

Chicken Mole

adapted from [Rick Bayless via Saveur Magazine](#)

serves 4 hungry folk

makes 1 quart mole sauce (enough for two dinners)

8 ancho chiles
8 guajillo chiles
2 1/2 tablespoon sesame seeds
1/2 teaspoon whole aniseeds
1/2 teaspoon peppercorns
1/4 teaspoon whole cloves
1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
1 1/2 dried bay leaves, crumbled
3/4 inch piece of a cinnamon stick (preferably Mexican)
1/4 cup raw almonds (skin on)
1/4 cup raw peanuts (shelled and skinned)
2 1/2 tablespoons pepitas (hulled pumpkin seeds)
2 1/2 tablespoons raisins
5 cloves of garlic (skin on)
1 slice white bread, crusts removed
1 corn tortilla
1/4 cup vegetable oil (divided)
1 small onion, halved and thinly sliced
1 quartered tomatillo
1/2 cup chopped and drained tomatoes
4 cups chicken broth
1/2 cup finely chopped Mexican chocolate (such as Ibarra)
2 tablespoon sugar
2 teaspoons salt
8 chicken thighs, bone-in and skin
Cooked rice- for serving

There are a lot of ingredients in this recipe. If you are like me and have a difficult time measuring accurately while cooking (and tending to the needs of children who are simultaneously turning the living room into an extravagant fort and cutting their own hair), then please measure out your ingredients before you get started. You will be glad you did.

Heat a cast iron or other type of heavy bottom skillet on medium heat.

the chiles

Remove the stem and seeds from the chiles (do not worry if a few seeds stick on, they will be strained out later). Tear the flesh of the chiles into flat pieces. Working with a few at a time, place the chiles on the dry skillet and press down with a spatula to flatten. Remove to a heat-safe bowl once the chiles have softened and begin to turn color- it only takes a few seconds. Repeat with the remaining chiles. Cover the chiles with boiling water and soak for 30 minutes.

the spices

While the chiles are soaking, toast the aniseed in the dry pan for a minute or two, until it begins to smell fragrant. Remove from pan and place in a spice grinder (I use a mortar and pestle). Repeat with the black pepper and add to the spice grinder. Repeat with the sesame seeds and add to the spice grinder. Add the cloves, thyme, oregano, bay leaves, and cinnamon stick to the spice grinder. Grind spices into a powder.

the nuts, raisins, and garlic

One ingredient at a time, toast the almonds, peanuts, pepitas, and raisins. Stir or shake the pan to ensure even toasting. As each is done, remove from the pan and add to a blender. Place garlic in the pan with the skins on. Shake around in the pan until the skin begins to brown. Remove from the pan, smash with a knife, and discard the skin. Add the garlic to the blender.

completing the sauce

Pour 1 tablespoon oil into the pan. Cook onion until it softens and begins to brown. Remove onion from the pan and add to the blender. Pour in the remaining 1 tablespoon of oil. Brown the bread in the oil, flipping to toast both sides. Tear into pieces and add the bread to the blender. Brown the tortilla in the oil, flipping to toast both sides. Tear into pieces and add the tortilla to the blender. Add the diced tomatoes and tomatillos to the blender along with 1 cup chicken broth. Drain the chiles and reserve the water. Add the chiles and 1 cup of chile water to the blender. Blend until smooth. Add more of the broth if necessary to get a smooth consistency.

Heat a large saucepan over medium heat. Place a strainer or food mill over the pot and pour puree mixture through the sieve into the pot. Discard bits left in the strainer. Add ground spice mixture and remaining broth to the pot. Bring mole to a simmer and cook uncovered for 45 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the chocolate whisk to incorporate. Simmer for 20 minutes more. Season to taste with salt.

The sauce can be made a day or two ahead.

the chicken

Preheat the oven to 325 degrees. Pat the chicken dry and season with salt and pepper. Heat a dutch oven over medium heat and add 2 tablespoons of vegetable oil. Add thighs to hot oil in two batches. Cook long enough to brown, then flip and brown the other side. Meat should not be cooked through. Set browned meat aside and repeat with any pieces that did not make it into the first batch. Once all the thighs are browned, return meat to pan and pour 2 cups of mole sauce over the top. Nestle the thighs into the sauce. Bring to a simmer. Cover and transfer to the oven. Cook until the meat reaches 160 degrees- about 40 minutes. Serve with rice.

Freeze the remaining 2 cups of mole for a special dinner down the road.