

Borrego en Adobo de Chile Pasilla

Rob Brooke & Susan Ott, with thanks to Rick Bayless

1 head of garlic separated into cloves	2 Tbsp vegetable oil or bacon drippings
12 dried pasilla chiles	1 large white onion, chopped
2 tsp dried Mexican oregano	2 ½ lbs. lean lamb, diced in 1/2" cubes
½ tsp freshly ground black pepper	1 can beef bouillon
¼ tsp ground cumin	Honey
¾ tsp salt	

Adobo: Heat a griddle or large iron frying pan over medium heat. Strew unpeeled garlic cloves on the hot surface and roast, turning frequently for 15 minutes. Set aside to cool. Stem and seed the dried chiles and cut or break into sections about 2"x 2". Roast the chile sections one at a time on the hot surface by pressing down for a couple of seconds with a spatula, then turning and roasting on the other side. There may be a spurt of smoke with each pressing, in which case, turn immediately or, if roasting the second side, remove (*have the hood fan running on high as the smoke will cause coughing and irritation*). When all the chiles are roasted, place them in a large bowl and cover with very hot but not boiling water for 30 minutes. Stir occasionally to ensure moistening of all the chiles. While the chiles are soaking, peel and place the garlic in a blender. Crush the oregano and pepper together in a mortar and pestle or a spice grinder. Add all of the spices and salt to the blender. When the chiles have soaked, remove them with a slotted spoon and place in the blender. Reserve the soaking water. Add 2/3 cup of the water to the blender. Blend to a smooth paste, adding more of the soaking water if necessary until everything is moving but still as thick a paste as possible. When completely pureed, pass through a sieve using a rubber spatula to press the paste through the sieve until only skin fragments are left in the sieve. Set the adobo aside.

Meat: In a large skillet, heat the oil or drippings to medium high and add the chopped onions and diced lamb. Stir, moderating heat if necessary, until the lamb has lost all of its pink color. Add the adobo and stir for several minutes to "roast" the adobo, then add the beef bouillon. Add some additional water if everything is not floating freely. Bring to the boil, then reduce heat, partially cover and simmer for an hour. The sauce should now be thickened somewhat. If not, simmer uncovered until it thickens. Taste the sauce, which will be quite bitter at this point. Add honey by tablespoons, stirring each addition to incorporate, tasting after each addition. Continue adding honey just until the bitter flavor is modified to your satisfaction. Correct the seasoning.

Serve with a garnish of rings of white onion and a few sprigs of cilantro.