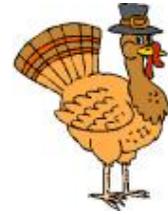


TIRED OF THE SAME OLD IDEAS
FOR LEFT-OVER TURKEY?



TRY MOLE POBLANO DE GUAJOLOTE

CELEBRATE LATINO CULTURE and CO-SPONSOR H.R. 2134

Dear Colleague:

A nation's history is reflected through its cuisine. In the Americas, the blending of ingredients in traditional foods often re-creates history by mixing the old world with the new world. Some dishes are flavored by historical events such as conquest or colonization.

Mole poblano (mó-ley po-bláh-no) is a culinary symbol of Mexico's ever changing national character: *el mestizaje* – or the mixing of indigenous, African, and European cultures. The word “mole” derives from the Nahuatl “mulli,” meaning a sauce flavored with chiles. According to legend, Aztec Emperor Moctezuma served a pre-Columbian version to the Spanish conquistador Hernán Cortez and his soldiers. Another legend says that a clumsy Spanish monk accidentally knocked over a tray of spices into a *cazuela*, or pot, magically creating the mouth-watering sauce. The most popular origin legend holds that a 17th Century Dominican nun, Sor Andrea de la Asunción, charged with preparing a feast for the colonial Spanish viceroy, sought to blend the best flavors of the old and new worlds, taking various chiles, cacao, and spices and grinding them forcefully together with a stone mortar and pestle – or *molcajete*.

Mole poblano illustrates the diversity and complexity of Latino culture. Garlic is mixed with raisins; chile is mixed with chocolate, resembling the cacophony of sounds that make up Latino music such as salsa – where European instrumentation meets African and native Caribbean rhythms. Whether in music or food, Latino culture is constantly evolving, adding layers of cultures like new flavors. The American Latino community is like *mole*, mixing cultures and people from many countries, each with their own traditions, seasoned by – and adding yet more flavor to – the American culture as a whole.

The museums in the nation's capital purport to offer a taste of this diversity to the millions of tourists who visit each year. These visitors come away with the impression that they have seen the best representation of what America is. Yet, scarcely any of the permanent exhibitions in the capital city celebrate the wealth of flavors Latino culture has to offer. For over 40 million Latinos in the United States, a more complete picture is warranted. Such diversity should be celebrated as something wholly American. For this reason, I have introduced legislation to create an expert commission to study whether and how to establish a national museum dedicated to Latino history, culture, and art in Washington, D.C.

To co-sponsor the bipartisan H.R. 2134, the National Museum of the American Latino Community Commission Act and join 99 of your colleagues (see list on back), please contact Joel Najar at 6-3748 or joel.najar@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,

XAVIER BECERRA
Member of Congress

Mole Poblano de Guajolote
Mexico's National Dish

4 tablespoons vegetable (corn, canola) oil
6 cups chicken broth
4 dried ancho chiles, seeded and deveined
6 dried mulato chiles, seeded and deveined
4 dried pasilla chiles, seeded and deveined
2 dried chipotle chiles, seeded and deveined
(To prepare a dried chile, pull or cut off the stem, split the chile lengthwise, and scrape out the seeds with a spoon)
2 corn tortillas, torn into pieces
1 medium onion, chopped
2 large cloves garlic, peeled and coarsely chopped
2 ounces raisins
3 ounces almonds
1 ½ ounces shelled peanuts
4 whole cloves
4 whole coriander seeds
1" cinnamon stick
¼ teaspoon anis seeds
¼ cup sesame seeds
1½ ounces Mexican (e.g., Abuelita or Ibarra) or semi-unsweetened chocolate
1 teaspoon sugar
salt to taste

In a large, heavy saucepan or *cazuela*, heat 1 tablespoon of oil and briefly sauté the ancho, mulato, pasilla and chipotle chiles for 2 minutes, stirring constantly. Take care not to burn them; they should be sautéed only to the point of fragrance.

In a separate pot, heat the chicken broth to near boiling. Put the chiles in a bowl with enough broth to cover and soak for half an hour. Puree the chiles with enough broth to turn blades. Set puree aside.

Heat a tablespoon of oil in the same saucepan and fry the tortilla pieces, onion and garlic until the onion is soft. Place them in a blender with just enough broth to turn the blades, puree and set aside.

Heat another tablespoon of oil; add the raisins, almonds, peanuts, spices and sesame seeds and sauté until the almonds turn light golden brown. Transfer to the blender with enough broth to turn blades and puree.

Heat the remaining tablespoon of oil, add the blended chile mixture and cook for 5 minutes. Put all remaining pureed ingredients through a food mill and add to the chile mixture, stirring to blend thoroughly.

Stir in the chocolate and sugar, gradually adding 3-4 cups of the reserved broth. Taste for salt. Bring sauce to a slow boil lower heat and simmer for ½ hour, stirring frequently. The sauce should have the consistency of heavy cream.

Serve the mole in bowls, with the sauce generously ladled over your left-over turkey (*guajolote*) or cooked chicken pieces. For a traditional garnish, sprinkle with toasted sesame seeds. Accompany with warm corn tortillas.

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