

Mole Mexicana

Mole (pronounced MOE – lay) is a traditional sauce from Mexico. Like American barbecue sauce, every region has a different interpretation. The sauce below is a speedy version for when you are short on time, but want big flavors! Use this sauce on grilled poultry, pork and seafood, or substitute it for red sauce in your next enchiladas. ***Caution:** *Even though chiles are dried, the residual oil can possibly irritate skin, so be careful handling them.*

Ingredients:

2 dried ancho chiles

1 cup boiling water

1 teaspoon olive oil

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup chopped white onion

4 garlic cloves, minced

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground cumin

1 stick cinnamon

1 very ripe banana or half of a soft and ripe plantain

1 cup vegetable or chicken stock

2 tablespoons raisins or dried cherries

1 cup crushed tomatoes

3 tablespoons toasted almond slivers or pepitas

1 ounce Mexican chocolate chopped (such as El Rey 61% cacao)

Directions:

1. To prepare mole, preheat oven to 200 deg. Place chiles on a half sheet pan and toast in the oven for 5 minutes. Combine chiles and 1 cup boiling water in a small bowl; cover and let stand 15 minutes.
2. Remove chiles from liquid, reserving the soaking liquid. Discard the stems and seeds from the chiles. Tear the chiles into pieces and set them aside.
3. Heat oil in a pan over medium-high heat. Add onion and sauté for 2 minutes. Add the garlic, salt, cumin and cinnamon and continue sautéing for 3 minutes.
4. Stir in chiles, soaking liquid, banana, stock, raisins, tomatoes and toasted nuts. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer 12 minutes, stirring occasionally.
5. Remove from heat. Discard cinnamon stick. Add chocolate, stirring until chocolate melts. Transfer mixture to a blender and process until smooth.

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