SALVADORAN PUPUSAS WITH CURTIDO AND SALSA ROJA

*Makes 18 pupusas, which serves 6 as a main course.*

We filled our pupusas with beans and cheese because it’s cheap and easy. Traditional pupusas can also be filled with pulled pork and other delicious things. Experiment if you’d like; it’s pretty hard to go wrong.

For the Filling:
1 can (15- to 16-ounces) pinto beans, drained
½ cup vegetable broth (1/2 cup water, 5mL powder)
½ teaspoon oregano (Mexican, if you can find it)
1 large bay leaf
1 cup mild cheese such as grated queso blanco or mozzarella or crumbled queso fresco
Salt and ground black pepper

For the Dough:
4 cups masa harina
½ teaspoon salt

For the filling: Bring beans, broth, oregano, bay leaf, and 1/2 cup water to boil in a medium saucepan. Reduce heat and simmer, partially covered, until flavors blend and beans begin to break down, adding more water if necessary, 10 to 15 minutes. Mash beans with a potato masher or the back of a wooden spoon; continue to cook until they are the consistency of refried beans. Removed from heat and discard the bay leaf; stir in cheese. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

For the dough: Meanwhile, mix masa, salt, and 2 ½ cups warm tap water in a large bowl; knead it into a soft dough, adding more warm water as necessary until a small portion pressed into a disc doesn’t crack around the edges.

For the pupusas: Divide dough into large golf ball size portions. Using your thumb, make a large, deep depression in the dough. Add about 1 tablespoon of the filling, making sure not overfill.  Using your fingers, press dough together to cover the filling, then press ball between your palms into an approximate 4-inch disc. Repeat with remaining dough and filling. (There may be leftover filling, which is great in omelets!)

Meanwhile, heat a large ungreased sauté pan over medium heat. Cook pupusas, turning once, until browned and blistering, 2 to 3 minutes per side. Serve warm with Curtido and Salsa Roja.