



Cuban Papas Rellenas - Stuffed Potatoes

Ingredients:

2 lbs large potatoes (peeled and cut into quarters)
1 lb picadillo (seasoned ground beef, see recipe below)
Vegetable oil for frying
1 cup dry bread crumbs
4 eggs
1 tsp salt

Preparation:

Add salt to a pot of cold water, and boil the potatoes until they are soft. Drain the potatoes, and then mash them, then set aside to allow them to cool.

Separate the egg yolks from the whites in two bowls. Mix the egg yolks into the mashed potato mixture, whisk the egg whites for a minute.

Take a 1/4 of a cup of the mashed potatoes, and form it into a ball. Make a dent in the ball, to give it more of a bowl shape. Fill the indentation with a tablespoon of picadillo, and then reseal it.

Reshape the potato as a ball again. Dip the ball in the egg whites, then roll the ball around in bread crumbs until it is coated. For a better coating, or for a crunchier texture, you may dip the ball into the egg whites again and coat it with another layer of bread crumbs. Refrigerate the potato balls for at least four hours before frying.

To fry, pour enough oil into a skillet or frying pan to cover half of the balls, the oil should be at least 350°. Place several balls into the frying pan and cook on each side until golden brown, usually 2-3 minutes, taking care not to overcook. Drain the stuffed potatoes on paper towels, do not stack them.

The other cooking method is to deep fry the papas rellenas at 375° until golden brown, they cook best deep-fried when they are frozen.

To Make the Picadillo:

1 lb ground meat
1 large onion, chopped
2-3 garlic cloves, chopped
1 small can tomato sauce
1/4 cup dry white wine
Pimiento stuffed olives
Salt and pepper to taste

In a large skillet, brown the ground meat, onions and garlic. If meat is not too lean, pour out whatever fat you render.

Turn heat down to medium low. Add the tomato sauce and wine. While it simmers, chop up the pimiento stuffed olives and add to meat mixture, it is ok to add a little bit of the brine, if you wish. Adjust the seasonings per taste.