

Classic Red Mole With Turkey (Mole Rojo Clásico de Guajolote)

Inspired by Rick Bayless, Mexico One Plate At A Time (ISBN 0-684-84186)

Red Mole is Mexico's national dish. Mole is the Spanish transliteration of the Aztec word that means sauce. The sauce comes in a variety of colors, from yellow to black. In this variation, the sauce is red, derived from three different varieties of red chiles which produce a round complex flavor.

Serves 8

1. Roast tomatillos

5 ounces (3 medium) tomatillos With your hands, peel off husk and discard.

baking sheet
broiler oven
thongs
medium bowl

Rinse tomatillos to remove any residual husk that sticks to the skin.

Spread the tomatillos on a small baking sheet.¹

Roast them 4 inches below a very hot broiler until darkly roasted, even blackened in spots, about 5 minutes.

Flip them over and roast on the other side, 4 or 5 minutes, until splotchy-black, blistered and soft.

Scrape the tomatillos, juice and all, into a medium bowl.

2. Roast seeds and spices

½ cup (about 2 ½ ounces)
sesame seeds

small skillet
stove
spatula

Heat an ungreased small skillet over medium heat for 2 minutes.

Add sesame seeds. Toast, stirring constantly, until golden, about 5 minutes.

Transfer 2/3 to the tomatillo bowl. Set aside the remaining 1/3 for garnishing.

½ teaspoon cinnamon,
preferably Mexican canela
¼ teaspoon black pepper
¼ teaspoon anise
a scant 1/8 teaspoon cloves

Roast spices in an ungreased small skillet over medium heat for 3 minutes. Stir constantly to prevent burning them.

Grind spices to a slightly coarse consistency in a mortar and pestle or a spice mill (a coffee grinder used only for spices).

¹ With this small amount, you may use a tabletop toaster oven rather than a regular oven.

3. Prepare other ingredients

4 garlic cloves	Separate cloves from the bulb. ²
<i>knife</i> <i>cutting board</i>	Remove peel and discard. Cut off tough stem end and discard. Cut cloves in half lengthwise. Set aside.
A scant ½ cup (about 2 ounces) unskinned almonds	Measure. Set aside.
½ cup (about 2 ounces) raisins	
1 whole (about 4 pounds) boneless turkey breast with skin on ³	Cut two halves apart. Set aside.
1 slice firm white bread	Toast bread until dark. Cut into ½-inch pieces. Set aside.
1 ounce (about ⅓ of a 3.3 ounce tablet) Mexican chocolate	Chop roughly. Set aside.

² One way is to pry the cloves along the border of two adjoining cloves with a paring knife. Another way is to place the bulb on a flat surface and pound it gently once or twice with the flat side of a wide knife like a chef's knife or cleaver.

³ If you happen to buy a turkey breast with the carcass, separate the breast from the carcass and gently boil the carcass in enough water to submerge it to produce a broth that can be used for the mole. later

4. Prepare chiles

6 medium (about 3 ounces
total) dried mulatto chiles
3 medium (about 1 ½ ounces
total) dried ancho chiles
5 medium (about 1 ½ ounces
total) dried pasilla chiles

Remove stem and seeds and discard.

Tear the chiles into flat pieces.

½ cup rich-tasting pork lard or
vegetable oil, plus a little
more if necessary

Set a large (8- to 9-quart) pot (preferably a Dutch oven or Mexican cazuela) over medium heat.

Add lard or oil. Turn on the exhaust fan or open a window to enable smoke from the lard or oil to escape.

chile pieces

When the lard or oil is hot, fry the chiles, three or four pieces at a time, flipping them nearly continually with the tongs, until their interior side has changed to a lighter color, about 20 to 30 seconds total frying time.⁴

tongs

2 bowls
strainer
hot tap water
small plate

As they are done, remove them to a strainer placed on top of an empty bowl to drain the fat.

Occasionally, transfer fried chiles to another bowl and return the drained oil to the pot.

Cover the toasted chiles with hot tap water. Place a small plate on them to keep them submerged. Let stand for 30 minutes.

⁴ Don't toast them so darkly that they begin to smoke – that would make the mole bitter.

5. Brown

garlic cloves
almonds

Remove any stray chile seeds left in the fat.

With the pot still over medium heat, fry the garlic and almonds, stirring regularly, until browned, about 5 minutes. The garlic should be soft and the almonds browned through.

With a slotted spoon, scoop out the garlic and almonds. With the spoon over the pot, Tap the spoon's handle a few times against the side of the pot to remove excess oil from the garlic and almonds and drop it back into the pot.

Transfer garlic and almonds to the tomatillo bowl.

raisins

Now add raisins to the hot pot. Stir with your slotted spoon for 20 to 30 seconds, until they are puffed and browned slightly. Scoop them out, draining as much fat as possible back into the pot.

Add raisins to the tomatillo bowl.

turkey breast
sea salt

Raise the heat to medium high.

Sprinkle all sides of the turkey breast with salt. Lay one on the pot. Thoroughly brown it on all sides, about 10 minutes total.

Remove to a clean plate. Brown the other half in the same way.

Turn off heat.

6. Prepare chile purée

rehydrated chiles
2 ½ cups soaking liquid or
water

blender
tongs
medium-mesh strainer

Use tongs to transfer the rehydrated chiles to a blender, leaving the soaking liquid behind. Taste the soaking liquid, and if it is not bitter, measure 2 ½ cups into the blender. If it is, throw it away and measure in 2 ½ cups of water.

Blend the chiles to a smooth purée, adding a little extra water if necessary, to keep the mixture moving through the blades.

Press the chile mixture through a medium-mesh strainer back into the empty chile-soaking bowl.

7. Prepare tomatillo purée

tomatillo mixture
1 cup water
mixture of ground spices
bread
chocolate

blender
medium-mesh strainer

Without washing the blender jar, scrape the tomatillo mixture into it.

Add 1 cup water along with the cinnamon, pepper, optional anise, cloves, bread and chocolate.

Blend to a smooth purée adding a little water if necessary to keep the mixture moving. Press through a medium-mesh strainer back into the tomatillo bowl.

8. Prepare mole (sauce)

lard or oil as needed
chile purée

Check the fat in the pot. If there is more than a light coating over the bottom, pour off the excess; if the pot is pretty dry, film the bottom with a little more lard or oil.

Set over medium high heat.

When quite hot, scrape in the chile purée. Stir nearly constantly until the mixture has darkened considerably and thickened to the consistency of tomato paste., about 10 to 15 minutes.

tomatillo purée

Add the tomatillo purée. Continue stirring until once again the mixture has thickened to the consistency of tomato paste, about 5 to 10 minutes.

6 cups water or turkey broth

Add water to the pot. Stir to combine thoroughly.

Partially cover, reduce the heat to medium low. Bring liquid to a gentle simmer (small bubbles appearing), stirring occasionally, for 45 minutes.

Check the consistency. The mole should be thick enough to coat a spoon, but not too thickly. If it is too thin, boil it briefly over medium to medium-high heat until a little thicker; If it is too thick, stir in a little water.

sea salt
4 to 5 tablespoons sugar

Season with salt and sugar to achieve a balance of sweet, salty, and spicy.

9. Store (optional)

At this point, you can refrigerate the sauce and the browned turkey in separate covered containers for 2 to 3 days.

10. Braise turkey

turkey
mole

instant read thermometer

Heat the oven to 325 degrees F.

Lay the turkey in the mole. Cover and place in the oven.

Cook until an instant read thermometer placed in the center of the turkey breast registers 150 degrees F, about 40 minutes. There should be only the slightest hint of pink if you cut into it.

11. Rest

Remove the turkey from the mole and place on a cutting board. Cover with foil and let it stand at room temperature for 10 minutes.

12. Arrange

Slice the turkey ½-inch thick, then arrange the slices slightly overlapping on a warm large deep serving platter.

If the mole has thickened beyond the consistency of a medium cream soup, thin it with a little water. Taste and season with a little more salt or sugar if you think necessary.

Ladle a generous amount (3 to 4 cups) of mole over or around the turkey slices.

13. Garnish and serve

sesame seeds
sprigs of watercress or fresh
cilantro for garnish

Sprinkle with the reserved sesame seeds.

Decorate the platter with sprigs of watercress or cilantro.

Serve.