

Venezuelan Food: Arepas & Tequeños



Arepas

Ingredients:

- 3 cups precooked white corn flour (P.A.N.)
- 3 ¼ cups warm water
- 1 pinch of salt
- 1 teaspoon oil or butter

Preparation:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Pour warm water into a large bowl. Stir in salt to dissolve. Pour in the corn flour and immediately start kneading the mixture with your hands, being sure to squeeze out any lumps. Allow the dough rest for 3-5 minutes. Divide dough into pieces. To shape an arepa, roll the dough into a ball and then pat it, between your hands, into a disc. Press your thumbs around the outside of the disc to form a nice edge. Set discs on a large platter or baking sheet as you form them. (If the dough seems dry or cracks when you roll it, add a more warm water).
2. Sear the arepas in a skillet, lightly oil a large skillet (cast iron or non stick). Turn the heat to medium and get the skillet nice and hot. Brown the arepas in batches, about 4 minutes per side, until they are seared with some brown areas on both sides. Set them back on the platter or baking sheet as you go.
3. Finish the arepas in the oven, when all the arepas are seared, set them directly on the wire rack in the center of the oven. Cook for 15-20 minutes, until they are puffed up a bit. Set them back onto the baking sheet for just a minute or two until they're cool enough to handle. Cut them open.



Tequeños

Ingredients:

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon salt (or maybe less)
- 3 tablespoons cold salted butter, cut into 1/4-inch cubes
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten
- 6 tablespoons cold water, plus more as needed
- 8 ounces White cheese (mozzarella), cut into slices 1/2-inch x 1/2-inch x 2 1/2-inch

- 1 teaspoon of baking powder
- **Special Equipment:** Food Processor

Preparation:

1. Place the dry ingredients in the workbowl of a food processor fitted with a steel blade; pulse to combine. Sprinkle butter evenly over flour and pulse until butter is cut into pieces slightly small. Add egg and water, pulse until it forms into a ball. If dough is not fully forming, add additional water 1 tablespoon at a time until it comes together. Press dough into a disc, wrap tightly in plastic wrap, and rest for about 30 to 45 minutes.
2. Unwrap dough and place on a lightly floured surface. Roll out into a square 1/8-inch thick. Cut off edges to create a 12-inch square. Cut square into strips 3/4-inch wide.
3. Take one strip of dough and drape end over top of one cheese slice. Wrap entire cheese slice in dough on a diagonal, overlapping dough. Cover bottom of cheese slice in dough and pinch edges close to fully seal. Repeat with remaining cheese slices.
4. Fill a cast iron skillet with 3/4-inch of oil. Heat oil to 400°F over high heat. Place tequeños in oil and fry until crust is golden brown and blistered, 3 to 5 minutes, turning halfway through. Transfer tequeños to a paper towel lined plate, let cool for 1 to 2 minutes, then serve immediately.



Shredded Chicken

Ingredients:

- Skinless boneless chicken breast halves
- Salt and pepper
- Heinz 57 sauce (about 3 tablespoons)
- 4 Cloves of Garlic
- Small Onion
- Half of a Bell Pepper (red and green)
- Parsley, Cilantro
- Olive Oil

Preparation:

1. Place chicken breasts into a saucepan (with salt, onion, cilantro) and pour in enough water to cover. Place over medium heat, bring to a boil, and simmer until chicken meat is no longer pink, 10 to 12 minutes.
2. Transfer chicken breasts to a bowl, allow to cool, and shred the chicken meat with 2 forks.
3. Heat olive oil in a small non-stick saucepan over medium heat, and cook garlic, onion, bell pepper for 3 minutes.
4. Mix in the shredded chicken, add more salt in pepper (if is needed), and Heinz 57 sauce.
5. Reduce heat to low and simmer until chicken is hot and the flavors have blended, about 3 minutes add parsley.