TAMALE MASA SPREADER

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

A system for enabling and/or facilitating the automatic depositing and pressure smearing or spreading or buttering of thick viscous fluids such as; grease, clay in a plastic state, molten plastic, or tamale masa hereafter: masa, onto a leaf. In one basic embodiment a refillable cylindrical container of masa is in conduit communication with a rectangular flat presser foot, like a trowel, of about 5 in. square or about 12 cm square, having at least one hole in it for masa to pass through from the presser foot's top side to its underside. With the application of motive force or pressure, by any one of a variety of means, the masa is moved from the cylinder into and through the conduit and out of the presser foot by pressure means applied to the masa at the container. The presser foot has at least one hole in it for delivering masa to and through the presser foot so that the presser foot can have the masa between the presser foot and a substantially flat surface; such as but not limited to a corn husk supported by a table or plank. Then and thereafter, the masa is now pressed and flattened by the presser foot and smeared by the relative lateral movement of the presser foot to the flat surface or a corn husk or plate or cloth or sheet; hereafter sometimes: leaf. The system provides that the masa be delivered and/or pressed with enough force during lateral movement to effect adherence of the masa to the leaf so that the masa will not fall off the leaf during further handling of the now masa buttered leaf.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to spreading tamale masa onto a corn husk or other substantially flat leaf like surface. In regards to tamales it is important to consider that traditionally tamales are an interactive food. That is, the consumer traditionally desires to unwrap her cooked tamale just before eating it. This lends the assurance of freshness and non-contamination virginity of the tamale with other foods or spices or contaminants. It also presents well as an aesthetically pleasing food wearing a dress. In this regard, it is also important that the tamale remain intact and wrapped in its own individual husk until after it is cooked and served. There are different styles of tamales. For example a Veracruzano tamale is a pigs foot wrapped in banana leaf that has been spread with tamale masa. Some tamales are named for regions of Mexico. It is believed that the instant design of tamale is known as a Norteno or "Northern" style of tamale referring to the northern area of Mexico. It is a further traditional aspect, of a Norteno tamale, hereafter: tamale, that the wrapping process creates a flap of pure masa that results when the tamale blank is rolled over itself. This flap helps to hold the tamale sealed; and also stuck to the husk during the cooking and subsequent handling of the tamale. Tamales can be considered a finger food and can be and have been eaten while being held with the fingers. When the tamale is unwrapped the resulting flap can easily be broken away from the main semi-cylindrical body of the tamale and used by the consumer to, sample the flavor and temperature of the tamale masa prior to biting into the filled portion of the tamale, or the flap can be used to mix with other foods on the plate as an enjoyable tasting experiment. Corn husks have a narrow end and a broad end with the broad end being slightly but notably thicker than the narrow end. It is peculiar in regards to corn husks adhesiveness that corn husks have an outside rough surface and an inner side, silky or smooth surface.

The "outside" meaning that when an ear of corn is intact it is covered by several layers of leaves which grow wrapped around or partially around the corn ear. We call these leaves: corn husks, or sometimes, leaves, and these leaves have two surface sides; one surface that faces towards the corn is the inside which tends to be smooth; and, the side facing away from the corn is the outside which tends to be rough. Some of the inner husks those closest to the ear of corn can be smooth on both sides. Occasionally some of these inner husks can be used and smeared on either side. Most of the useable leaves, however, do have a substantially rougher outside and a smoother inside. Generally the husks have significant variance in size. Corn husks are all generally roughly trapezoid shaped when layed flat, having a narrow or tail end and a broad end and can vary in width on the broad end from about 3 inches to about 12 inches. The tail ends can come to a point but are sometimes trimmed near the tail end transversely to thus create a trapezoid shape and a narrow end that is from about ½" to about 2 inches wide. They vary in length from about 5 to about 14 inches in length measuring from the narrow end to the broad end.

If the masa is, erroneously, applied to the outside of the husk the adherence can be so strong, once cooked, that it can be nearly impossible to remove the tamale from the husk. Thus it is counter-intuitively, important, to apply the masa to the side that is more difficult for the masa to adhere to, when it is also a goal for the masa to adhere to the husk! That: limited adherence, is why it is important that the masa be firmly pressed onto the husk. For purposes of further description tamale husks have an imaginary longitudinal centerline extending from the center of the tail end to the center of the broad end of the leaf.

Typically the corn husk is only partially spread with masa. The masa is typically spread on from about ½ to about ⅞ths of the leaf's surface completing on the broad end, leaving the narrow end, sometimes called the tail, without any masa at all.

The result is a partially coated tamale husk referred to as a tamale blank.

Tamale blanks are typically further handled by being filled with mincemeat, ground or shredded beef, or ground or shredded chicken, or ground or shredded pork, or ground or shredded venison, or combinations of those meats. Beans or other fillings such as cheese, rice, corn, or other legumes and/or vegetables are also used as tamale fillings. The inventor has even used left over pizza sliced into finger sized billets as a tamale blank filler. Typically however, a dollop of a generally gooey filling is longitudinally arranged on top of the masa on the tamale blank such that its corpus is roughly wiener shaped and biased to one side or the other of an imaginary longitudinal centerline running from the center of the broad end of the leaf to the center of the narrow end. The filling is usually cooked prior to being utilized as a filling. The filling is usually left just short of the both tail end and broad end limits of the masa so that it can be sealed into the masa to be completely enveloped thereby, once cooked. The now filled tamale blank is then rolled transversely to enclose the filling 100% of its 360 degree circumference and then further overwrapped by the remainder of the leaf by from about a 5% to about 50% amount of the 100% wrap. The unspread narrow end now forms a tail which is folded under the rolled tamale thus sealing what is known as the bottom end of the tamale. The opposite end would be known as the top or open end. The top end is momentarily pinched to seal the masa around the filling at the top end but no further treatment of the top end is required after that. The tamales are stacked for temporary storage or arranged either horizontally or with tail end down to avoid spillage of the filling during the cooking process.