

Criollo is a term that refers to the “Puerto Ricanness” of something. For us, it means “of this place,” and while there are so many dishes on the island that qualify as *criollo*, this one may be the most quintessentially Puerto Rican. Completely comforting, it is made very often at home but also easy to find in restaurants all over the island. Traditionally the dish is made with a lesser cut of meat that’s pounded, tenderized with vinegar, and sautéed in olive oil, but here I use lean, buttery tenderloin and just a hint of vinegar. It’s always served with white rice and pink beans.

This recipe calls for more rice and beans than you will need to serve two people, but we like to keep these things cooked so that they are always ready for mealtime, to make *arroz mamposteo* (page 135) or a late-night snack.

“BISTEC” ENCEBOLLAO CON ARROZ BLANCO Y HABICHUELAS ROSADAS

Beef Tenderloin Medallions and Sautéed Onions with Rice and Pink Beans

SERVES 2

- 8 ounces beef tenderloin
- 1 clove garlic, mashed to a paste in a mortar
- ½ teaspoon dried oregano
- ½ teaspoon apple cider vinegar
- Kosher salt
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- ½ of a large white onion, sliced into thin rings
- Arroz Blanco (recipe follows), for serving
- Habichuelas Rosadas (recipe follows on page 135), for serving

From the beef tenderloin cut 2 medallions, making each about 4 ounces. With a mallet, pound each piece of meat to about ½ inch thick. Season the beef with the garlic, oregano, vinegar, and salt to taste.

In a sauté pan, heat the oil over high heat. Add the beef and sauté until it has a nice, seared, brown surface, 1 to 2 minutes on each side. Transfer the beef to a serving plate and add the onion to the sauté pan. Cook until the onion softens a bit and some brown color begins to form, about 2 minutes.

Spoon the onion over the beef and serve with the rice and beans.

ARROZ BLANCO / WHITE RICE

SERVES 4 TO 6

- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt
- 2 cups short- or medium-grain white rice

In a medium saucepan, bring 3 cups water to a boil with the oil and salt. Add the rice and stir. Reduce the heat to medium, stir, and cook uncovered for 10 to 15 minutes, then stir again. Reduce the heat to low, cover the pot, and cook for 10 to 15 minutes more, until the rice is tender and all the water has been absorbed. Serve hot.

