

RECIPES

Asado de Boda (Wedding Stew)

This simple but outrageously delicious stew is often served at weddings in Northern Mexico and is also popular in Zacatecas and San Luis Potosí. Like the Simple *Mole*, it is a relatively painless introduction to the *mole* genre.

Ingredients

- 3 *ancho* chiles
- 4 cloves garlic
- 1/4 teaspoon cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon oregano
- 1/2 teaspoon marjoram
- 1/4 teaspoon powdered cloves
- 1/2 teaspoon powdered cinnamon
- 1/4 cup cooking oil
- 2 pounds boneless pork loin, cut into 3/4 inch pieces
- 1/2 cup onion, minced
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 teaspoons cider vinegar
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt, or to taste
- 1/2 teaspoon ground pepper
- 1 tablespoon bittersweet chocolate, cut into small pieces
- 2 to 3 teaspoons grated orange peel (orange part only)

Directions

1. Toast the chiles and make the cooking liquid. Toast the chiles on an ungreased skillet or griddle over medium heat for 20 to 30 seconds on both sides, but do not allow them to burn. When the chiles are cool enough to handle, rinse them and remove their stems, seeds, and veins, tear them into small pieces, and place them in a blender. Add 3 cups of boiling water, cover the blender, and allow the chiles to rehydrate for at least 20 minutes. Pour off the soaking water but leave the chiles in the blender. Add the garlic, cumin, oregano, marjoram, cloves, cinnamon, and 1 ½ cups water to the blender and blend for at least 1 minute. Add another ½ cup water and blend a few more seconds to mix thoroughly.

2. Cook the pork. Heat a heavy pot or Dutch oven over medium high to high heat, add 2 tablespoons of the oil, and when it just begins to smoke add ½ the meat. Allow the meat to sizzle and brown without touching it for 20 - 30 seconds, turn it and repeat the process, then stir fry it until the meat is just browned but not cooked through. Remove the meat to a bowl and reserve. Brown the other half of the meat in the same manner, adding a little more oil, if necessary, and remove it to the bowl with the first batch. Turn the heat to medium, add a little more oil, if necessary, and saute the onions until they are golden brown, but do not allow them to burn. Return the reserved meat to the pot, add the contents of the blender, bring it to a simmer, cover the pot and continue simmering, adjusting the heat as

necessary, for 45 minutes. Remove the top of the pot, turn the heat up until the contents come to a fairly brisk simmer and continue cooking, stirring frequently, until the sauce thickens to the consistency of a thin milk shake and begins to glisten. This usually takes 10 to 15 minutes.

3. Finish the dish. Stir in the chocolate, and orange peel, and serve with white Mexican style rice and hot corn tortillas. Although not traditional, I like to sprinkle some grated, smoked provolone cheese over the stew.

Serves 4