Cuban Recipes

APETIZERS

Cuban Salad (receta de Ensalada Cubana)

1/2 head of baby lettuce, unchopped
1 avocado
1 red onion
2 tsp. olive oil
lime juice
salt to taste

Arrange the leaves of lettuce, and then top with small slices of avocado and onion. Add olive oil, sprinkle with salt, and then add a squeeze of lime juice.

Serves 3-4.
Mariquitas (Plus Cuban Tostones)

Chicharritas is the Cuban name given to green plantain chips, sliced round, fried and salted. Mariquitas is what Cubans call them when they are sliced the Nicaraguan way; slicing them lengthwise to create long, slender, wavy chips, fried and salted.

They are really good brought to the table piping hot and sprinkled with mojo.

3 to 4 cups canola or peanut oil for frying
2 green plantains
salt or garlic salt

Pour the oil to a depth of 2 or 3 inches in a deep-fat fryer, a Dutch oven or heavy skillet. Heat to 350°F.

Peel the plantains. Slice lengthwise for Mariquitas or in round chips for Chicharritas, as thinly as possible, using a mandolin if you have one, with the blade at its thinnest opening. Slide them into the hot fat in small batches. You don't want them to clump together.

Fry until golden brown and crispy, about 1 to 2 minutes, turning with a metal skimmer. Drain on paper towels. Sprinkle with salt and/or mojo. Serve at once.

Cuban Tostones

Tostones are twice-fried plantain chips. When making Cuban tostones, first use green plantains (plantains with a black skin are ideal for platano maduro - the sweet and soft dessert version). Peel plantains, then slice into pieces, each piece about 2” long (click here for an example).

Fry them using the same method as above until soft, and let them drain on paper towels. Next, take each piece and smash it in a tostonera - a tostones press available at most online Cuban stores. If you don't have a tostonera, you can simply place paper towels over a slice, and smash it into a flat round with a can of food.

When your cooking oil is hot again, add all of your flat plantain pieces and fry them on each side until golden brown. Allow them to drain on paper towels, sprinkle them with mojo sauce (if you like) to taste, or put the mojo on the side to use as a dipping sauce.
SOUP

Cuban Chicken Soup recipe - Sopa de Pollo

1 3/4 quarts of water
1/2 chicken cut in small pieces
1 chicken liver
1 large onion
1 finely chopped green pepper
2 minced garlic cloves
1/4 cup tomato paste
2 carrots
1 tbsp green pepper
1/4 tsp vinegar
1 medium chopped onion
1/2 cup tomato sauce
1/2 tsp oregano
1 tbsp tomato sauce
2 tbsp olive oil
1 potato peeled and diced
1/2 cup curly pasta
salt, pepper and oregano to taste

Boil chicken with liver, garlic, salt, oregano, pepper, onion and tomato sauce. Remove chicken from pot when it is tender and discard fat and skin. Add chicken, potatoes and carrots, cooking until vegetables are tender. Partially mash some but not all of the vegetables and add pasta, cooking until pasta is tender.

Serves 8.
MAIN DISHES

Congri recipe - Cuban Rice with Red Beans

3 tbsp. olive oil
2 inch cube of salt pork
3 cloves of garlic
1 medium onion
1/4 green pepper
4 oz. of tomato sauce
1 cup long grain white rice
1 can (15 oz.) dark red kidney beans (see image below)
1 1/2 cups of water
1 tbsp. salt

In blender or food processor, purée onion and green pepper together (add a little water if needed). Set aside.

In Dutch oven heat the oil on medium-high heat. Add the salt pork and garlic cloves. Sauté until browned. Discard the garlic.

Add the onion/pepper mixture to the oil, stir and cook for 5 minutes. Add the tomato sauce and continue to cook, stirring occasionally, for another 5 minutes until the sauce is a deep, rich red. This mixture is called sofrito.

Stir in the rice, mixing it well. Add the beans, water and salt and stir. Cook on high heat, uncovered until water begins to boil. Adjust heat to low, cover and let simmer for about 20 minutes until rice is tender.

Serves 4-6
Cuban Roast Suckling Pig recipe - How to Roast a Pig Cuban Style

10 lb whole suckling pig
3 cups fresh squeezed orange juice
1 cup fresh squeezed lime juice (6-8 medium limes)
12 garlic cloves
1 onion
1 tbsp salt
1 tbsp oregano
2 tbsp olive oil
4 bay leaves

This recipe is for how to roast a Cuban pig in your kitchen. If you were looking for a way to roast a pig outdoors, click here to see what a Caja China (traditional Cuban pig roaster) looks like.

Instructions

Bring a large pot of water to a rolling boil. Wearing rubber gloves to protect your hands, hold pig by head and submerge as much of body as possible in water for 1 minute. Remove, reverse pig and, holding tail end, submerge head and as much of body as possible, 1 minute. Place in a snug-fitting, non-reactive pan and pour orange and lime juice over and inside pig.

In a food processor combine garlic, onion and salt. Add oregano and olive oil and process to a paste. Smear inside and out of pig with garlic paste and scatter with bay leaves. Tightly cover pig with plastic wrap and marinate, refrigerated, 48 hours, turning occasionally.

Preheat oven to 200 degree. Transfer pig to a large roasting pan. Pull hind legs forward toward head and prop it up so its back is up and it is sitting on its hind legs. Open mouth a stuff with crumpled aluminum foil. Roast pig 12 to 13 hours, basting with marinade every hour. A meat thermometer inserted in thickest part will register 190 degrees. To brown and crisp skin, turn heat up to 350 degrees for last 1/2 hour of cooking. Let sit, loosely covered with foil, 1/2 hour before carving.

Yield: 8 servings.
**Arroz con Pollo**

1 chicken, cut up (6 pieces)
3 Tbsp. olive oil
½ small green pepper, chopped
½ small red pepper, chopped
1 large onion, chopped
2 or 3 cloves of garlic, smashed
1 bay leaf
½ tsp. oregano
1 tsp. cumino
1 Tbsp. vinegar or white wine
2 c. regular white rice
2 tsp. salt
Pepper to taste
2 or 3 Tbsp. tomato sauce
1/16 tsp. Bijol (spice available at Mexican / Cuban markets)
½ can beer

Brown the chicken lightly. Add the onion, garlic, and green pepper, sauté for a few minutes. Add the tomato sauce, vinegar, spices, and salt. Cook on low heat until the meat is tender (about 20 minutes). Add the rice and water in equal amounts. Cook uncovered on medium heat until it comes to a boil and some of the water absorbed. Add ½ can of beer. Stir and cover the pot. Cook on low heat until done. It should take from 45 mintues to an hour.
Optional – before adding the rice, you can add ¾ c. of frozen corn or frozen mixed vegetables.
Torrejas recipe - Cuban French Toast

1 loaf Cuban bread
4 eggs, beaten
2 teaspoon dry wine
1 can evaporated milk
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 cup sugar
2 cups oil for frying (*)

Torrejas is the Cuban version of French Toast. If Cuban bread is not available in your area, use a French or an Italian bread loaf.

Mix eggs, milk, sugar, wine, vanilla and cinnamon; cut bread in slices less than 1" thick. Soak bread in the milk mixture. Fry in hot oil until lightly golden.

Serve with sugar syrup or any other type syrup (maple, fruit syrup, etc).

(*) Instead of so much oil, I prefer to fry them in just a small amount of butter.
**Arroz Con Leche recipe - Cuban Rice Pudding**

It is of course, very easy to do, but a bit time consuming as the rice and milk have to simmer for about one hour, but the results were very good. The only variation I made from her [Nilla] recipe was that I poured the finished pudding in the blender and made it smooth instead of leaving the rice "bumps". It was silky and delicious!

1/2 cup rice (I used jasmine, since it was what I had on hand)
1-1/2 cups water
1 small piece of lemon peel
1 small cinnamon stick
4 cups milk
1 cup sugar
1/4 tsp salt
1 tsp vanilla extract
Cinnamon powder

The recipe calls for washing the rice (in the old days, you had to pick through the rice and take little bits of trash and pebbles out, then wash it, as it was not clean) but I did not wash it.

Cook the rice in the water, lemon peel and cinnamon stick until rice is soft, about 10 minutes or so. Add the milk, salt, vanilla and sugar. Bring to just under a boil and turn down heat. Cook at medium-low heat, uncovered, until it gets thick and rice has absorbed most of the milk. Stir once in a while so it will not stick.

Fish out the cinnamon stick and pour into a bowl or several individual bowls and sprinkle with powdered cinnamon. Serves 8.