Atole

Ingredients

Atole Base:
- 3 cups water
- ¼ cup raw sugar, or more, to taste (such as piloncillo)
- 1 stick cinnamon
- ¼ cup corn flour for masa (such as Maseca™ or PAN™)

Berry flavoured:
- 2 cups fresh or frozen berries (most traditionally strawberries, any other, or a mix)
- 1 cup water (or milk)
- More sugar, to taste

Chocolate flavoured (also called “Atole Champurrado” or “Champurrado”):
- 2 cups water (or milk)
- 3 oz (around 100 g) chocolate (Mexican chocolate, or baking dark or semisweet)

Atole base:
Mix corn flour and 1 cup of water at room temperature, stirring with a fork or a beater until smooth; reserve. Bring the other two cups of water, ¼ cup sugar and cinnamon stick to a boil in a pan over high heat, stirring until the sugar has dissolved completely. Slowly add the reserved corn slurry, stirring. Bring to boil again, then lower heat to medium. Continue cooking and-stirring constantly to avoid burning the bottom, for about ten minutes. Taste, adjusting sweetness with more sugar, if needed; continue cooking and stirring, until the atole is thick but still runny enough to pour, and with no trace of raw flour taste; remove cinnamon. This base may be used to prepare flavoured atoles, or served as it is; it is sometimes called atole blanco - white atole. Serve hot (photo, left).

For berry flavoured atole:
Prepare atole base as above. Process fruit and water (or milk) in a blender until smooth. Add to the simmering atole base, straining through a mesh to remove seeds. Continue stirring and bring back to boil. Reduce heat and simmer for one minute; taste, and adjust sweetness with raw sugar, to taste. Continue cooking and stirring for one more minute. Serve hot (photo, centre).

For chocolate flavoured atole (champurrado):
Prepare atole base as above. Add water (or milk) and chocolate, stirring to dissolve. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and cook for one more minute, stirring vigorously until frothy. Serve hot (photo, right).