



The main ingredients



Beef & chicken, shredded



Ready to enjoy

Ropa vieja (Canary-style)

There are many takes on "ropa vieja" (translates as "old clothes"). On the mainland, it's a way to recycle leftovers from cocido. In the Canary Islands it can be made that way, but often it's made from scratch, rather than leftovers. On a recent trip to Gran Canaria, a local chef (Bar Restaurante El Puente, La Aldea de San Nicolás) explained how he makes it and I've tried to replicate it here.

This was prepared in a pressure cooker (quick & easy), but can be done on the stovetop (takes longer: 90 minutes or so). Canned garbanzos are a good option, just boil & shred the meat first. The extra broth is an added benefit, makes for terrific stock or a base for soup.

Ingredients

- 1 chicken leg, whole
- 350 grams beef (chuck is just the thing)
- 250 grams dry garbanzos, soaked in hot water with a bit of salt overnight
- 2 ripe tomatoes, diced (or small tin of diced tomatoes)
- 1 small red pepper, diced
- 1 onion, diced
- 1 medium sized potato, diced.
- 2 cloves garlic
- Salt (to taste)
- Olive oil
- A small glass of white wine
- 2 teaspoons pimentón (sweet or spicy)
- Bay leaf, thyme, black pepper

Preparation

- Salt beef & chicken, add to the pot (uncovered) in 2 liters of cold water.
- Bring to a boil, skim off the foam that comes to the top, add garbanzos & a bit of salt.
- Cover and cook at high pressure for 35 minutes.
- Strain off the broth, set aside garbanzos & meat to cool.
- Shred beef & chicken with a fork (or fingers as I did).
- Heat 3 or 4 tablespoons of olive oil in a large pot; when the oil is very hot, fry the shredded meat until crispy, stirring to avoid it burning.
- Set the meat aside, leave the oil and proceed to make the "sofrito" in the same pot. Add extra oil if needed.
- Saute the onion for a few minutes, add red pepper, tomato & garlic and cook for 8-10 minutes, scraping the bits off the bottom of the pan.
- Add spices (pimentón, 1 bay leaf, a sprig of thyme, black pepper), and the wine; cook for 2-3 minutes before incorporating the fried meat, potato and garbanzos.
- Add a 1/2 cup or so of the cooking broth, check salt and simmer for about 15-20 minutes until the potatoes are cooked through. Add more stock as needed (used 2 cups in the test recipe). Check salt once again.
- That's it, serve hot. Like most stews, this dish only gets better with a day or two in the fridge.

Note:

1. As mentioned, canned garbanzos are an excellent alternative.
2. Make it as soupy as you want, just add more broth.
3. Some like it spicy, use pimentón "picante", Tabasco, sriracha, cayenne pepper... whatever in the final phase.
4. For extra flavor, added a chunk of my frozen ham stock to the cooking water, a bouillon cube will work as well.

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