

1 bunch celery, roughly chopped  
Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste  
3 tbsp tomato paste, thinned with 1/4 cup water  
1 cup crushed, canned tomatoes  
10 green olives, pitted and roughly chopped  
1/2 cup vinegar  
1/2 cup golden raisins  
1/4 cup salt-packed capers, rinsed and drained  
3 tbsp sugar  
2 tbsp finely grated unsweetened chocolate  
1/2 cup finely shredded basil  
2 tbsp almonds

**Method:**

Heat oil in a 12 inches fry pan over medium-high heat. Working in batches, add eggplant and fry, tossing occasionally, until browned, 3–4 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer eggplant to a large bowl; set aside. Pour off all but 1/4 cup oil, and reserve for another use. Return pan to heat, add onions and celery, and season with salt and pepper; cook, stirring often, until beginning to brown, 10 minutes. Reduce heat to medium, and add tomato paste and cook, stirring, until caramelised and almost evaporated, 1–2 minutes.

Add crushed tomatoes and continue cooking for 10 minutes. Stir in olives, vinegar, raisins, capers, sugar, and chocolate, and cook, stirring occasionally, until thickened, about 15 minutes.

Transfer to bowl with eggplant, along with basil and pine nuts, and mix together. Season with salt and pepper and allow to cool to room temperature before serving.

**BLACK MOLE SAUCE TO POUR OVER ROAST CHICKEN**

Nuts, chocolate, herbs, and spices all

impart colour to this mole, but it's the charring of the stems and seeds of the chillies that really gives it the dark hue. One of the seven classic moles of Oaxaca, Mexico, this sauce is typically served over chicken.

**Ingredients:**

14 dried hathazari chillies, washed  
5 dried red chillies, washed  
7 green big sweet chillies, charred on fire and washed  
4 tbsp oil  
One 6" square dry bread  
8 cloves garlic, peeled



1 small white onion, peeled and quartered  
2 whole cloves  
2½ tsp cinnamon  
1 tsp anise  
3 black peppercorns  
4 whole allspice  
1 large green (unripe) banana  
2 prunes, pitted (optional)  
4 tbsp bittersweet chocolate, melted  
4 tbsp almonds  
4 tbsp sesame seeds, toasted until golden  
1/3 cup raisins  
1 bay leaf

**Method:**

Stem, seed, and de-vein chillies, reserving everything. Sear stems, seeds, and ribs in a thick fry pan over high heat until charred black. (Don't worry, this is a secret of real mole, but avoid breathing smoke or getting it in your eyes.) Cool, then rinse in a fine strainer to wash out bitterness and white ashes. Set aside. Instead of washing I also sometimes cover the hot chillies with a cold wet wash cloth, and leave aside for 10 minutes, afterwards when you rub the skin of the chillies with the cloth the bitterness and white ash will just come off.

In the same pan, heat two tbsp of the oil and brown bread on both sides. Remove from pan. Add 1 tbsp of the remaining oil, and garlic and onions; cook until tender and golden.

Soak chillies in three cups very hot water until soft. Meanwhile, mix cloves, cinnamon, anise, peppercorns, and allspice. Using a spice mill or mortar and pestle, grind the spices very finely. Combine charred stems, seeds, ribs, chillies (reserve soaking water), garlic, onions, ground spices, banana, prunes, chocolate, almonds, sesame seeds, raisins, bread, and bay leaf. Using the food grinder attachment to an electric mixer or a blender, grind in small batches until they are very smooth. Use soaking water as needed to process the mole into a thick paste.

Put paste in non-stick pan brushed with remaining 1 tbsp oil. Fry paste until thick, fragrant, and slightly golden on all surfaces, about 20 minutes. It should be a dense, dry, toasty-looking smooth paste. Cool, then refrigerate or freeze until needed. Thin with diluted chicken stock to a sauce consistency. Serve with roasted chicken.

**Photo: Collected**



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