MEXICAN

Bistec Ranchero

COMPLEXITY	SERVES	PREP	COOK	TECHNIQUE	CUT
Basic	**4**	**15 min**	**1 hr**	**Simmer**	**Outside round**

Ingredients

- 700 g (1½ lb) outside round, cut into 4 thin steaks about 1 cm (⅜ in) thick
- Salt and black pepper
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 white onion, sliced into half-moons
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- 2 jalapeños or serranos, sliced
- 4 ripe tomatoes (about 500 g or 1 lb), roughly chopped
- 250 ml (1 cup) water or beef stock
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 2 tbsp chopped cilantro (coriander)
- Warm tortillas, rice and beans, to serve

Steps

1. Season the steaks generously with salt and pepper (up to 30 minutes ahead). Pound lightly with a mallet or the back of a heavy knife.
2. Heat the oil in a wide skillet over medium-high heat. Brown the steaks for 1½ minutes per side, until golden. Move to a plate.
3. Lower the heat to medium. Cook the onion for 5 minutes, until soft and translucent. Add the garlic and chillies and cook for 1 minute more.
4. Add the tomatoes, oregano, cumin and a pinch of salt. Cook for 8 minutes, stirring now and then, until they break down into a thick sauce.
5. Pour in the water and bring to a bubble. Slide the steaks back in, pressing them under the sauce.
6. Cover and simmer on low heat for 35 to 40 minutes, until the beef is tender enough to cut with a spoon. Add a splash of water if the sauce gets too thick.
7. Taste for salt and stir in half the cilantro. Scatter the rest on top and serve.

Notes

- **Heat:** deseed the chillies for a milder sauce, or add a dried chile de árbol for more.
- **Serving:** best with warm tortillas, rice and refried beans or frijoles de la olla.
- **Leftovers:** shred the beef into the sauce and use it for tacos or burritos.
- **Freezer:** freezes in its sauce for 3 months. Thaw overnight in the fridge and reheat until steaming hot.
- **Chef's touch:** serve with lime wedges; a squeeze of acid lifts the tomato sauce and the rich beef.
- **Twist:** for a smoky, non-traditional version, stir in 1 tbsp chopped chipotle in adobo with the tomatoes.