

122: South of the Border

Oaxacan Mole with Braised Duck Tamal

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Oaxacan Mole

4 mulato chiles, seeds removed and reserved

4 pasilla chiles, seeds removed and reserved

2 guajillo chiles, seeds removed and discarded

3 morita chiles, fried whole

8 ounces duck fat

1 corn tortilla, grilled

8 ounces peanuts, roasted until very dark

3/4 cup pecans, roasted until very dark

1/2 cup almonds, toasted to golden brown

1/4 cup sesame seeds, toast in cast iron with chile seeds

1/2 stick cinnamon, toasted and ground

3/4 teaspoon cloves, toasted and ground

3/4 teaspoon cumin, toasted and ground

1 1/2 teaspoons coriander, toasted and ground

1 1/2 teaspoons Mexican oregano

3/4 teaspoon ground black pepper

1 bay leaf

1 avocado leaf

1/2 yellow onion, charred deeply

1/2 head garlic, charred whole, garlic pressed out

1 small slicer tomato, charred

1 to 2 tomatillos, charred

1/2 very ripe plantain

1/4 very ripe banana

1/2 cup raisins

16 to 24 ounces duck, chicken stock or water (for blending) ingredients together

1 tablet Mexican sweet chocolate

Honey to taste

Salt to taste

Fry the chiles in the duck fat. Remove the chiles from the fat and place in a bowl, then cover chiles with hot water to soften. Reserve the duck fat.

Char and toast the remaining ingredients, setting aside the chocolate, honey and salt for later use. Cut the charred and toasted ingredients into a small dice, then puree the ingredients in batches with the duck stock, ensuring that each batch has a nice distribution of soft, juicy vegetables and fruit. Combine the batches of mole. The puree should be smooth and spreadable.

In a rondeau (a wide shallow pan) or Dutch oven, put 1/4 cup of the duck fat from frying the chiles, reserve the rest for later use. When the fat is hot pour in the mole to fry it. Let the mole simmer for 30 to 45 minutes. Add the reserved chocolate, honey and salt. Cook 10 more minutes. Store, covered, in the refrigerator or divide and freeze in small containers. Reheat over low heat stirring constantly.

Makes 2 1/2 to 3 quarts.

Masa Dough

1/2 pound masa flour

1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder

1 heaping teaspoon salt

1 3/4 cups hot chicken stock

2 ounces duck fat reserved from the mole preparation (lard or shortening can be used instead)

Mix together the masa flour, baking powder and salt in the bowl of a stand mixer bowl or food processor. Slowly incorporate the hot chicken stock into the dry ingredients. Beat the duck fat into the masa dough, then knead for 5 to 7 minutes. Set aside.

Duck Braise (filling)

2 duck legs seasoned with oregano, cumin, and salt to taste

1/2 onion, diced

1/4 cup diced smoked onion

1/2 cup diced carrot

2 cloves of garlic, peeled
4 ounces chocolate porter
4 ounces duck or chicken stock
1/4 cup raisins

Sear the duck legs, then place them in a gallon size plastic bag. Combine the remaining ingredients, except the raisins. Add the vegetables and liquid to the bag. Seal the bag and cook Sous Vide for 8 hours in a 167-degree water bath.

Remove the legs from the bag. Pick the duck meat and chop the skin. Combine the duck with the raisins. Set aside.

Assembly

2 duck breasts, cooked Sous Vide
11.2 ounces masa dough
3/4 cup duck tamal filling
Banana leaves or corn husks
1 ripe plantain, sliced into 1/2" rounds
1/2 cup vegetable oil
3/4 cup Oaxacan Mole
Chimichurri (recipe follows)

Seal the duck breasts in vacuum bags and place the bags in a 130-degree water bath for at least 45 minutes to 4 hours. Remove the breasts from the bags and dry thoroughly.

Sear the duck breasts skin side down in a cast iron pan over medium-low heat until the skin is crisped. Turn the duck breasts and cook the other side for 45 to 60 seconds. Remove from heat and let the duck rest for 5 minutes, then slice.

Making 4 tamales, flatten masa dough onto banana leaves or corn husks. Divide the filling and place in the center of each leaf. Fold the masa onto itself. Steam for 30 minutes.

Just before serving, heat the vegetable oil to 325 degrees in a cast iron pan. Fry the plantain rounds in the hot oil until dark golden brown.

Spoon reheated mole on the bottom of each plate. Divide the sliced duck breast between the plates and arrange the fried plantain rounds on the plate. Place a tamal on each plate and top with mole. Generously spoon chimichurri onto the duck slices and the tamales.

Serves 4.

Chimichurri

1/2 cup white onion, brunoised (cubed)

1 tablespoon seeded and minced jalapeno

1 1/2 teaspoons minced garlic

3 limes, use the juice of 1 1/2 and the zest of 1/2

3/4 teaspoon cumin, toasted and ground

1 small bunch cilantro, chopped, including stems

1/4 bunch parsley, leaves chopped

1/4 cup olive oil

Salt and pepper to taste

Stir all the ingredients together. Serve the day the chimichurri is made.