
RECIPE BY ANA CARLA MAZA – SERVES 6 PEOPLE

PICADILLO / CUBAN BLACK BEANS / CUBAN TOSTONES / CUBAN MOJITO

PICADILLO

Ingredients: 1/4 cup of El Cocinero oil • 1 onion • 1 large bell pepper • 1 clove of garlic • 1/2 lb of ground beef • 1/2 lb of ground pork • 1/4 lb of ground ham • 3/4 cup of capers and olives mixture (alcaparrado) • 1 tsp of salt • 1 tsp of Ac'cent seasoning • 1/8 tsp of pepper • 1/2 cup of tomato sauce • 1/4 cup of dry wine

Instructions / Method:

1. Heat the oil and sauté the finely chopped onion, crushed garlic, and finely chopped bell pepper. Add the meats and cook for a few minutes, stirring to prevent sticking. Add the remaining ingredients and let it cook over a medium heat for about twenty minutes.

CUBAN BLACK BEANS

Ingredients: 1/4 cup of El Cocinero oil • 1 pound (450 grams) of dried black beans • 1 large onion, chopped • 1 green bell pepper, chopped • 4 cloves of garlic, minced • 1 bay leaf • 1 teaspoon of ground cumin • 2 tbsp of olive oil • Salt to taste

Instructions / Method:

1. Soak the black beans in cold water for at least 8 hours or overnight. Then, drain and rinse them.
2. In a large pot, add the soaked beans along with enough fresh water to cover them. Bring to a boil and then reduce the heat to medium-low. Cook the beans at a gentle simmer for about 1.5 hours or until tender.
3. Add additional water as needed to keep the beans covered.
4. While the beans are cooking, in another large skillet, heat the olive oil over medium heat. Add the chopped onion, green bell pepper, and minced garlic. Sauté until they are tender and lightly golden.
5. When the beans are tender, add the onion, pepper, and garlic mixture to the pot of beans. Also, add the bay leaf and ground cumin. Cook over low heat for another 30 minutes, stirring occasionally.
6. Taste and adjust the salt as needed. Remove the bay leaf before serving. Serve the hot Cuban black beans as a side dish or as a main course, accompanied by white rice and fried ripe plantains if desired.

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CUBAN TOSTONES

Ingredients: 2 green plantains • Vegetable oil, for frying • Salt to taste

Instructions / Method:

1. Peel the green plantains and cut them into thick slices, about 1 inch (2.5 cm) thick.
2. In a large skillet or deep fryer, heat enough vegetable oil to cover the plantain slices. Heat the oil over medium high heat until it reaches a temperature of about 350°F (175°C).
3. Carefully place the plantain slices in the hot oil and fry them for about 3-4 minutes on each side, or until they are golden brown and crispy. You may need to fry them in batches to avoid overcrowding the pan.
4. Once the plantain slices are fried, remove them from the oil using a slotted spoon or tongs and transfer them to a paper towel-lined plate to drain excess oil.
5. Using a tostonera (a wooden or metal press specifically designed for flattening plantains) or the bottom of a heavy glass, flatten each fried plantain slice into a thin disk.
6. Increase the heat of the oil to medium-high and carefully place the flattened plantain slices back into the hot oil. Fry them for an additional 2-3 minutes on each side, or until they are golden brown and crispy.
7. Remove the tostones from the oil and transfer them back to the paper towel-lined plate. Immediately sprinkle them with salt while they are still hot.
8. Serve the tostones as a side dish or as a snack. They can be enjoyed plain or served with a dipping sauce such as garlic mojo or a tangy salsa.

CUBAN MOJITO

Ingredients: 2 oz white rum • Juice of 1 lime • 2 tsp granulated sugar (adjust to taste) • 8-10 fresh mint leaves • Club soda • Ice cubes • Lime slices • mint sprigs for garnish

Instructions / Method:

1. In a tall glass, add the fresh mint leaves and sugar.
2. Squeeze the juice of one lime into the glass.
3. Use a muddler or the handle of a wooden spoon to gently muddle the mint leaves and sugar together, releasing the mint oils.
4. Fill the glass with ice cubes.
5. Pour the white rum over the ice.
6. Stir the mixture well to combine the ingredients.
7. Top off the glass with club soda.
8. Garnish with a lime slice and a sprig of fresh mint.
9. Give it a final stir, and your Cuban Mojito is ready to be enjoyed!

Remember, you can adjust the proportions of lime juice, sugar, and mint according to your personal taste. Feel free to experiment and make it your own!
