

BASQUE SHEEPHERDERS' LAMB STEW

from Bruce Aidells and Denis Kelly

HERB RUB

1 tsp. chile powder
1 tbsp. paprika preferably sweet Hungarian
1 tsp. dried oregano or thyme
2 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp freshly ground pepper

3-4 lbs. lamb stew meat from the neck, shoulder, or leg, with or without bones, cut into 2-inch pieces
1 fire-roasted red bell pepper (or 2 canned or bottled red peppers or pimentos)
2 tbsp. red wine vinegar
2 tbsp. olive oil
1 medium onion, chopped
6 garlic cloves, chopped
1 fire-roasted mild green chile, chopped, or 1/4 cup chopped canned chiles
2 bay leaves
About 1 cup red wine
About 1 cup beef stock
Salt and freshly ground pepper

Mix the rub ingredients in a small bowl, add the meat and toss to coat thoroughly. Marinate for up to 2 hours at room temperature or overnight in the refrigerator. If the meat has been refrigerated bring it up to room temperature before cooking.

In a blender or food processor, blend the red pepper and vinegar to a puree. In a large skillet or heavy pot, heat the olive oil over medium-high heat. Brown the lamb, about 10 minutes. Remove the lamb. Reduce the heat to medium and saute the onion, garlic, and green chile for about 5 minutes. Add the lamb, pureed red peppers, bay leaves, wine and stock and simmer for about 1 1/2 hours until meat is tender. Uncover to reduce the sauce or add more wine or stock if necessary.