

Slow Cooked Beef Barbacoa

Make authentic slow cooker beef barbacoa at home! This tender, spicy Mexican dish takes just 15 minutes prep for restaurant-quality results.

15 min

PREP

8h

COOK

8h 15min

TOTAL

4

SERVINGS

Medium

DIFFICULTY

Ingredients

- 1 onion
- 5 clove garlic
- 2 guajillo pepper
- 1 red chilli
- 1 cup beef broth
- 1 tbsp sunflower oil
- 2 bay leaf
- 2 lb chuck roast
- 1 tbsp oregano
- 2 tsp cumin
- 1 tsp black pepper
- 1 pinch salt

Instructions

- 1 Prepare the chili sauce base**

Heat a large dry sauté pan over medium heat for 2 minutes. Add 1 halved onion and 5 garlic cloves to the dry pan and cook for 5 minutes, turning occasionally, until lightly charred and fragrant on all surfaces.
- 2** Add 2 guajillo peppers and 2 chile de arbol to the pan and toast for 30 seconds until fragrant and slightly darkened. Remove pan from heat.
- 3** Transfer all toasted vegetables and peppers to a blender with 1 cup beef broth. Blend on high speed for 1-2 minutes until completely smooth with no visible chunks.

4 **Sear the beef**

Heat 1 tablespoon vegetable oil in the same sauté pan over medium-high heat until shimmering, about 2 minutes. Season 2 pounds chuck roast all over with salt and pepper.

5 Sear the chuck roast for 3-4 minutes per side until deeply browned and caramelized on all surfaces. Transfer beef to slow cooker.

6 **Assemble and slow cook**

Pour the blended chili sauce over the beef in the slow cooker. Add 2 bay leaves, 2 teaspoons dried oregano, 1 teaspoon ground cumin, and 1 pinch black peppercorns.

7 Cover and cook on low heat for 7-8 hours, until the beef easily shreds when pierced with a fork and pulls apart effortlessly.

8 **Finish and serve**

Remove and discard bay leaves and peppercorns. Use two forks to shred the beef into bite-sized strands directly in the slow cooker.

9 Strain the shredded beef from the cooking liquid, reserving the liquid for serving. Season the meat with salt to taste and serve immediately with warm tortillas or over rice.

Tips

Toast the onions, garlic, and chilies in a dry pan to develop deeper, more complex flavors before blending into the sauce.

Sear the beef before slow cooking to create a beautiful caramelized crust that adds extra depth to the final dish.

Save some of the cooking liquid to keep the shredded meat moist and flavorful when serving.

For meal prep, portion the barbacoa into individual containers with a bit of cooking liquid to prevent drying out.

Remove excess fat from the cooking liquid by refrigerating it overnight - the fat will solidify on top for easy removal.

Taste and adjust seasoning after shredding the meat, as the flavors concentrate during the long cooking process.

For extra richness, add a bay leaf and a few black peppercorns to the slow cooker along with the other spices.

If the sauce seems too thin, remove the lid during the last hour of cooking to allow some liquid to evaporate.