



Ropa Vieja (Old Clothes)

From the kitchen of Marigene

This is a traditional dish of Cuba taught to my mother by Gloria Hayes, our next-door neighbor in Miami. Miz Gloria, as we called her, was from Ybor City, Florida, so this may well be a reworking of the original island dish. It was the only main course my mother made that she could still use after my father had a heart attack in 1962. (It was a popular dish because flank steak was one of the cheapest cuts of meat in those days.)

- 1 1/2-2 pounds of flank steak*
- 1 large can of tomato sauce*
- 1 green or red pepper, diced*
- 1 onion, diced*
- 3-4 cloves of garlic, diced*
- 1 small jar of pimentos*
- 2 teaspoons of oregano*
- 1 teaspoon of salt*
- 1 can of petite green peas*
- 2 tablespoons of olive oil*
- 1 bay leaf*
- Splash of red wine*

Put the flank steak and bay leaf in a large skillet. Add enough water to cover the meat. put a lid on the skillet and bring the water to boiling; lower heat and keep water just at the boiling point for about an hour. Remove the lid, turn it upside down, and put the meat on the lid to cool. Discard the bay leaf and save the broth in separate container.

Heat the oil in the pan and then add the diced garlic, pepper, and onion. Sauté. While this is cooking, shred the flank steak and add to the mixture, and then the tomato sauce; put about a cup of the reserved broth, enough to cover all of the ingredients. Add the salt, pimentos, and a generous dollop of red wine or cooking sherry. Cover this and simmer for about 1/2 hour (or more if you wish). Add the oregano and green peas and simmer about 10 minutes more. Serve with a side of black beans and rice, or over white or brown rice.