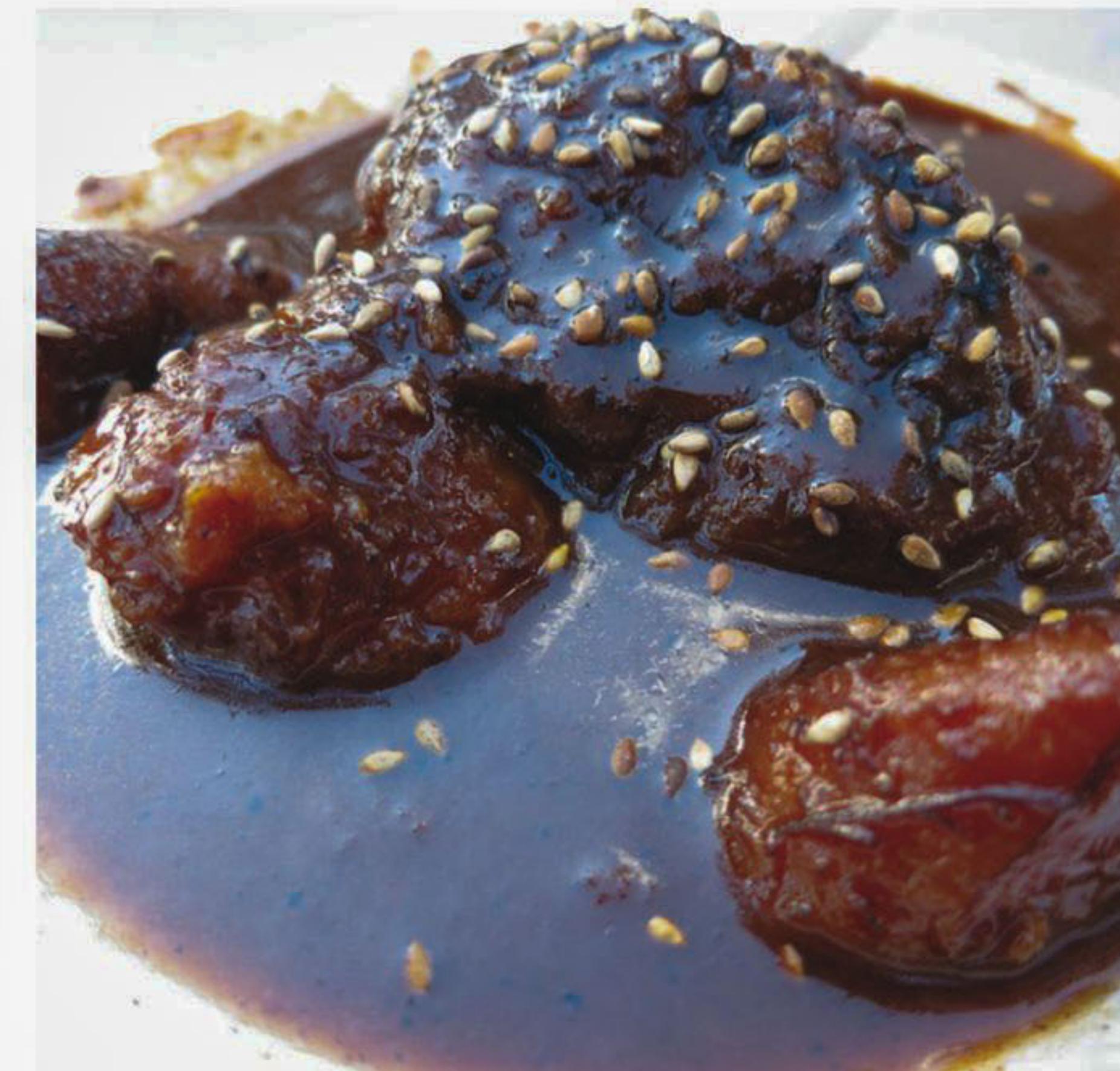


THE FEARLESS OLIVE
BY REEMA ISLAM



CHILLI AND CHOCOLATES: A MATCH MADE IN HEAVEN

The Mayans drank chocolate with chilli as an elixir, and that is how the delicious cocoa bean is regularly used in their cuisine-- as a non-dessert condiment. The trick lies in pairing chocolate well with other elements so the heavy bodied flavours and the bitterness (this only works well in case of dark chocolate of course) come through, allowing the chocolaty taste to be the ruling flavour.



"All you need is love. But a little chocolate now and then doesn't hurt"

- Charles M Schulz

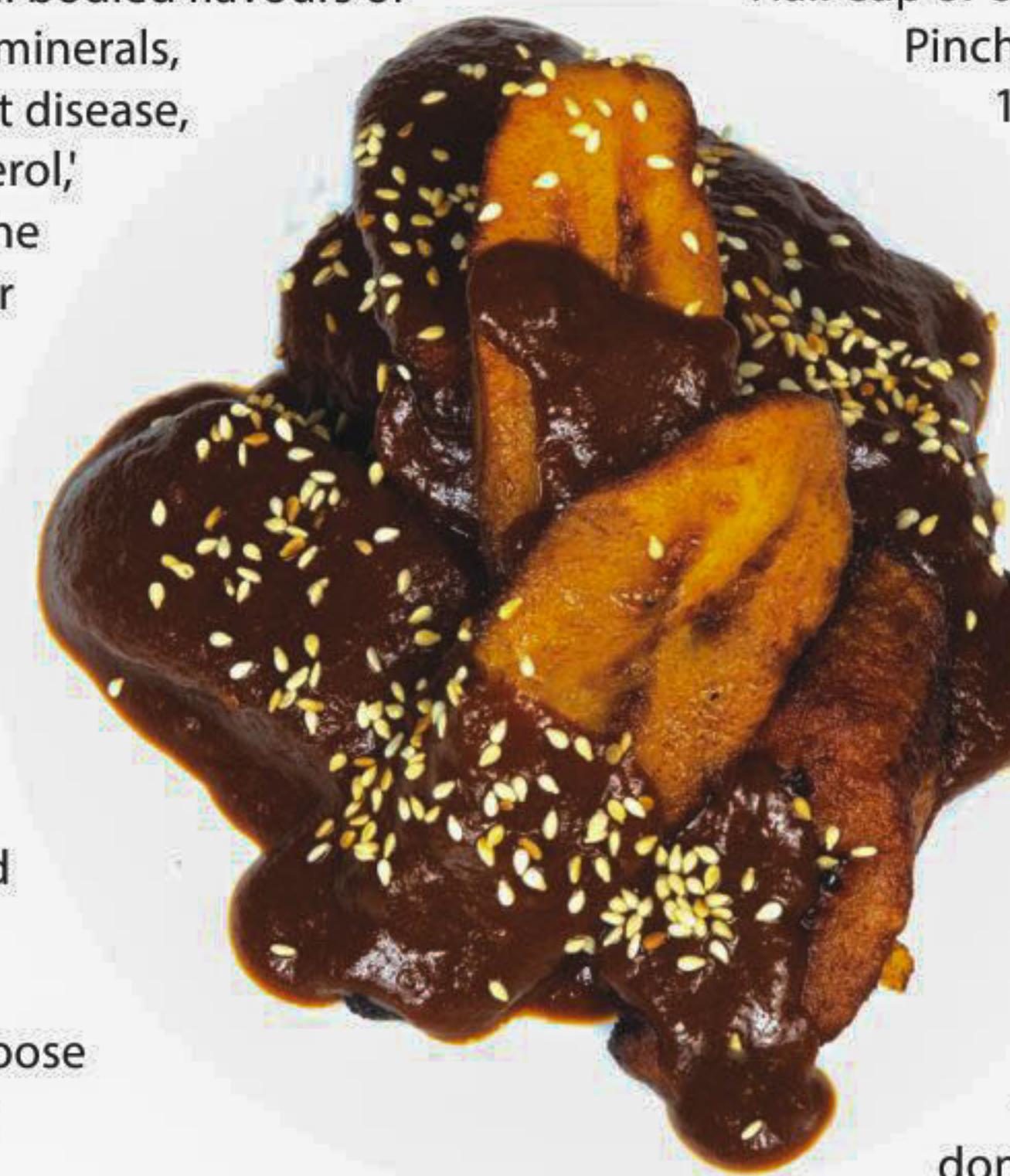
As the days get colder, appreciate the full bodied flavours of chocolate is all its savoury glory! Rich in minerals, chocolate is known to help combat heart disease, fight the LDL, the so-called 'bad cholesterol,' and also aid in losing weight. Probably the best of the qualities is its ability to lift our moods by releasing the chemical, phenylethylamine (PEA). This encourages the neurons in our brain to release endorphins, making us feel happier. So chomp away and let those happy thoughts envelop you!

CHOCOLATE WITH BEANS

An ideal combination that works deliciously with beans and tomatoes as used in some South American cuisines.

Ingredients

1 cup boneless beef, cubed, (you can choose to make a vegetarian one sans the beef)
2 red onions, sliced
1/4 cup grated ginger
1/4 cup garlic paste
2 cups red kidney beans (mixed with black eye beans)
2-3 large jalapenos (or 1 large capsicum)



1/2 cup grated dark chocolate

1 tbsp apple cider vinegar

Salt and pepper to taste

Half cup of chopped mint and coriander

Pinch of nutmeg and cumin powder (zeera)

1 tsp chopped parsley

1 cup chopped tomatoes (or 1 cup chopped plums)

1/4 cup olive oil

Method

After soaking beans for at least 4-5 hours, boil them with garlic and parsley, salt and some pepper. In a separate pan, cook the chopped onions in olive oil until translucent, then add ginger and beef and cook for about 3-4 minutes. Once the oil starts to separate, add the boiled beans and tomatoes (or plums) and cook for another few minutes, until the oil separates again. Add about 1 cup of water so the beef can boil. Add spices, vinegar and jalapenos just as you feel the beef is done and cook for about 2-3 minute. Before taking it off the fire, add grated chocolate and mix it up.

Serving

Serve with a sprinkle of the mint and coriander, either with steaming plain rice or a freshly baked brown bread.



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