

Mexican Lamb Tacos with Tequila Soaked Raisins and Pepitas



Ingredients

- 6-8 pound boneless American Lamb shoulder
- 2 tablespoons canola or vegetable oil
- 1 medium red onion, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 teaspoon chile powder
- 1 teaspoon ancho chile powder
- ½ teaspoon cumin
- Kosher salt
- ½ cup golden raisins
- 3 tablespoons tequila
- ½ cup pepitas
- 2 avocados, chopped
- Pickled Onions**
- Mexican Crema*

Hot Sauce
Flour or Corn Tortillas
1 cup crumbled Queso Fresco
Cilantro, chopped, for garnish

Directions

Preheat oven to 350°F. Cut lamb shoulder in large pieces, approximately 4-5 inches and remove excess fat. Season generously on all sides with Kosher salt.

In a large heavy-bottom oven safe pot (I use my dutch oven), heat the oil over medium-high heat. Sear lamb shoulder on all sides until deep golden brown, approximately 2-4 minutes per side. If your pot is too small to cook all the lamb at one time in a single layer, sear in batches.

Remove browned lamb from the pot and use a paper towel to blot away excess grease. Pour in 1 cup of water and use a wooden spoon to scrap up all the browned bits on the bottom of your pot. Stir in onion, garlic, chile powder, ancho chile powder, bay leaves, cumin, and a big pinch of salt. Return all the lamb to pot and add enough water so that it submerges $\frac{2}{3}$ of the meat.

Place uncovered pot in the oven for 2½ to 3½ hours, turning the lamb a couple times throughout the braising process. Lamb is done when almost all of the liquid is evaporated and the meat literally falls apart as you try to pick it up with a fork.

Remove bay leaves and discard. Remove meat to a large bowl and shred with two forks (or allow to cool a bit and shred with your fingers). Discard any visible big chunks of fat.

If serving right away: discard any excess braising liquid left in pot. Add shredded lamb back into pot and return to oven, turning shredded lamb occasionally, until it's as crispy and caramelized as you want it.

If making ahead: let lamb cool completely and refrigerate for up to a few days. Alternatively, you can wrap shredded lamb in foil and seal in a ziploc bag and freeze for several weeks. Thaw overnight in the refrigerator and reheat in 350°F oven wrapped in foil placed on a baking sheet. Once lamb is heated through, unwrap foil and let lamb get all crispy and caramelized, if desired. Meanwhile, while lamb cooks in oven, submerge raisins in tequila in a small mixing bowl. Let soak for approximately 2 hours.

Warm tortillas. Top with shredded lamb, tequila soaked raisins, pepitas, pickled onions, and avocado. Drizzle with crema and hot sauce, and garnish with queso fresco and cilantro. Devour.

Tip: *you can easily make a DIY substitute for Mexican Crema if you can't find it. Just combine ½ cup sour cream with ¼ cup of half and half. Season with Kosher salt and if too thick, thin with filtered water to desired consistency.

Servings: 4-6 | Prep Time: 30 minutes | Cook Time: 3 hours