

CARNE ASADA

CHARCOAL-GRILLED BEEF IN OREGANO/BLACK PEPPER MARINADE

There are approximately 11 *recados* – or spice blends – used throughout Yucatán. Each is made distinctive by its primary ingredient. The famous *recado rojo* derives its color and flavor from *achiote*, or annatto. The intense *recado negro* owes its pungent flavor and color to charred dried chiles. The deep green-brown recado known as *recado para bistec* (which suggests its typical use) is an intoxicating blend of *orégano Yucateco* and crushed black pepper. Its taste is indescribable, and when mixed with *naranja agria*, as is traditional, it acquires a complex flavor with citrus top notes and burnt pepper and herb bottom notes. Give the meat plenty of time to marinate, then cook quickly over a mesquite charcoal fire.

✧ MAKE THE MARINADE ✧

- **5 garlic cloves, peeled and charred**
- **1 tsp. (5ml) black peppercorns**
- **2 Tbs. (30ml) orégano Yucateco, lightly toasted** (*Substitute: 1 tsp. Mexican oregano*)
- **6 Tbs. (90ml) recado para bistec**
- **6 Tbs. (90ml) naranja agria juice** (*Substitute: 2 parts lime juice, 1 part each grapefruit and sweet orange juice*)
- **3 1/4 lbs. (1.5 k) skirt steak, well hammered to tenderize**
- **Salt to taste**

STEP 1 GRIND SPICES IN A MOLCAJETE or mortar and pestle. Meanwhile, mix the recado with the orange juice, and stir until it resembles a thick catsup or barbecue sauce: thick but pourable. Add the spice mixture and stir to incorporate. Check for salt (recado para bistec always contains some, so be careful not to oversalt). Completely cover the beef with the marinade, top and bottom. Allow to marinate in the refrigerator as long as time allows: anywhere from 1 hour to overnight (the longer the better).

✧ GRILL THE BEEF ✧

STEP 2 LIGHT A CHARCOAL GRILL OR WOOD FIRE. Grill for 10-15 minutes on each side or to desired doneness. Remove from grill and allow to cool. Cut into slices and serve with tortillas, *Tomate Tamulado* and *Chile Tamulado*.