

How to Make a Torma

What is a Torma?

A Torma is a special cake offering made of special substances which you are offered to an Enlightened Being. These Tormas will go on your altar for the length of the retreat.

❖ Step 1: Make clarified butter/Ghee

Stovetop:

1. Melt 2 pounds (1 kilo) of unsalted butter in a pot on low heat, for about 45 mins, until the milk solids begin to settle to the bottom
2. Remove the foam from the top
3. Let it cool a bit and strain it through a fine strainer into a jar. Use a clean paper towel (or similar) in the strainer to filter out the little bits. Don't pour in the milk solids at the bottom.

Microwave:

4. Place your butter in a measuring cup (it is easy to pour from) with high sides. Melt a bit at a time, to avoid overflow.
5. Melt the butter in the microwave on high for 1 min making sure it does not bubble over. It will be foamy, and totally melted. If not, cook another 30 seconds.
6. Scoop off the foam from the top.
7. Let it cool a bit and strain it through a fine strainer into a jar. You can use a clean paper towel (or similar) to filter out the little bits. Don't pour in the milk solids at the bottom.
8. Note: you will need more ghee if you are going to use butter lamps

❖ Step 2: Making the Torma dough

1. Clean every surface and tool you will be using. Wash your hands.
2. Set your intention- You are making special cakes for each of the Medicine Buddhas, keep this in your heart and mind as you make the Tormas.
3. Gather everything you need, see the page with all the pictures
 - a. 5 loaves of Bread (crusts on or off)
 - b. Clarified Butter/Ghee
 - c. Honey
 - d. Milk
 - e. White cheese slices
 - f. Paint Brushes, one for each color and the ghee

- g. Food or cake coloring: Lapis blue, gold/yellow, pink, coral (orange –red), red
 - h. Drinking straw; 2 different sizes of bottle caps; tooth picks or stiff grass
 - i. Mixing pan
 - j. Plastic bag or waxed paper
 - k. 4 plates
4. Start with 2 loaves for the Medicine Buddha tormas.
 5. Then continue with the other three for the white tormas you will need. You may only need about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a loaf for each of the large tormas.
 6. Beginning with $\frac{1}{2}$ a loaf of bread tear it up into small pieces, the smaller the better. Avoid squishing the bread. Take your time. While you are tearing up the bread, remember who you are making the Tormas for. If you have learned Medicine Buddha's mantra you can recite it while making your tormas.
 7. Add 1 generous tablespoon of honey, 1-2 tablespoons of clarified butter, melted or not, and a little bit of milk to the crumbled bread in the mixing pan.

If there is too much clarified butter, this may cause cracking. If it is too wet it will not hold its shape, if it is too dry it will also crack.

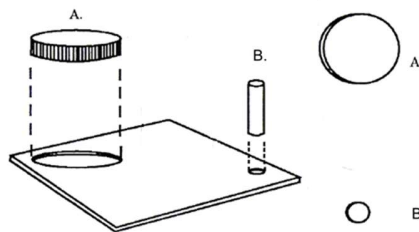
8. Add milk and clarified butter as needed. Mix it up thoroughly, kneading it like you would bread, on a flat surface for 5-10 mins.
9. Once you have finished one batch, place it in a plastic bag, or wrap it up so it won't dry out until you have completed making all the dough.
10. Complete making your dough with the rest of the bread. Storing each piece as you finish it, so it won't dry out.
11. Divide the first 2 loaves of the dough into 7 equal parts, plus one part a little larger for the central torma.
12. You can use some of the dough from the last 3 loaves to make your little tormas which you will offer fresh every day. Or you can use cookies, M&Ms, Jelly Beans, etc. You will need 5 of these refresher tormas every day during your retreat.

❖ **Step 3: It's taking shape!**

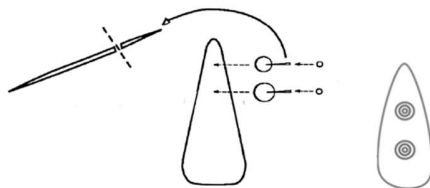
1. Shape each ball into a conical shape with a round bottom.



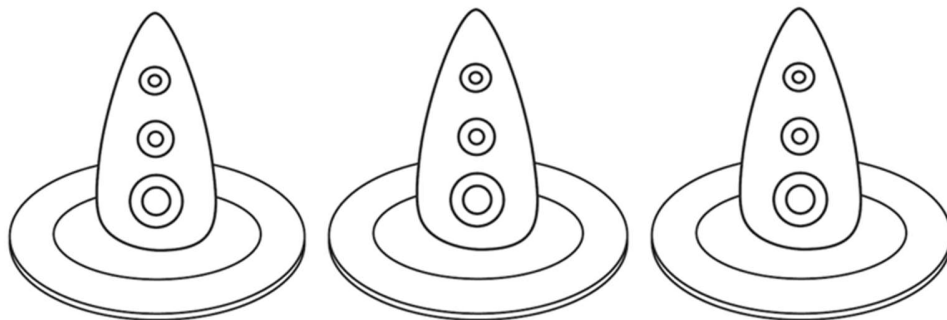
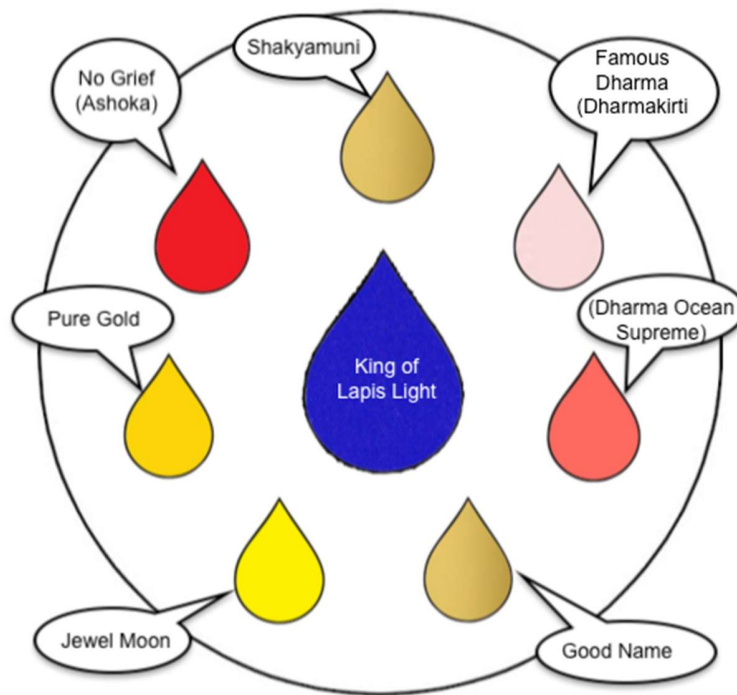
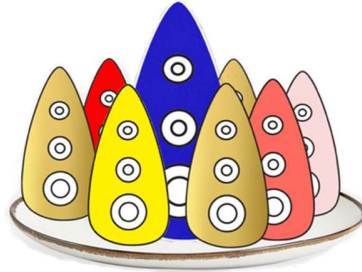
2. Paint 8 of them with the appropriate food or cake decorating color (see below).
The 3 larger ones stay white.
 - 3 gold – if you can't find gold cake coloring, try yellow with a very tiny bit of red
 - 1 light red
 - 1 pink
 - 1 coral (orange-red)
 - 1 Lapis blue
 - 1 yellow
3. Melt some ghee (clarified butter) and using the paint brush, paint each torma with ghee. You don't need to paint the bottom.
4. Use your bottle caps and drinking straw to cut out 2 circles of cheese for each torma.



5. Place the larger circle on the torma. Hold it in place with a piece of straw or 1/3rd of a toothpick. Push the straw or piece of toothpick in so there is only a little piece left, and then cover it with the little circle.

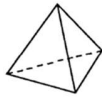


6. Your tormas are finished. Place them on the torma plates as shown.

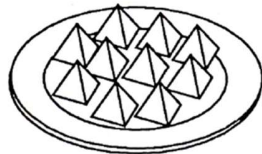


❖ **Step 4: Make your little tormas to offer each day, or you can use yellow cookies, M&Ms, jelly beans, etc.**

1. Divide the dough into 50 equal parts, 5 for each day.
2. Create a small three-sided triangular tormas, with a triangular base.



3. Paint them with the melted clarified butter.
4. Place them on a plate, cover them so they won't dry out and store them in a cool place, like the refrigerator or freezer.



5. Before each session in retreat and at the end of the last session, offer one of these mini tormas to the 8 Medicine Buddhas recalling your motivation.