

COOK'S

ILLUSTRATED

STEAK TACOS

Serves 4 to 6. Published September 1, 2008. From Cook's Illustrated.

For a less spicy dish, remove some or all of the ribs and seeds from the jalapeños before chopping them for the marinade. In addition to the toppings suggested below, try serving the tacos with Sweet and Spicy Pickled Onions (see related recipe), thinly sliced radishes or cucumber, or salsa.

INGREDIENTS

Herb Paste

- 1/2** cup packed fresh cilantro leaves
- 3** medium garlic cloves , roughly chopped
- 3** medium scallions , roughly chopped (about 1/3 cup)
- 1** medium jalapeño chile , stemmed and roughly chopped (see note)
- 1/2** teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/4** cup vegetable oil
- 1** tablespoon fresh lime juice

Steak

- 1** flank steak (1 1/2 to 1 3/4 pounds), trimmed of excess fat and cut lengthwise (with grain) into 4 equal pieces (see below)
- 1** tablespoon kosher salt or 1 1/2 teaspoons table salt
- 1/2** teaspoon sugar
- 1/2** teaspoon ground black pepper
- 2** tablespoons vegetable oil

Tacos

- 12** (6-inch) corn tortillas , warmed (see note)
- Fresh cilantro leaves
- Minced white or red onion
- Lime wedges

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. FOR THE HERB PASTE:** Pulse cilantro, garlic, scallions, jalapeño, and cumin in food processor until finely chopped, ten to twelve 1-second pulses, scraping down sides as necessary. Add oil and process until mixture is smooth and resembles pesto, about 15 seconds, scraping down sides of workbowl as necessary. Transfer 2 tablespoons herb paste to medium bowl; whisk in lime juice and set aside.
- 2. FOR THE STEAK:** Using dinner fork, poke each piece of steak 10 to 12 times on each side. Place in large baking dish; rub all sides of steak pieces evenly with salt and then coat with remaining herb paste. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate at least 30 minutes or up to 1 hour.
- 3.** Scrape herb paste off steak and sprinkle all sides of pieces evenly with sugar and pepper. Heat oil in 12-inch heavy-bottomed nonstick skillet over medium-high heat until smoking. Place steak in skillet and cook until well browned, about 3 minutes. Flip steak and sear until second side is well browned, 2 to 3 minutes. Using tongs, stand each piece on a cut side and cook, turning as necessary, until all cut sides are well browned and internal temperature registers 125 to 130 degrees on an instant-read thermometer, 2 to 7 minutes. Transfer steak to cutting board and let rest 5 minutes.

- 4. 4. FOR THE TACOS:** Using sharp chef's knife or carving knife, slice steak pieces across grain into 1/8-inch-thick pieces. Transfer sliced steak to bowl with herb paste-lime juice mixture and toss to coat. Season with salt. Spoon small amount of sliced steak into center of each warm tortilla and serve immediately, passing toppings separately.

TECHNIQUE

How to Warm Tortillas Our preferred method for warming tortillas is to place each one over the medium flame of a gas burner until slightly charred, about 30 seconds per side. We also like toasting them in a dry skillet over medium-high heat until softened and speckled with brown spots, 20 to 30 seconds per side. You can also use the oven: Divide the tortillas into 2 stacks and wrap each stack in foil. Heat the tortillas on the middle rack of a 350-degree oven for 5 minutes. Keep the warmed tortillas wrapped in foil or a kitchen towel until ready to use or they will dry out. (If your tortillas are very dry, pat each with a little water before warming.)



STEP-BY-STEP

Keys to Tender, Flavorful Beef



1. Cut: Slice flank steak into strips that can be browned on all sides.



2. Poke: Pierce steak pieces with fork to allow herb paste to penetrate.



3. Salt: Season meat and coat with herb paste; let stand at least 30 minutes.



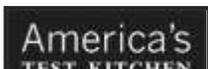
4. Sear: Cook steak in generous 2 tablespoons oil to promote browning.



5. Slice: Cut steak thinly across grain to ensure tenderness.



6. Toss: Mix steak with more herb paste and lime juice to brighten flavors.



America's Test Kitchen is a 2,500-square-foot kitchen located just outside of Boston. It is the home of Cook's Country and Cook's Illustrated magazines and is the workday destination for more than three dozen test cooks, editors, and

 cookware specialists. Our mission is to test recipes until we understand how and why they work and arrive at the best version. We also test kitchen equipment and supermarket ingredients in search of brands that offer the best value and performance. You can watch us work by tuning in to America's Test Kitchen (www.americastestkitchen.com) on public television.