

Dominican-style Pastelitos a.k.a. Empanadas



No two recipes for pastelitos are the same and many debate the shape and fillings that should go inside. This recipe will deliver a more traditional-style version but feel free to play around. Substitute ground pork, chicken, or cooked cubed potatoes. Add some chopped olives, cheese, or even raisins for a sweet-savory surprise.

PREP TIME 15 mins.
+ 20 mins. cooling time

TOTAL TIME 50 mins.

COOK TIME 15 mins.

SERVINGS Approx. 10

Ingredients

- 1 package (10-pack) of large empanada wrappers (yellow or white), defrosted
- 1 large russet potato, diced into 1/4" cubes
- 1 tsp. salt
- 3 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1 small red onion, diced small, about 1 cup
- 1/2 red bell pepper, diced small, about 1 cup
- 2 cloves of garlic, minced, about 1 Tbsp.
- 2 heaping Tbsp. cilantro, chopped
- 1 lb. of ground beef
- 2 Tbsp. tomato paste
- 6 cups vegetable oil for frying
- Salt and pepper to taste

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 425°.
2. Toss potatoes in 2 Tbsp. of olive oil and 1 tsp. of salt.
3. Spread out evenly on baking sheet and bake for about 15 mins., flipping once halfway, until potatoes are crispy and tender. Set aside.
4. While potatoes are baking, heat 1 Tbsp. of oil in large skillet on medium heat. Saute onions and bell pepper until onions are transparent and peppers tender. Season with a sprinkle of salt and pepper.
5. Add garlic, saute for 1 min., taking care not to burn.
6. Add cilantro, saute until wilted.
7. Add ground beef. Brown until cooked through.
8. Add tomato paste. Stir to evenly coat mix and let simmer for 1 min.
9. Add more salt and pepper to taste, if necessary.
10. Remove from heat and skim excess fat from pan.
11. Gently scrape up potatoes from baking sheet and fold into beef mixture, taking care not to smash potatoes.
12. Spread mix out on baking sheet to cool to room temperature.
13. Once beef mixture is cooled, fill the center of a large empanada wrapper with about a 1/4 cup of filling. Fold over into a half moon shape and crimp edges together, sealing them. Work your way through the wrappers, placing filled empanadas on a clean baking sheet covered with a damp paper towel so they do not dry out.
14. Heat 6 cups of vegetable oil in a deep dutch oven or pot to 350°.
15. Gently drop empanadas in oil, 2–3 at a time, frying about 2 mins. each side or until golden, bubbly and crispy. Cool on wire rack.
16. Serve immediately with your favorite dipping sauces.