

Ilina de la Vega, whose cooking class is one of the "25 Reasons We Love Oaxaca", has kindly given us three recipes. Now you can make her hibiscus iced tea, salsa verde, and mole *coloradito* at home.

OAXACA RECIPES

AGUA DE JAMAICA (ICED HIBISCUS TEA)

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Serving Size: 6

Ingredients:

- 3 quarts of water
- 1 1/2 cups dried hibiscus blossoms (*hibiscus sabdariffa*)*
- sugar or honey to taste

In a large stockpot, bring 3 quarts of water to a boil. Add the blossoms, and boil for 10 minutes. Let cool and strain. Add fresh water until the bitter taste is gone. Sweeten to taste with sugar or honey. Serve very cold over ice.

* Available in most Mexican grocery and some health food stores

SALSA VERDE

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Serving Size: 1 cup

Ingredients:

- 1 jalapeño chili
- 10 tomatillos, husks removed
- 1 medium garlic clove, peeled
- 1/2 cup fresh cilantro
- 1 medium-size Spanish onion, chopped
- salt to taste

- 1 large avocado, if the sauce is raw

COOKED: Boil jalapeño for 5 minutes in large saucepan 3/4 full of water. Add tomatillos, onion, and garlic. Boil for 3 more minutes. Drain and transfer to a blender and process. Add the cilantro and salt and process again until smooth.

RAW: Place everything, raw, in the blender, including avocado. Process into a puree.

Serve with meat, chicken, or fish. (Or simply eat it with corn chips.)



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OAXACA RECIPES

MOLE COLORADITO

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Serving Size: 8

Ingredients:

- 8 pieces of bone-in chicken
- 1/2 medium-size Spanish onion
- 7 medium garlic cloves, unpeeled
- 4 large Roma tomatoes
- 1 one-inch-long cinnamon stick piece (preferably from Mexico or Sri Lanka)
- 10 ancho chilis
- 1 *pasilla* chili
- 3 Tbs. vegetable oil
- 2 slices of day-old bread
- 15 blanched almonds
- 1/2 cup toasted sesame seeds
- 3 whole cloves
- 10 black peppercorns
- 1 Tbs. dried oregano (preferably from Oaxaca)
- 2 Tbs. sugar
- 1 cup chicken stock or vegetable broth

CHICKEN: Bring 2 quarts of water to a boil. Add 1/2 onion, 3 garlic cloves, and salt to taste. When water boils again, add chicken pieces and turn heat down to minimum. Let simmer until meat is done (approx. 20 minutes).

MOLE: In a hot dry skillet, roast tomatoes and unpeeled garlic cloves. Remove garlic cloves when you see black spots. Let the tomatoes go longer, until they are soft and blistered. Peel the garlic cloves, and set aside.

Dry roast the cinnamon in hot skillet and reserve.

Slice chilis. Discard seeds and stems. Lay chilis flat and open in a separate skillet and dry roast until you see black spots, or they become tender—just a few seconds on each side. Transfer roasted chilis to a pot with hot water, and let them soak for no more than 20 minutes.

Add 1 1/2 tablespoons of vegetable oil to a skillet and heat. Tear bread into pieces and fry until it becomes a pale golden color. Add the blanched almonds, sesame seeds, oregano, black peppercorns, cloves. Fry until everything turns golden, then set aside.

Discard chili water. Blend the soaked chilis with enough fresh water to produce a thick sauce. Heat remaining oil in a large deep pot (preferably a cast-iron Dutch oven). Add pureed chilis. Fry for 8–10 minutes.

Blend roasted tomatoes and garlic with the reserved bread, seed, nut and spice mixture. Thin with water, then add to chili sauce in the large pot.

Separately, blend the cinnamon with a little water, and pass through a sieve. Fold into the mole.

Let everything simmer until mixture thickens (approx. 20 minutes). Add chicken stock and bring to a boil. (Note: You can substitute water or vegetable stock if you like.) Let cook for 15 minutes. Add salt and sugar to taste. The mole should reduce until it's so thick it coats the back of a spoon.

Add boiled chicken or pork. Let it simmer for another 10 minutes. Serve with rice and tortillas.