

Slow-Cooked Mexican Carnitas

Serves 12

Ingredients

3 pounds pork shoulder (Pork Butt)
7 strips scrubbed orange zest
5 cloves garlic, minced
1 large onion, chopped
1 tsp crushed red pepper flakes
1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
2 leaves bay
Pinch ground cloves
1 tsp dried oregano leaves (less if ground oregano)
1 1/2 tsp kosher salt, or more, to taste (less if using fine salt)

Cut pork shoulder into chunks (about 1-2 inches), cutting off and discarding any chunks of fat along the way. It's fine to leave a bit of fat on the cubes, just remove the areas of pure fat.

Place pork in a large, heavy-bottomed pot on the stove-top. Add enough water to cover the meat by about 2 inches. Heat over medium-high heat until water boils. Allow to boil a minute or so, then turn off the heat. Carefully skim off the fat from the top of the liquid and discard.

Add to the pot the orange zest strips, garlic, onion, red pepper flakes, cinnamon, bay leaves, oregano, salt and cloves. Stir to combine. Re-heat liquid to boiling, then reduce heat to medium low to a gentle simmer. Simmer uncovered for 1 1/2 hours, checking a few times near the end of cooking to make sure there is still liquid in the pot (if not, add a bit).

After 1 1/2 hours, REMOVE AND DISCARD BAY LEAVES, then use a fork or potato masher to break apart/shred the chunks of pork. Continue cooking, stirring occasionally, for an additional 30 minutes, or until almost all the liquid has evaporated.

Use immediately, or refrigerate or freeze for later use.

You can use the Carnitas "as is", or crisp it up in a skillet with a little oil over medium-high heat before using.

Credit: Seasons and Suppers