

FAJITAS - Skirt Steak



Adjust ingredients slightly based on number of folks eating.

Fajitas are a terrific for an informal dinner party. There is something inherently festive about them and their accompanying dishes. Or perhaps it's the margaritas and Mexican beer that so often go hand-in-hand with this Southwestern treat. Don't settle for some watered-down, chain restaurant version of fajitas.

The Mexican term for grilled skirt steak is *arracheras*, and its American counterpart is *fajitas*. But these days, fajita has come to describe just about anything cooked and eaten, rolled up, in a flour tortilla. The only true fajitas, however, are made from skirt steak. For this recipe you can use a meat of your choice.

Fajitas start with the marinade. Marinades for fajitas rely on acid ingredients like lime juice not just for flavor, but to tenderize the meat. So that the marinade will have time to work, fajitas should be marinated several hours or up to 24 hours.

There is nothing written in stone when it comes to marinades. Cooks experiment with everything from bottled salad dressing or orange juice to tequila or Coca-Cola. Putting together your marinade can be a creative experience.

Drain the meat; then cut it across the grain, diagonally, into finger-length strips. Fry the strips over high heat in the disk, working in batches if necessary, turning them frequently. They should take no more than 1-2 minutes to cook. I like to fry fajitas because I wouldn't think of serving them without stir-fried onions and bell peppers, so the disk does double duty (easily cook the meats and onions/peppers at the same time).

By now, of course, everybody knows how to eat fajitas: You roll them in a flour tortilla -- but not all by themselves. The proper fajita feast will include a stack of warm flour

tortillas, grilled or fried onions and bell peppers (red and/or green), pico de gallo, guacamole and maybe a little sour cream.

Onions and Peppers: The onions and peppers are very simple: add a few tablespoons of olive oil. Add 1 large (or 2 medium) onions, separated into rings, and 2 green bell peppers (or 1 green and 1 red), cut into strips. Add the onion rings and pepper strips and stir-fry them just until they start to get limp, 3 or 4 minutes. You might sprinkle just a little salt over them.

Tortillas: Fairly good to excellent flour tortillas are available in supermarkets almost everywhere these days and 6 or 7 inches in diameter. Warm them up by sealing them in foil packages, six or eight at a time, and placing them Better yet, use one of those nifty tortilla keepers.