

Mole Veracruzano ~ Mole from Veracruz



Mole (Makes about 5 pints of mole)

CHILES

12 mulato chiles

8 pasilla chiles

→Remove the seeds and veins from the chiles. Place in a medium-sized pot and cover with water.

→Over medium heat, bring the chiles to a simmer and simmer for 5 minutes. Set aside to soak for an additional 10 minutes.

→Drain the chiles. Discard the chile water and place chiles to the side.

ONION/GARLIC MIXTURE

2 TBSP + 1 TBSP pork lard or vegetable oil (I like to use avocado or grapeseed oil.)

½ medium white onion, sliced

6 garlic cloves, peeled and left whole

4 cups chicken broth (If you have it, homemade is best.)

→In a medium saucepan, heat the lard for about a minute. Add the onion and garlic. Fry for about 3 minutes until the onion is translucent but not brown.

→Using tongs, remove the onion and garlic from the lard and place in a blender. Do NOT clean this saucepan. You will use this leftover lard in a few steps.

→Add ½ cup of chicken broth and blend until smooth.

→Now, add about half of the rehydrated chiles to the onion/garlic mixture in the blender. Add another 1 ½ cups of chicken broth to the blender, and blend until smooth. If the blender blades become stuck, you may need to stop the blender and loosen them with a wooden spoon. You may also need to add some additional broth if the mixture is too thick. Once the mixture is blended, pour into a bowl.

→Place the remaining chiles in the blender. Add 2 cups of chicken broth. Blend until smooth. Once again, if the blades become stuck you may need to stop the blender and loosen them with a wooden spoon. You may also need to add some additional broth if the mixture is too thick. Add this mixture to the rest of the chiles/onion/garlic.

→In the same saucepan that you fried the onion/garlic, add an additional tablespoon of lard. Heat the lard until it shimmers, then add the chile/onion/garlic mixture. Be careful because it might splatter! Stir the mixture so that it combines with the lard.

→Reduce the heat to low. You will need to fry the mixture for about 10 minutes to bring out the flavor. I like to put a lid on the saucepan and keep it slightly cracked to let out steam. I have found that if you don't do this, the chile puree splatters everywhere even if you are stirring it constantly! I stir it about every two minutes so that it doesn't stick to the bottom of the pan.

→After 10 minutes, remove the saucepan from heat and set aside.

FRUIT/NUT MIXTURE

About 3 TBSP pork lard or vegetable oil

1/3 cup of whole, raw almonds

¼ cup hazelnuts

¼ cup pine nuts (Peanuts could be substituted, if necessary.)

¼ cup pecans

¼ cup raisins

8 prunes, pitted

½ small plantain

1 bolillo, sausage roll, or large piece of French bread (tear into pieces)

1 dried/stale corn tortilla (tear into pieces)

3 TBSP sesame seeds

4 cups chicken broth

→Add about 1 TBSP of lard to a medium size saucepan. Fry the almonds, hazelnuts, pine nuts, and pecans just until fragrant. Do NOT burn! They will probably absorb most of the lard. Place in a bowl.

→Add another TBSP of lard to the saucepan. Fry the raisins, prunes, and plantain until lightly browned. Do NOT burn! They will probably absorb most of the lard. Place in the bowl along with the nuts.

→Add 1 more TBSP of lard to the saucepan. Fry the bolillo, tortilla, and sesame seeds. Be very careful because sesame seeds can burn easily. They should give off a fragrant smell when ready. Place in the bowl with the nuts and fruits. Mix all of the ingredients together.

→Place half of this fruit/nut/bread mixture in the blender. Add 2 cups of chicken broth. Blend until smooth. Add this to the chile puree. Repeat with the remaining mixture and broth. Add to the chile puree.

SPICE MIXTURE

1 large plum tomato, cut in half lengthwise

4 peppercorns

4 cloves

½-inch Mexican/Ceylon cinnamon

3 tsp salt

2 cups+ chicken broth, divided

1 ounce Mexican drinking chocolate, chopped

→On a comal or griddle, place the tomato, peppercorns, cloves, and cinnamon. Toast the peppercorns, cloves, and cinnamon until fragrant. Remove and place in a blender. Cook the tomato until it becomes blackened on all sides. Place in a blender. Add 1 cup of chicken broth. Blend on high speed until completely smooth and add to the chile/nut mixture.

→Pour the mole into a large pot with high sides and set over medium heat. Add an additional cup of chicken broth. Add the chopped chocolate. Stir the mole until the chocolate is completely melted.

→Cook the mole for about 30 minutes over low heat. You may need to add some more chicken broth if you feel like the mixture is too thick. Once again, I like to partially cover the pot so that the mole doesn't splatter everywhere. I stir it about every 4-5 minutes making sure the mole doesn't stick to the bottom of the pot.

STORAGE

→After the 30 minutes, I usually pour the mole into 1 quart mason jars and let it cool on the countertop. Then, I add the lids and rims and place the COMPLETELY cooled mole in the refrigerator or freezer.

→The mole will keep in the refrigerator for about 1 month and in the freezer for several months.

SERVING

→I usually boil about 4-6 boneless, skinless chicken thighs or breasts with carrots, celery, onion, cilantro, salt, and pepper in a pot until cooked.

→I defrost one jar of mole and place it in a medium saucepan. I may add some chicken broth (from above) if the mole seems too thick. I heat the mole for about 5-10 minutes.

→I like to place the chicken in the mole and then serve it on a plate topped with sesame seeds and a side of rice.

NOTES:

- I have always made this recipe using lard because that is the traditional way. However, if you are looking for an alternative, I'm sure vegetable oil would work just fine.
- I like to use homemade broth if I have it on hand. I think the overall flavor of the mole is more refined, but I have also used store-bought broth as well.
- I have tried many mole recipes, and I like this one because it is not sweet. The chiles lend a certain spiciness to the sauce that is more characteristic of the Veracruz region. If you would like, you can add some piloncillo for sweetness, but I think you will find that you like it better without it.

Recipe Source: Adapted from Diana Kennedy's My Mexico

