

# Chicken Mole

This mole by chef Ofelia Barajas at La Guerrera's Kitchen in Oakland is inspired by her grandmother Jovita Vargas' recipe from her restaurant in Guerrero, Mexico. It's rich, warm, and well balanced, with a variety of chiles adding layers of heat, fruitiness, sweetness, and smokiness. As you fry the individual ingredients, Barajas recommends smelling and tasting each one, including the chiles, to create a connection with each—and to learn how to build the flavors that make a great mole. The payoff is a luscious and complex sauce that drapes over tender chicken. Serve with fresh tortillas to swipe up every drop of sauce.

By **Ofelia Barajas** | Published on February 18, 2021

**Active Time:** 1 hrs 15 mins

**Total Time:** 2 hrs 5 mins

## Ingredients

- 8 cups water
- 2 tablespoons kosher salt, divided
- 4 bone-in, skin-on chicken quarters (about 3 1/4 pounds)
- 3 3/4 cups vegetable oil, divided
- 12 garlic cloves, divided
- 4 1/2 cups diced plum tomatoes
- 3 1/2 cups diced yellow onion
- 8 dried guajillo chiles (1 3/4 ounces), stemmed
- 6 dried chiles de árbol (1/8 ounces), stemmed
- 4 dried ancho chiles (2 1/2 ounces), stemmed
- 3 dried pasilla negro chiles (3/4 ounce), stemmed
- 2 dried mulato chiles (1 ounces), stemmed
- 1/2 cup sesame seeds, plus more for garnish
- 1/2 cup pepitas
- 3 6-inch corn tortillas, plus more for serving
- 1 (3 1/2-ounce) bolillo or demi baguette, torn into pieces (about 5 1/2 cups)
- 1 (about 3-ounce) Mexican chocolate disk (such as Dandelion or Ibarra)
- Cooked long-grain white rice, for serving

## Directions

### Step 1

Bring 8 cups water and 1/2 tablespoon salt to a boil in a large stockpot over high. Reduce heat to medium-low, and add chicken. Cook until chicken is tender and a thermometer inserted in thickest portion of meat registers 155°F, about 30 minutes. Remove chicken; set aside on a large plate. Reserve 4 cups chicken cooking liquid in a large heatproof bowl; discard remaining cooking liquid.

### Step 2

Heat 1/4 cup vegetable oil in a 12-inch skillet over medium-high. Add 8 garlic cloves; cook, stirring constantly, until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add tomatoes, onions, and 1/2 tablespoon salt; cook, stirring occasionally, until onions are translucent and softened, about 8 minutes. Transfer mixture to a blender. Secure lid on blender, and remove center piece to allow steam to escape. Place a kitchen towel over opening in lid. Process until smooth, about 1 minute. Transfer mixture to a large bowl, and set aside.

### Step 3

Wipe skillet clean. Add 3 cups vegetable oil; heat over medium-high. Working with a few different types of chiles at a time, place in a spider, and submerge in hot oil for 2 seconds per batch. Remove from oil using spider, and place in a large heat-proof bowl. Repeat with remaining chiles and remaining 4 garlic cloves.

### Step 4

Place sesame seeds and pepitas in a medium metal strainer; submerge in hot oil in skillet over medium-high. Cook, stirring mixture inside strainer and shaking occasionally, until seeds are golden brown and fragrant, about 2 minutes. Transfer seed mixture to bowl with Chile mixture.

### Step 5

Working with 1 tortilla at a time, add to hot oil in skillet over medium-high. Cook, turning occasionally, until golden brown, 30 seconds to 1 minute. Transfer fried tortillas to a plate lined with paper towels; let cool 5 minutes. Break into 2-inch pieces. (Strained and cooled oil may be reused for frying.)

### Step 6

Add chile mixture, tortilla pieces, and bolillo pieces to reserved 4 cups chicken cooking liquid in bowl. Let stand until liquid is almost absorbed and bolillo has softened, about 10 minutes. Transfer mixture to a blender; process until smooth, about 1 minute.

### Step 7

Heat remaining 1/2 cup vegetable oil in a large pot over medium. Add tomato mixture; cook, stirring constantly, until heated through, about 1 minute. Add blended chile mixture and chocolate disk. Bring to a simmer over medium-high. Cook, stirring occasionally, until chocolate has melted and mixture is well combined, about 20 minutes. Add cooked chicken and remaining 1 tablespoon salt; stir to submerge in mole. Reduce heat to medium-low; cover and simmer until chicken is heated through, 10 to 15 minutes. Serve with rice and tortillas, and garnish with additional sesame seeds.

## Make Ahead

Chicken mole can be made up to 3 days ahead and stored in an airtight container in refrigerator.

## Note

Find dried chiles, bolillo, and Mexican chocolate at Latin grocery stores or online.