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CUBAN BEEF PICADILLO

45 MINUTES

Picadillo—a ground beef dish popular in Cuba, the Caribbean and Latin America—combines tangy, sweet and salty flavors. There are many variations, but the essentials are a stew of ground meat and tomatoes with raisins for sweetness and chopped olives for a balancing touch of brine. For an optional,

finishing touch, chopped hard-cooked egg makes an attractive and delicious garnish. Serve the picadillo with white rice or fried potatoes or on a mound of french fries. Or serve it with a stack of warm corn tortillas and use it as a taco filling.

Don't use 80 or 85 percent lean ground beef or the picadillo may end up slick and greasy.

INGREDIENTS

2	TABLESPOONS EXTRA-VIRGIN OLIVE OIL
2	MEDIUM YELLOW ONIONS, FINELY CHOPPED
	KOSHER SALT AND GROUND BLACK PEPPER
6	MEDIUM GARLIC CLOVES, MINCED
1½	POUNDS 90 PERCENT LEAN GROUND BEEF
½	CUP RAISINS, CHOPPED
1	TABLESPOON CUMIN SEEDS
1	TEASPOON DRIED OREGANO
2	TABLESPOONS TOMATO PASTE
½	CUP PIMIENTO-STUFFED GREEN OLIVES, ROUGHLY CHOPPED, PLUS 3 TABLESPOONS OLIVE BRINE
½	CUP MINCED FRESH CILANTRO
3	PLUM TOMATOES, CORED, SEEDED AND FINELY CHOPPED

DIRECTIONS

In a 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium-high, heat the oil until shimmering. Add the onions and ½ teaspoon salt. Cook, stirring, until beginning to brown, about 5 minutes. Add the garlic and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add the beef and cook, breaking it up, until no pink remains, 5 to 7 minutes.

Stir in the raisins, cumin, oregano, tomato paste and 1½ teaspoons salt, then cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Stir in ¾ cup water and bring to a simmer. Reduce to medium and cook, stirring occasionally, until most of the water has evaporated, 7 to 9 minutes.

Stir in the olives and cook until heated through, about 1 minute. Off heat, stir in the brine, cilantro and tomatoes. Taste and season with salt and pepper.