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Chicken and Sausage Gumbo

During cooking, okra exudes a thick liquid that gives this hearty Cajun stew a sumptuous, silky texture; a little filé powder, made from dried sassafras leaves, further thickens and enriches it. But the backbone of this gumbo, and the source of its smoky flavor, is the roux made by toasting flour in hot oil until it is a deep red-brown.



Credit: Maxime Iattoni

SERVES 6 to 8

INGREDIENTS

1/2 cup canola oil

2 lb. bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

8 oz. andouille sausage, cut into 1/2" pieces
4 slices bacon, cut into 1/2" pieces
1 cup flour
2 ribs celery, finely chopped
1 small yellow onion, finely chopped
1 small green bell pepper, stemmed, seeded, and finely chopped
2 tsp. dried thyme
1 tsp. cayenne
6 canned, whole peeled tomatoes in juice, drained and crushed by hand
6 cloves garlic, finely chopped
1 bay leaf
10 oz. okra, trimmed and cut into 1/2" slices
4 cups chicken stock
Cooked white rice, for serving
Hot sauce and filé powder, for serving

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Heat 1/4 cup oil in an 8-qt. Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Working in two batches, season chicken with salt and pepper, and add chicken to pot; cook, turning once, until lightly browned, about 12 minutes. Transfer to a plate. Add sausage and bacon, and cook, stirring, until their fat renders and bacon is browned, about 5 minutes; transfer to plate with chicken.
2. Add remaining oil, and reduce heat to medium-low; stir in flour, and cook, stirring constantly, until this mixture (called a roux) is the color of dark, reddish caramel, about 8 minutes. Add celery, onion, and pepper, and cook until soft, about 6 minutes. Add thyme, cayenne, tomatoes, garlic, and bay leaf, and cook for 3 minutes. Return chicken, sausage, and bacon to pot along with okra and stock, and bring to a boil over high heat; reduce heat to medium, and cook, stirring occasionally, until chicken is cooked through, okra is tender, and gumbo is thickened, about 30 minutes. Remove chicken from pot and let cool for 5 minutes. Remove and shred meat, and discard bones and skin; stir meat back into gumbo. Season with salt and pepper, and serve with white rice on the side. Serve with hot sauce and filé powder for sprinkling over each serving.

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