Main dishes / Mexico

Pollo en Mole Negro

Bone-in chicken pieces simmered low and slow in mole negro until the dark, bittersweet sauce coats every surface and the meat pulls from the bone in silken threads — the defining celebration dish of Oaxaca, where complexity is measured in chiles and time.

Time 300 min **Servings** 4

What you'll need.

- ☐ 1400 g Bone-in chicken pieces (legs, thighs, and drumsticks)
- ☐ 200 g Mole negro paste (Oaxacan or commercial, e.g. Doña Maria)
- ☐ 750 ml Chicken stock, warm
- ☐ 8 g Fine sea salt
- ☐ 30 ml Lard or vegetable oil
- ☐ 20 g Sesame seeds, lightly toasted

Let's make it.

01 Pat the chicken pieces completely dry and season all over with salt. Heat the lard or oil in a wide, heavy pot (Dutch oven or cazuela) over medium-high heat until shimmering. Working in batches, sear the chicken skin-side down for 4–5 minutes without moving it until the skin is golden-brown and releases cleanly from the pan. Flip and sear the underside for 2 minutes. Remove and set aside. This browning is not about cooking the chicken through — it is about building Maillard-browned fat and fond in the pot that will marry into the mole.

02 In the same pot over medium heat, add the mole negro paste directly into the remaining fat. Fry the paste, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon, for 3–5 minutes. The paste will sputter and spit at first, then gradually quiet as its moisture evaporates. You are frying out the raw, flat flavour of the paste ingredients and developing a deeper, more complex base. The paste will darken by one shade and smell toasted, smoky, and bittersweet — like dark chocolate and dried chile.

03 With the fried mole paste over medium heat, add the warm chicken stock one ladle at a time, whisking each addition fully into the paste before adding the next. This gradual incorporation prevents lumping and helps the sauce develop a smooth, velvety body. After all the stock is incorporated, bring the sauce to a gentle simmer and cook uncovered for 15 minutes, stirring frequently to prevent the thick sauce from catching on the bottom. Taste and adjust salt.

04 Nestle the browned chicken pieces into the mole sauce, turning each piece to coat. The sauce should come three-quarters up the sides of the chicken. Cover with a lid, reduce to the lowest possible simmer, and cook for 1.5 hours, turning the chicken gently every 20 minutes and spooning the sauce over any exposed skin. The low heat is critical — a rolling boil will make the chicken tough and crack the mole sauce. Uncover for the last 15 minutes to thicken the sauce slightly and glaze the chicken.

05 Transfer the chicken pieces to warm plates or a warm serving platter. Ladle the mole sauce generously over each piece — the chicken should be nearly submerged in sauce. Scatter toasted sesame seeds over the top. Serve immediately with freshly made white rice (which absorbs the mole beautifully), warm corn tortillas for tearing and scooping, and a garnish of finely chopped white onion. Mole negro is meant to be tasted in quantity — do not be restrained with the sauce.

Recipe & provenance ForkRecipe Kitchen / ForkRecipe / FoodML and contributors / CC BY-SA 4.0.
Original recipe and attribution CC BY-SA 4.0
Servings are an estimate; check quantities in the source recipe.
recipes.dvs-services.be / chicken-mole