



Ropa Vieja

SERVES 6

Ropa Vieja is a classic dish popular in Cuba but is traced back to the Canary Islands in Spain. It resembles a heap of rags, which is why its name translates to “old clothes”. Legend says a man was too poor to feed his children, so he shredded his clothes and cooked them for hours. After patiently waiting, it magically turned into a meaty stew. It is made with flank steak, peppers, and spices, and always served with rice and black beans. I learned to make this dish in Havana from a woman who cooked in a private restaurant called a paladores. Her kitchen was steaming hot, but a cold beer made it a little more bearable while we chopped onions and peppers for our feast. Once the meat was tender and juicy, we scooped it onto a mound of rice and black beans and sat outside to enjoy the fruits of our labor. Although this dish takes some time to prepare, it's worth more than its weight of “old clothes”!

INGREDIENTS

3 pounds flank steak	2 teaspoons ground oregano
1 tablespoon kosher salt	1 teaspoon cinnamon
1 teaspoon ground black pepper	2 teaspoons salt
¼ cup vegetable oil	1 teaspoon ground black pepper
1 onion, thinly sliced	1 1/2 cups chicken broth
1 green bell pepper, thinly sliced	1 16 ounce can diced tomatoes
1 red bell pepper, thinly sliced	1/2 cup green olives, sliced
4 cloves garlic, minced	1/2 cup fresh parsley, chopped
2 teaspoons ground cumin	
2 teaspoons sweet smoked paprika	
½ teaspoon cayenne	

PROCESS:

Season steak with salt and pepper. Heat the oil in a large pot or Dutch oven on stove over high heat. Add the steak and brown on both sides. Transfer meat to a plate. To the pot, add the sliced onion and peppers



and cook over medium heat for 15 minutes. Add the garlic and spices and cook another minute. Add chicken broth and tomatoes and simmer for another five minutes.

Return the steak to the pot and cover. Reduce heat to medium low cook for 2 hours until beef is very tender. With 2 forks, shred the steak and stir in olives and parsley. Serve with rice and black beans.