

Guerrero Style "Stuffing" – *Relleno*

Ingredients

2 lb (1 kg)	pork shoulder with skin
1 lb (454 g) about 3	potatoes
1	tomato
3	carrots
1	plantain
½ cup	raisins
½ cup	green olives
1 can	pineapple packed in juice; save juice, and cut pineapple into chunks
3	<i>guajillo</i> peppers; washed, stems and seeds removed
1	white onion; peeled, ends removed, and halved
3 cloves	garlic; peeled
½ tsp	dry thyme
½ tsp	dry Mexican oregano OR marjoram
3	bay leaves
½ tsp	cumin
3	cloves
¾ cup	pineapple vinegar,
	OR ½ cup apple cider vinegar and ¼ cup juice from the pineapple
3 tbsp	lard OR oil
¼ tsp	black pepper, plus more, to taste
1 tsp	salt, plus more, to taste
Water, as needed; freshly boiled	



To serve: crusty buns, pickled jalapeño peppers

Prepare marinade: Warm up a dry frying pan over medium heat; add *guajillo* peppers, turning frequently to roast evenly. Transfer to a bowl, and pour boiling water over, to cover; allow to soak. In the same pan, lightly roast oregano (or marjoram), thyme, cloves, cumin, and one garlic clove; transfer to a bowl or mortar, and pound with the back of a spoon, or a pestle, to break up into small pieces. Reserve. Cut up one half of the onion into chunks, and place in a blender jar. Add half a cup of vinegar (or mix), the other two garlic cloves, salt, and pepper; add soaked peppers, and reserved seasonings. Process for one minute, then add half a cup of the soaking water from the peppers, and process again for a few seconds, until smooth; Reserve. **Prepare meat for marinade:** Remove skin from the pork shoulder, remove any bristles that might be still attached, and cut into two or three rectangles; cut meat into chunks, and if there is bone, it may be kept with the rest of the meat. Arrange in a non-reactive container (preferably with lid). Pour reserved marinade over; using tongs and a kitchen brush, or gloved hands, rub meat and skin with marinade, turning and mixing, to coat. Cover container tightly with foil, or lid; Place in the fridge for at least four hours, or overnight.

When ready to cook, prep veggies for sautéing: Peel plantain, and slice into coins. Chop the other half of the onion. Wash tomato, potatoes, and carrots. Remove stem spot from tomato, and chop; peel and cube potatoes; remove ends, and peel carrots, cut lengthwise into quarters, then slice. Warm up one tablespoon of lard (or oil) in a large pan over medium heat; add plantain, and fry, flipping, to brown all sides. Remove into a bowl, and reserve.

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In the same pan, warm up two tablespoons of lard (or oil); add chopped onions, and sauté, until translucent, then add chopped tomatoes. Continue cooking, and stirring until tomatoes are soft, then incorporate cubed potatoes. Cook and stir for a couple of minutes, then add sliced carrots, and continue stirring. Add raisins, then pineapple chunks. Stir, then incorporate reserved fried plantain. Season with salt and pepper, to taste, then tuck in bay leaves. **Optional:** Add olives; otherwise, reserve olives, to serve on the side. Allow to cook for two more minutes, then remove from heat. **Pre-heat oven to 350°F (180°C).** **Assemble for baking:** Traditionally, *relleno guerrerense* is arranged in a clay pot, but a ceramic baking dish, or a large oven-proof glass tray are also adequate. Transfer half of the sautéed mix, spreading as a layer. Arrange marinated meat (and bone, if using) on top, in a single layer. Spread the rest of the sautéed mix, to cover meat. Top with skin rectangles. Pour a quarter cup of vinegar (or vinegar and juice mix) into the container with the leftover marinade. Scrape and mix with a spatula, then pour into the baking dish. Cover dish with parchment paper, tucking tightly in, around the edges, to keep moisture contained. **Bake in the middle of the oven for two hours.** Take dish out of the oven, and uncover; the meat should be fully cooked, and fork-tender. Change oven setting to broil, then return uncovered dish for a few minutes, and allow skin to crisp further.

To serve: Arrange some veggies on a plate, then top with shredded meat, and a piece of crispy skin; drizzle some of the juices from the dish on top. Offer crusty buns, pickled jalapeños, and olives (if reserved), on the side (photo, right).

Tradition calls to pull open the top of a crusty bun with one's hands, moist the inside with juices from the relleno, then scoop a very generous portion of it, to completely stuff the bun (photo below, left); finally, top with pickled jalapeños, and crown with a piece of crispy skin (photo below, right):

