





Vegetable Samosas

A *samosa* is a popular Indian street food that is a turnover stuffed with potatoes and peas and deep-fried. Freshly made samosas are readily available throughout India, so Indians do not typically go through the effort of making them at home. Even in America, samosas are available in Indian restaurants, take-out cafes and sometimes, in the frozen section at a grocery store. However if you are feeling adventurous, you may make them at home the easy way by using Mexican white flour tortillas instead of making the samosa dough from scratch. And if you are not amazed at how easy and delicious this shortcut way is, I have also provided the method for making samosas the traditional way with homemade dough. Samosas make excellent appetizers as well as a great afternoon snack along with a cup of Indian Chai Spiced Tea (page 134) or Indian Cappuccino (page 135). You may serve samosas with Mint Chutney (page 32), Sweet Tamarind Chutney (page 31), ketchup or simply enjoy them as they are!

Samosa Dough

1¼ cups (150 g) all-purpose flour, plus extra flour for dusting
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
4 tablespoons water

- 1** Place the flour, oil and water in a medium bowl. Using one hand, thoroughly knead the flour mixture for about 5 minutes. Use up all the loose flour to form a firm and smooth dough. Shape the dough into a ball.
- 2** Wet the inside of a small clean bowl with water and place the dough into the bowl. Cover and let it rest at room temperature for 30 minutes or you may refrigerate up to 2 days. While the dough is resting, make the filling and binding.
- 3** Knead the rested dough for 1 minute. If the dough was refrigerated, let the dough come to room temperature to make it easier to work with and then knead for 1 minute.
- 4** Separate the dough into 5 equal

pieces. If the dough is too sticky, dust with a bit of loose flour as needed, but the dough should be firm. Roll each piece between your hands to form a smooth ball and then slightly flatten it between your palms.

- 5** Work with 1 flattened dough ball at a time. Dip both sides of the flattened dough ball in loose flour. Place on a flat rolling surface. Using a rolling pin, roll out the dough ball into a circle about 6 inches (15 cm) across. You may flip and turn the circle while rolling to help you get an even thickness and a round shape. The dough will be firm so it might take a bit of pressure to roll out the circle and you should not need to dust with too much loose flour. Repeat with the other dough balls.
- 6** Using a knife, slice each dough circle down the middle to create 2 semicircles in order to create 2 samosas from each dough circle. You're now ready to assemble and fry the samosas.

MAKES 10 SMALL SAMOSAS

PREP TIME 35 minutes to boil the potato (can be done 1 day in advance) + 10 minutes to assemble samosas (Note: If you're making homemade Samosa Dough, you will need to add an additional 20 minutes to make and roll out the dough + 30 minutes of resting time)

COOK TIME 5 minutes for the filling + 20 seconds per samosa

REFRIGERATOR LIFE Not recommended. (Tastes best freshly fried and served hot.)

Five 6 in (15 cm) white flour Mexican tortillas or 1 recipe Samosa Dough (recipe on this page)
Vegetable oil, for deep-frying

FILLING

2 tablespoons vegetable oil
½ teaspoon cumin seeds
1 medium russet potato (about ½ lb/ 250 g), boiled, peeled and diced (page 16)
4 tablespoons frozen or fresh green peas
¼ teaspoon ground red pepper (cayenne)
½ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon ground black pepper

BINDING

1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
2 tablespoons water

- 1** If you're making the samosas with homemade dough, make the samosa dough following the recipe on this page. If you're using tortillas, go to the next step.
- 2 TO MAKE THE FILLING**, pour the oil into a medium nonstick skillet and place over medium heat. When the oil is heated, add the cumin seeds for about 10 seconds and let brown. Do not let the cumin seeds burn and turn black.
- 3** Immediately add the diced potato, peas, red pepper, salt and black pepper. Stir to combine. Sauté for 5 minutes and stir frequently. You may taste the filling to make sure the seasoning and spices are to your liking and add more if desired. Remove from the heat.
- 4 TO MAKE THE BINDING**, place the flour and water in a small bowl. Using a small spoon, mix until thoroughly combined and smooth. The binding is the "glue" that holds the samosa together.

Grating an Onion



1 Firmly hold the peeled onion against the grater and move up and down.



2 Finished grated onion.

Grating Vegetables

Grating means to shred. To grate an onion, unripe mango, carrot or piece of ginger, first, peel the vegetable or fruit. Use the largest holes on a box grater for onions and the smaller holes for unripe mangoes, carrots and ginger. Firmly hold the peeled onion, or other food, and grate on the holes pressing down with some force while making sure you don't scrape your knuckles! A Microplane can be used for ginger as well.

Roasting and Grinding Whole Spices

Roasting spices is a common Indian technique used to deepen the flavors of the spices. Whole spices, such as coriander seeds, cumin seeds and cloves, may be roasted on

a dry skillet and then ground into fine powder that is added to dishes during cooking. The intense aroma given off by the spices while roasting and grinding them is amazing! It is best to roast and grind spices just when you plan to use them since they lose their potency over time. However, you can also keep them in an airtight container at room temperature for up to three months.

1 Place a small, heavy-bottomed skillet over medium heat. When the skillet is heated, add the whole spices. (You can check to see if the skillet is heated by holding your palm directly above the skillet. You should be able to feel the heat.)

2 Roast the spices until they are fragrant. Stir frequently for about 1-2 minutes. Some spices will turn a darker shade as they roast. Do not let the cumin seeds or any spices turn black and burn. Immediately remove the spices from the skillet and place in a bowl. Let them cool before grinding.

3 In a coffee or spice grinder, or using mortar and pestle, grind the roasted spices to a fine powder.

Boiling Potatoes

Boiling potatoes is an easy task but you do have to factor in the half hour it will take when making a recipe that will use them. If my mom plans to make Potato Flatbreads (page 64) for a delicious breakfast, she boils the potatoes the night before, which is a useful tip that I also follow.

1 Wash the unpeeled potatoes with cold water. In a large pot, add the potato(es). Cover them with about 1 inch (2.5 cm) of water and make sure that the water level is at least 2 inches (5 cm) from the top of the pot so that the water does not boil over.

2 Cover the pot. Bring to a rolling boil over high heat. Reduce the heat to medium-high and continue boiling for about 30 minutes or until you can easily insert

a knife into the potato. Make sure you do not boil them to the point where they become too tender and easily fall apart, especially if you are going to cube or dice them.

3 Drain the potatoes in a colander and let the potatoes slightly cool down so you can hold them. You can also run cold water over them to cool them down faster.

4 Using your fingers or a small knife, peel the skin off the potato and discard. The potatoes are now ready to be used in a recipe.

TIP You may boil the potatoes up to one day in advance. They may be refrigerated already peeled or with the peels on, though it is easier to peel the skin off potatoes when they're still warm.

Shelling Fresh Peas

Fresh raw peas take longer to cook than frozen peas because frozen peas are already blanched. If you'd like to use fresh peas in my recipes, adjust the time to fully cook the peas. I prefer to use frozen peas since they are already shelled, easily available and I do not even have to thaw them. The frozen peas found in stores are the garden pea variety also known as "green peas" or "English peas." They grow in plump pods from which the peas are removed or "shelled." The pods are discarded. **To shell peas**, pry open the pod at the seam with your fingers and remove the peas out of the pod. Wash the peas before using them.