKILLET over highest heat for 5 minutes. Meanwhile, shape *masa* into 3.5-oz (100g) balls. Pat one ball into a thick *tortilla*, about 4" (10cm) in diameter and 3/8" (5mm) thick in the palm of your hand. Place the *gordita* in the hottest part of the griddle, directly above the flame. Fry approximately 3-4 minutes. Turn to check for doneness: it should be very browned in patches over the entire surface. Continue on reverse side. Add 1-2 more *gorditas* to your griddle, depending on its size. (The *gorditas* will cook better over the hottest part of the griddle.) As they are completed, remove to paper towels to drain.

SERVE

- **1 recipe Salsa X'nipek, Salsa de Jitomate Yucateca II, or the salsa of your choice**

STEP 4 SERVE WARM. If you will serve them later, keep warm in a 150°F (65°C) oven. Guests may eat *gorditas* with their fingers, or from plates with forks and the *salsa* of their choice. *Gorditas* can also be shaped smaller and served as an *hors d'oeuvre*. In that case, top with a spoonful of *X'nipek*.