

Oaxaca Style Yellow Mole, with Chicken (or Vegetarian) - *Mole Amarillo de Oaxaca, con pollo (o vegetariano)*

Ingredients (for six portions)

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| 1 whole | chicken, cut up into pieces; cooked in water, strained broth reserved
(Note: skip for vegetarian) |
| 45g (1.6oz) | light coloured dry <i>chiles</i> (between 8-10 pieces of any combination of: <i>Guajillo</i> , <i>Chilcosle</i> , <i>Chilhuacle Amarillo</i> , and <i>Costeño Amarillo</i>) |
| 350 g (¾ lb) | tomatoes; washed, stem end removed, and cut into chunks |
| 350 g (¾ lb) | tomatillos; washed (papery peel removed) |
| 1 | white onion; peeled and cut into quarters |
| 2 cloves | garlic; peeled |
| ¼ tsp | ground Mexican cinnamon (or 1/8 tsp regular ground cinnamon) |
| 1/8 tsp | ground cloves |
| ¼ tsp | ground black pepper |
| ½ tsp | dry Mexican oregano (or 1 bay leaf, or omit); crushed finely |
| ¼ tsp | ground cumin |
| 1 | <i>Hoja Santa</i> , fresh, or dry (or 1 tsp tarragon, or omit); broken into very small pieces |
| 1 | <i>chayote</i> ; washed, peeled and cut into chunks |
| 454 g (1 lb) | baby potatoes; washed (or regular potatoes, cut into chunks) |
| 454 g (1 lb) | green beans; washed, trimmed and sliced into 2.5 cm (1 inch) lengths |
| 1 ½ cups | <i>masa</i> (nixtamalized corn dough); or 1 cup corn flour such as Maseca™ |
| 1 tbsp | lard (Note: or 1 tbsp vegetable oil, for vegetarian) |
| 1 | lime; washed and halved |
| Water, as needed | |
| Salt, as needed, to taste | |



Prepare macerated onion topping: Slice three quarters of the white onion very finely. Place in a non-reactive jar with lid. Add half a teaspoon of salt (or to taste) and squeeze the juice from the lime over (photo, right). Close the jar, shake to incorporate all the ingredients, and reserve until serving time.



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Cook vegetables: Place potatoes in a large pot, and cover with water. Bring to boil over high heat, then reduce to medium and cook, covered, for ten minutes. Uncover and add chayote chunks; cover and cook for five minutes. Uncover and add green beans; continue cooking for a couple more minutes, just until the green beans turn bright green, and the potatoes may be pierced with a fork. Remove from heat, transfer veggies to a bowl and reserve (**Note: also reserve cooking veggie water for vegetarian option.**)

Prepare masa ingredients: If using corn flour, prepare dough (*masa*) as directed in the package, by hydrating and mixing with water; divide *masa* in half. Crumble one of the portions of *masa* (about three quarters of a cup) into a blender jar, then add one cup of reserved chicken broth (**Note: use reserved veggie water, for vegetarian option.**) Process until very smooth; transfer this *masa* slurry to a container and reserve.

Mix the second portion of *masa* with half a teaspoon of salt, the lard, and half a cup of reserved chicken broth (**Note: use oil and veggie water for vegetarian option**). Knead until smooth and soft, then divide into small balls, approximately one teaspoon of *masa*, each; press each ball in the centre with thumb, or the back of a small measuring spoon, to form concave discs, called *chochoyotes* (photo right). Cover with a kitchen towel, and reserve.



Prepare sauce: Rinse all the dry *chiles* in cold water, then drain; remove and discard stems and seeds; place cleaned *chiles* in a pot, along with the tomatoes and tomatillos, and add one cup of clean water. Bring to boil over high heat, then reduce to medium, and continue cooking until the tomatillos change colour. Press the chiles down to submerge in the water, placing the tomatillos on top; cook for a few more minutes, until the *chiles* are soft, and the tomato skins may be removed easily (photo below, left). Discard tomato skins, remove pot from heat, and allow to cool down. Once cooled down, transfer all the contents of the pot to the blender jar; add cinnamon, cloves, black pepper, Mexican oregano (or bay leaf), cumin, garlic and the last quarter of the white onion. Process long enough to obtain a smooth sauce. Return sauce to the pot, then add one cup of chicken broth to the blender jar (**Note: or veggie water**); swirl gently to collect all the leftover sauce, then pour in the pot (second photo). Cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, for at least ten minutes; the sauce will become smoother. Add the reserved *masa* slurry (third photo), and continue cooking and stirring, until it becomes uniform, starts to thicken, and a yellow to orangey tone develops (photo below, right):



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Finish the dish with add-ins: Add the reserved cooked chicken pieces (**Note: skip for vegetarian option**), and the reserved cooked potatoes, chayote and green beans, stirring to coat with sauce. Cook for ten more minutes, until everything is warm, and the flavours are starting to meld, adding more broth (**Note: or veggie water**) if it gets too thick. Gently drop reserved *chochoyotes* in the pot, scooping sauce to coat them (photo below, left). Continue cooking and adding more liquid, as needed, until *chochoyotes* are fully cooked; they should look shinny, fluffy, and become porous (photo below, centre). Finally, add pieces of *Hoja Santa* (or tarragon, if using), folding-in very gently, to avoid breaking the *chochoyotes* (photo below, right):



After a few more minutes, adjust seasoning with more salt, to taste, and then, the *Mole Amarillo* is ready. Serve in bowls, or plates with a rim, including portions of all the veggies, *chochoyotes*, and one or two pieces of chicken (**Note: if using**), along with reserved macerated onions:



Note: The vegetarian option is still a very satisfying and well balanced meal, especially with the combination of grain and legume, from the corn in the *masa*, and the green beans.