Skillet Arepas with Black Beans and Tomato

4 stuffed arepas · Active 25 min · Total 40 min

Skills: Intermediate

Ingredients

- 1 cup precooked white cornmeal for arepas (150 g)
- 1 cup warm water (240 ml), plus teaspoons as needed
- 1/2 teaspoon fine salt, divided
- 2 teaspoons neutral oil (10 ml), divided
- 1 can black beans (15 oz/425 g), drained and rinsed
- 1 medium tomato, finely diced (150 g)
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- 2 tablespoons water for the beans (30 ml)
- 2 teaspoons lime juice (10 ml)
- 2 tablespoons chopped cilantro

Set out

10-inch nonstick skillet with lid, Mixing bowl, Spatula, Plate and clean towel

Allergens

No major US allergen identified in the base ingredients. Check labels and substitutions.

Make it

1. Mix warm water with 1/4 teaspoon salt. Stir in arepa cornmeal and rest for 5 minutes. Knead briefly with clean hands. Add teaspoons of water if the dough cracks badly.

2. Divide into four balls and flatten to rounds about 3 1/2 inches across and 1/2 inch thick.

3. Heat 1 teaspoon oil in the skillet over medium-low. Cook the arepas for 7–8 minutes per side until golden. Cover and cook for 3 more minutes, then split one to check the center has no wet dough. Put on a plate and cover with the towel.

4. Add remaining oil, beans, cumin, remaining salt and 2 tablespoons water to the skillet. Cook over medium heat for 3–4 minutes until hot, crushing a few beans. Stir in tomato and cook for 1 minute.

5. Turn off the heat and add lime juice and cilantro. Split the warm arepas partway through, fill with beans and serve immediately.

One burner, two short stages

The cakes cook first and stay covered only while the beans heat. Set the serving plate in a stable clear spot before lighting the burner, so there is somewhere safe to transfer hot food without juggling pans in a narrow galley.

A useful detail

Cooking flour can leave a warm, soft center, but it should not be wet or paste-like. Make the cakes thinner next time if the outsides brown before the centers set.

Keep it well

Refrigerate beans and arepas separately within 2 hours, or 1 hour above 90°F/32°C, at 40°F/4°C or below for up to 3 days. Reheat the beans to 165°F/74°C. Warm arepas in a covered skillet, then uncover briefly to refresh their crust.