

Arepas

Arepas are a traditional meal in Venezuela and Colombia. Colombians arepas are your usual Encanto movie arepa with cheese, while Venezuelan arepas do not have the cheese before cooking. Their process of making them are similar, but is a Venezuelan tradition to fill the arepa with cheese or Venezuelan fillings such as Reina Pepiada (which is avocado and chicken), meat, etc.



2 cup PAN or Goya brand Masarepa pre-cooked white cornmeal

Pinch of salt

2 1/2 cups water at room temperature

1 tsb of oil

Cacique white Panela cheese or guayanés cheese

In a bowl mix in the salt with the cornmeal, oil, and water. With your hands massage until all the ingredients combine and create a dough that is soft and compact. If it is too dry you can add a bit more water.

Make a little shaped ball with your hand and flatten it into a disk. Preheat a pan with a little bit of oil. Set the arepa in a pan and flip when each side has a bit of a crust. When they are done open it up add cheese or whatever fillings you want. Enjoy!

Pabellon Venezolano

Pabellon is the national dish in Venezuela, it consists of shredded beef, rice, and black beans. The history of the dish dates to colonial times but the origin of the dish is unsure.



Before we begin, I am going to give you some background information for the sofrito.

Sofrito

The base ingredient for most recipes in Venezuela, even though the base varies from each region, it consists of white onions, red and green bell peppers. Garlic, leek, and “aji dulce” (a form of sweet pepper common in Venezuela). We will be using sweet peppers instead of aji dulce. We will be making two different sofrito, one for the beans and one for the beef. All the ingredients will be the same with the exception that the beef sofrito will have tomatoes while the beans sofrito will have fresh cilantro.

Basic Sofrito :

- 2 tbsp oil
- 1/2 cup onion
- 1/2 cup red and green peppers
- 1/4 cup leek
- 1/4 cup celery
- 1/4 cup green onions
- 2 chives
- Pinch of salt
- Pinch of pepper
- Pinch of cumin

Heat a pan over medium heat and add the oil, the onion, the chives, the celery, the white portion of the leek, garlic, red or green pepper, pepper, salt, and a little bit of cumin. We will sofrito (let it cook and let the vegetables tear up) over medium heat. In Venezuela we use “aji dulce” but we will substitute it for sweet pepper.

After basic sofrito is done there, we will separate half of it, one for the beans and one for the meat.

Beans

1 can of Goya black beans pre-cooked

Sofrito

Cilantro

Ground Cumin

Sugar (optional)

In a pan or a pot, we placed half of the sofrito we made earlier and heat it again before adding the black beans. After about five minutes the beans should be around the boiling point. After the beans boil, we add the cilantro and taste it to add more cumin or salt if needed. When served some regions like to place a bit of sugar.

Carne mechada (meat)

To make the shredded beef place the brisket on a slow cooker the night before cooking for two hours with a little bit of water until the meat is soft and peeling. With a fork or your hands shred the beef and save it in the refrigerator so that it is ready to use for the recipe. You can do this a few days before and freeze it, just remember to have the meat unfreeze before we move to the cooking process.

1lb of pre-cooked shredded beef (brisket)

Meat sofrito

1/2 cup tomatoes

About 1 tsp of Worcestershire sauce or soy sauce

Pinch of salt and pepper

On a medium heat pan, we will add the other half of the sofrito we made earlier and add the Worcestershire sauce and the tomatoes. Let the sofrito mix in with the added ingredients before adding the meat. Later we will keep tasting to test the salt and pepper. It is particularly important to get it off the heat when there is still a bit of water in the pan but too much about an inch liquid is good enough.

Rice (I will be using 5 min rice so we can concentrate on the beans and the beef)

1 ½ cups of rice

1 ½ water

Salt

1 Tbs olive oil
1 sweet pepper

Make your rice how you usually make it and set it aside. I like leaving the rice almost to last since it's the quickest and easiest recipe.

Once all three basic ingredients like meat, rice, and beans are cooked, served on a plate. In Venezuela, we also use the Pabellon as part of a filling for the arepa feel free to do so as well.

Quesillo

A popular dessert in Venezuelan especially in birthday parties or social gatherings. Named Quesillo because of the wholes that resemble Swiss cheese (in Spanish queso means cheese). Even though is like flan, Venezuelan Quesillo will need both the yolks and egg whites.



1 can of evaporate milk
1 can of condensed milk
3 eggs
1tsp vanilla
1tsp of alcohol like whiskey or brandy (I will be using rum)

For syrup:

½ cup of sugar

Pre-heat oven to 350 F. Mix all the ingredients in the blender for a brief time just for the ingredients to blend well. Set mixture to the side. Now, we will be making honey or syrup for the Quesillo. On a pan placed sugar on medium heat until it gets to an amber color. That syrup will be placed on a flan mold with a lid (you can use any round or square pan and cover it with aluminum). Carefully make sure the syrup touches all the walls of the mold. After the syrups have been sufficiently spread, place the mix, and cover the mold with the lid. On a bigger square pan or mold, placed a bit of water and placed the mold (in Spanish this technique is

known as baño maria which references a double boiling). Place the pan in the oven and cook for 40 min. Let it cool for a few seconds to minutes and served (not too cool that caramel sticks to the pan just enough that is easy to transfer to another plate).