

Houston Chapter Celebrates Cinco de Mayo with a Masa Lesson

BY ANDREA ALBIN

How do you make *masa harina* (corn dough flour)? This spring, the chapter celebrated Cinco de Mayo with an informative and entertaining meeting at the home of my mother, Veronica Albin. We learned how to make *masa*, the basic corn flour used, for example, to make tortillas, *sopes*, and tamales. *Sopes* are traditional Mexican street food that looks like an unusually thick tortilla with pinched sides topped with a variety of meat, vegetables, and salsas. About 15 Houston Dames gathered to learn the art of making tortillas from scratch: learning about the different varieties of corn; observing how to soak the dried corn in slaked lime; the grind-

ing process; and, of course, the forming and cooking of the tortillas.

Veronica, originally from Mexico City, has spent the last several years perfecting her *masa* recipe. She follows the traditional process of “nixtamalization” (soaking and cooking corn in an alkaline solution; then hulling it to make grinding easier). Then she uses an electric food processor to grind the corn, making it more accessible to the modern cook. After the hands-on demonstration, Dames enjoyed sangria and an authentic Mexican meal prepared by Veronica and her family featuring *sopes* and tortillas made from the homemade *masa*. ¡Delicioso!

Veronica Albin grinds the corn for masa as Dame Yvonne Sternes looks on. Dames Julie Hettiger and Yvonne Sternes. Dames Diane D’Agostino and Beverly Kakuda.

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