

Trying Something New

Right after Thanksgiving, Maria's grandmother came to visit from Mexico. Maria was thrilled.

"I'm making tamales with my grandmother this weekend," Maria told her friends during lunch. "You two should come over. Homemade tamales are the most wonderful things in the world."

"Aren't tamales spicy?" said Brittany. "I don't eat hot peppers."

Maria shook her head. "You haven't tasted my grandmother's tamales. She makes ones with pork, ones with chicken, ones with refried beans. She cooks all sorts of tamales, and I love them all. But what's even better is that my family has a party to make them."

"You have a party to cook?" said Jackie. "My mom and I make cookies together, sometimes. It's fun, but I wouldn't call it a party."

"All my aunts and cousins come, and we work in the kitchen with grandmother. We sing songs and tell stories and make tamales."

"I wish I could join you, but I'll be at my cousin's wedding," said Brittany.

"I'm free," said Jackie. "I can't wait to see what it's like with all those people in your kitchen."

"It takes a lot of hands to make good tamales, my grandmother says," said Maria.

After all the talk about tamales, their leftover turkey sandwiches seemed very boring.

"Your grandmother doesn't make turkey tamales, does she?" asked Brittany. "I am so tired of turkey."

"No," said Maria. "Not turkey."

"Your grandmother must like to cook," said Jackie.

"She's the best cook in the world," said Maria. "And I'm going to learn to cook just like her."

On Saturday, Jackie watched in Maria's kitchen as the family made tamales. Everyone had a job. One of Maria's aunts softened the corn shucks in boiling water. Two other aunts spread **masa** on the softened shucks. Maria and her cousins put filling on the corn masa, and then Maria's mother and her grandmother rolled up the tamales and tied them with little strips made of corn shuck. The tied tamales were put in a big steamer pot on the stove to cook.

"When I was a little girl, we ground corn for our masa," Maria's grandmother told the children. "That was hard work."

"Would you like to help Maria now?" asked Maria's mother. Maria's cousins wanted to take a break.

"Sure," said Jackie.

Maria's grandmother showed her just how much filling to put in a tamale. Carefully, Jackie spooned a seasoned chicken mixture down the center of the masa on the corn shuck.

"Perfect!" said Maria's grandmother.

Soon Jackie was helping like one of the family. Everyone talked, laughed, and told stories while they made the tamales. It was like a party, but a busy party.

The best part came later, when the tamales were finally done, and Jackie tried all the flavors they had made.

"Which do you like the best?" asked Maria's mother.

"I think I like the chicken ones. Because I helped make them," said Jackie.

"You've learned the best part about cooking," said Maria's grandmother. "Enjoying what you create."

Reading Homework 2 Fiction: Explicit Meaning

Monday	Tuesday
Before you read, make a prediction about this story based on the title. <div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; height: 1.2em; margin-top: 10px;"></div>	How does Maria feel about her grandmother? Support your answer with evidence from the text. <div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; height: 1.2em; margin-top: 10px;"></div>
Where does the second part of the story take place? <div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; height: 1.2em; margin-top: 10px;"></div>	What is Maria making with her grandmother this weekend? <div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; height: 1.2em; margin-top: 10px;"></div>
Who are the characters in the story? <div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; height: 1.2em; margin-top: 10px;"></div>	Why is Brittany not sure about trying tamales at first? <div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; height: 1.2em; margin-top: 10px;"></div>
Have you ever tried something new? If so, what was it? <div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; height: 1.2em; margin-top: 10px;"></div>	What is the one kind of tamale Brittany hopes Maria's grandmother doesn't make? Why? <div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; height: 1.2em; margin-top: 10px;"></div>
Wednesday	Thursday
How is making tamales at Maria's house different from baking cookies at Jackie's house? <div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; height: 1.2em; margin-top: 10px;"></div>	What was Jackie's job when helping Maria's family make tamales? <div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; height: 1.2em; margin-top: 10px;"></div>
When Maria's grandmother says, "It takes a lot of hands to make good tamales," what does she mean? <div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; height: 1.2em; margin-top: 10px;"></div>	What was the best part of cooking the tamales for Maria? <div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; height: 1.2em; margin-top: 10px;"></div>
Why did the turkey sandwiches suddenly not seem so good? <div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; height: 1.2em; margin-top: 10px;"></div>	How do you think Jackie feels about trying something new? <div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; height: 1.2em; margin-top: 10px;"></div>
What was Maria's job when making tamales? <div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; height: 1.2em; margin-top: 10px;"></div>	How do you think the author feels about trying new things? <div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; height: 1.2em; margin-top: 10px;"></div>