

Nobody makes tamales like Granny does— come and get them while they are hot!

BY SUSAN MCFARLAND

Tribune Correspondent

The Gonzalez family has been making homemade gourmet tamales for a long time. The special recipe for the tamales, including the fillings, was developed by Daniel Gonzalez' mother, Juanita, back in the late 1990s. Juanita, along with her husband Robert, opened the first Granny's Tamales shop in Corpus Christi almost 20 years ago. Daniel and Tina Gonzalez moved to Houston in 1997 and opened the first local Granny's Tamales shop in downtown Humble 12 years ago and a second shop at 8041 Bypass 1960 West a little later.

"Our tamales are Tex-Mex and the best in Houston. We start with corn masa and we add spices and other secret ingredients to make the dough. Then we create our tamale fillings using our special recipe.

Our last step is to wrap the tamales in corn husks and steam them. We sell them homemade, hot and fresh. We have a wide variety of tamales, including mild or spicy pork and beef; mild or

spicy chicken; spinach and cheese; jalapeño and cheese; chicken, jalapeño and cheese; chicken, spinach and cheese; bean; bean and cheese; bean and chorizo; and sweet corn. It's our secret recipes that makes our tamales so delicious and Fox 26 News agrees. They have voted us in the top 10 tamales in Houston. People go and try the tamales at other places on the list, but after they try ours, they don't go anywhere else. "We have a lot of repeat customers," said Tina.

Granny's most popular tamale is the traditional pork and beef. Coming in second and third place respectively is the chicken, jalapeño and cheese, and the chicken, spinach and cheese.

"We have a great variety of tamales — which is unusual — and we also make our own red and green salsa. People pick up the tamales to go and take them home and

cover them with chili and cheese to make a casserole or they serve them with rice and beans. You can also eat them for breakfast by themselves," Tina said.

Tina said that the time of year will determine how many dozens of tamales will be on demand at the tamale shop.

"During the holidays, we sell a lot more tamales, because in Texas, tamales are a holiday staple on everyone's table. From Thanksgiving to New Year's Eve we sell a lot of tamales. Christmas Eve is the most popular day of the year. Place your order early or you will be in line to wait; but don't worry, we never run out of tamales. The tamales are \$10 a dozen and come with a 2-ounce cup of red or green salsa for dipping. Patrons can purchase a pint of salsa for \$5. We have a lot of tamales on hand at all times," she said.

The restaurant is strictly take away and there are no plans to change that. "We are a take-out restaurant and we just serve tamales. We recently moved to a larger space at 1502 East First Street in Humble because we outgrew our

original location. We only had 900 square feet in the other location and here we have 2,000 square feet. We also do catering and we have a stand at local farmers' markets," Daniel said.

Daniel and Tina have been married 35 years and have three children, two of whom live close by and work at the restaurant. Daniel was in the construction business for many years before opening Granny's Tamales.

"We really have been guided by God in this whole journey. Daniel's mom kept asking him why he wasn't making tamales, so we found the little store in Boomtown in downtown Humble and put up a sign and God did the rest," Tina said.

There are seven Granny's Tamales stores across the United States, all owned by members of the Gonzalez family.



OWNERS:

Daniel and Tina Gonzalez



OPENED DOORS:

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FAVORITE QUOTE:

Putting God first with perseverance and hard work creates success.