

IN EVERY POT

ONE GOOD WAY TO EXPLORE THE REGIONAL FLAVORS AND COOKING TECHNIQUES OF LATIN AMERICA? LET CHICKEN BE YOUR GUIDE. RECIPES BY SHELLEY WISEMAN PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROMULO YANES

POLLO A LA BRASA

PERUVIAN GRILLED CHICKEN

SERVES 2 TO 4

ACTIVE TIME: 50 MIN START TO FINISH: 9 1/2 HR (INCLUDES MARINATING)

This iconic regional dish incorporates soy sauce, evidence of the strong influence of the Japanese and Chinese communities in Peru. The intensely flavored marinade, bright with lime juice and zesty with garlic, deeply seasons the meat, and the grill gives it a beautiful sear. We've provided a range for the portion size, because while some home cooks may be content with a quarter chicken per person, many Peruvian restaurants and takeout places serve each customer a half chicken (even here in the States, where chickens tend to be on the large side).

- 1/3 cup soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
- 5 garlic cloves
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 whole chicken (about 3 1/2 lb), quartered

ACCOMPANIMENT: lime wedges

MARINATE CHICKEN: Blend soy sauce, lime juice, garlic, cumin, paprika, oregano, 1/2 teaspoon pepper, and oil in a blender. ▶ Put chicken in a large sealable bag and add marinade. Seal bag and marinate, chilled, 8 to 24 hours. ▶

GRILL CHICKEN: If using a charcoal grill, open vents on bottom and lid of grill. Light a large chimney starter full of charcoal (preferably hardwood). When coals are lit, dump them out along opposite sides of bottom rack, leaving a space free of coals (the size of the quartered chicken) in middle. When you can hold your hand 5 inches above the grill rack directly over coals for 3 to 4 seconds, coals will be medium-hot. ▶ If using a gas grill, preheat all burners on high, then reduce heat to medium-high. ▶ Discard marinade, then pat chicken dry. Oil grill rack, then grill chicken over area with no coals (or over a turned-off burner), skin side down first, covered, turning over once, until cooked through, 30 to 35 minutes (add charcoal to maintain heat).

COOKS' NOTE: If you aren't able to grill outdoors, chicken (quartered) can be roasted in middle of a 500°F oven in a 13- by 9-inch roasting pan with 1 cup water 30 minutes, then tented with foil and roasted until browned and cooked through, about 15 minutes more.

TLATONILE DE POLLO

VERACRUZ CHICKEN WITH SESAME-SEED AND RED-CHILE SAUCE

Adapted from Carmen Ramírez Degollado

SERVES 8

ACTIVE TIME: 1 HR START TO FINISH: 1½ HR

Looking for comfort food with a kick? Here, tender boiled chicken is simmered with a mole, in this case a velvety, slightly spicy sauce made from aromatic ground sesame seeds, peanuts, and dried chiles. Veracruz cooks use comapeño chiles, which aren't available in the States, but the *pulla*, *guajillo*, and New Mexico varieties are equally delicious. This recipe is based on one by cookbook author Carmen Ramírez Degollado and, as is typical in Mexico, it makes lots of sauce—perfect over rice or scooped up with tortillas.

FOR CHICKEN

- 4 chicken breast halves with skin and bone
- 4 whole chicken legs
- 2 qt water
- 1 medium white onion, chopped
- 1 medium carrot, chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, chopped
- 1 branch fresh epazote or 1 teaspoon dried

FOR SAUCE

- 1 oz dried *pulla* chiles (about 12) or dried *guajillo* or New Mexico chiles (about 5), wiped clean
- 1 oz dried ancho chiles (2 medium), wiped clean
- 1 cup white sesame seeds (5 oz)
- 6 whole allspice
- ½ cup roasted peanuts
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- ¼ cup corn oil or other vegetable oil
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh epazote leaves or 1 teaspoon dried

COOK CHICKEN: Put chicken in a 6- to 8-quart pot and add water, onion, carrot, garlic, epazote, and 1½ teaspoons salt. Bring to a boil, skimming foam, then reduce heat and simmer, partially covered, until chicken is cooked through, 25 to 35 minutes.

▶ Transfer chicken to a plate and discard epazote. Strain broth through a sieve into a large bowl, skimming fat if desired, and reserve broth and solids separately.

MAKE SAUCE: Slit chiles lengthwise, then stem, seed, and devein. Heat a comal or large heavy skillet (not nonstick) over medium heat until hot, then toast chiles in 1 batch, turning and pressing with

tongs, until more pliable and slightly changed in color, 1 to 2 minutes (see Kitchen Notebook at gourmet.com). Transfer to a plate.

▶ Toast sesame seeds and allspice in hot skillet, stirring, until sesame seeds are pale golden. Transfer to a plate to cool. Reserve 1 tablespoon sesame seeds for garnish.

▶ Purée solids from broth in a blender (in 2 batches if necessary) with 3 cups broth, chiles, peanuts, sugar, 1 teaspoon salt, and remaining sesame-seed mixture until smooth, about 3 minutes per batch (use caution when blending hot liquids).

▶ Heat oil in a 6- to 7-quart heavy pot (10 to 12 inches wide) over medium heat until it shimmers, then add sauce (it will spatter) and bring to a simmer, stirring. Cook sauce over medium-low heat, stirring constantly, until very thick, about 20 minutes. ▶ Stir 2 cups broth and chopped epazote into sauce and season with salt. Add chicken, submerging it, and cook, covered, over low heat, stirring frequently, until chicken is heated through, 15 to 20 minutes. Thin with additional broth or water if necessary (sauce should have consistency of a thick cream soup). Serve chicken with generous amounts of sauce, sprinkled with reserved sesame seeds.

COOKS' NOTES: Chicken can be cooked 1 day ahead and chilled in broth, uncovered, until cool, then covered. Skim fat if desired before reheating.

▪ Sauce can be made 1 day ahead (without adding chicken) and chilled, uncovered, until cool, then covered. Reheat slightly, adding more liquid if necessary, before adding chicken and proceeding with recipe.

AJIACO

COLOMBIAN CHICKEN, CORN, AND POTATO STEW

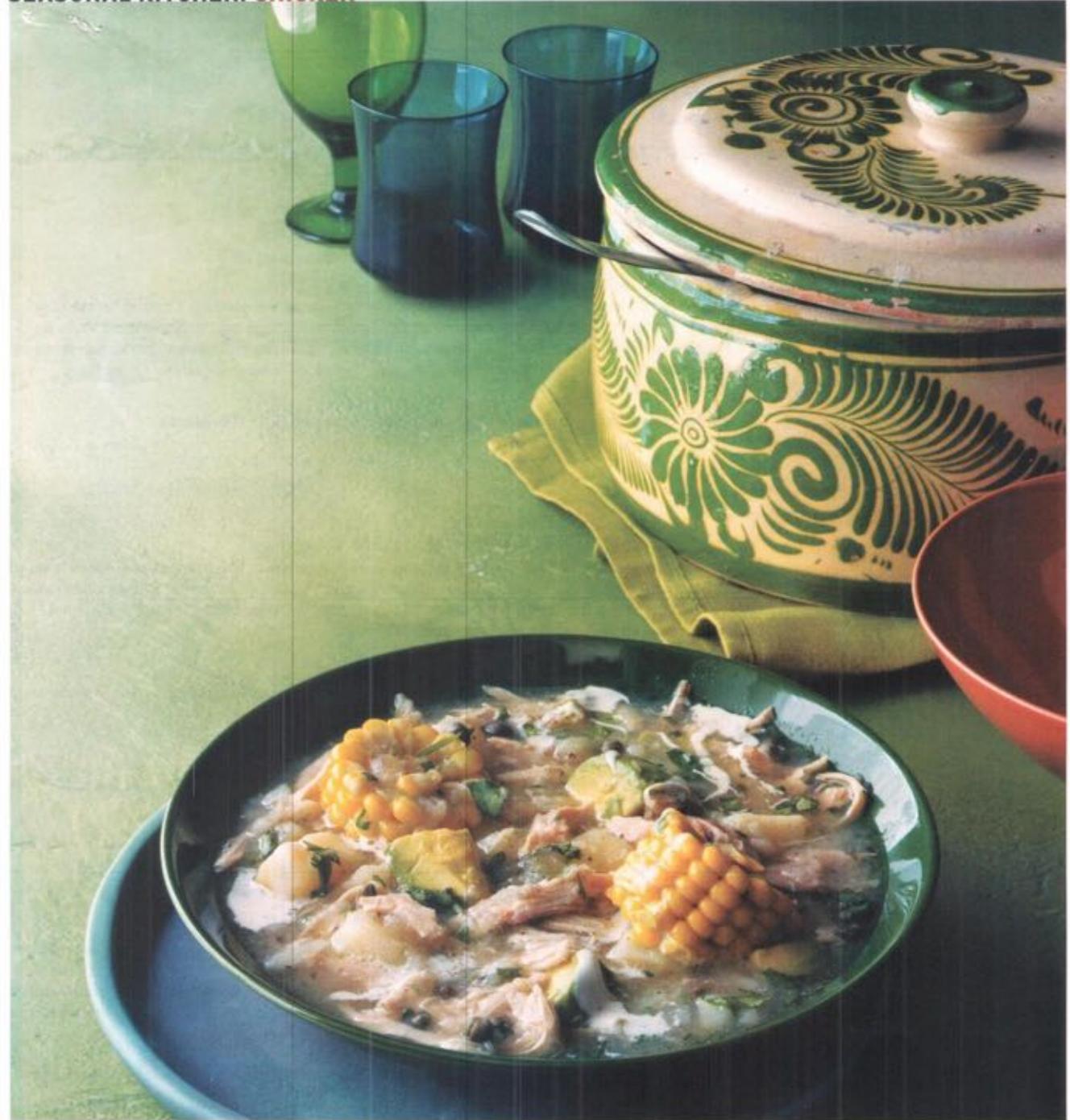
SERVES 8

ACTIVE TIME: 1 HR START TO FINISH: 2 HR

The term *ajíaco* means different things in different parts of Latin America, but in Colombia the name refers to a chunky chicken soup thickened with papas criollas, a native potato. The tiny yellow tubers break down completely, giving the broth a rich, silky mouthfeel. If you can't find papas criollas in your supermarket's freezer section, grated russets achieve pretty much the same effect. Yukon Gold and red boiling potatoes contribute contrasting texture, and a handful of briny capers punches up the flavor.

- 1 whole chicken (about 3½ lb)
- 2 qt water
- 2 cups reduced-sodium chicken broth
- 1 large white onion, chopped
- 1 tablespoon dried *guascas* or oregano
- 1 lb *papas criollas* (thawed if frozen), quartered, or russet (baking) potatoes
- 1 lb Yukon Gold potatoes
- 1 lb boiling potatoes
- 3 ears corn, cut into 1-inch rounds, or 2 cups kernels (10 oz)
- ¾ cup chopped cilantro, divided
- 1 cup *crema*, or ½ cup heavy cream mixed with ½ cup sour cream
- ¼ cup drained capers
- 3 (6- to 8-oz) firm-ripe avocados, cut into cubes

▶ Put chicken in a 6- to 8-quart pot and add water, broth, onion, *guascas*, and 1½ teaspoons salt. Bring to a boil, skimming foam, then reduce heat and simmer, covered, until chicken is cooked through, 30 to 40 minutes. Transfer to a plate to cool slightly (reserve broth). ▶



Who'd turn down a bowl of homemade chicken soup? This version, from Colombia, boasts a flavorful broth enriched with potatoes and *crema*.

- Add *papas criollas* to reserved broth (if using russet potatoes, peel and coarsely grate first) and simmer, uncovered, stirring occasionally, until potatoes are falling apart and beginning to thicken broth (mash if necessary), 20 to 30 minutes.
- Meanwhile, peel Yukon Golds and boiling potatoes and cut into 1-inch pieces, then add to pot and simmer, covered, stirring occasionally, until almost tender, 10 to 15 minutes.
- Add corn, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup cilantro, and 1 teaspoon coarsely ground black pepper and simmer, covered, until corn is tender, 5 to 10 minutes.
- While corn cooks, coarsely shred chicken, discarding skin and bones. ► Add chicken to stew and cook, stirring occasionally, until heated through. Season with salt. ► Serve stew with *crema*, capers, avocados, and remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cilantro, each in separate bowls (or add them to stew in pot just before serving).

COOKS' NOTE: Chicken can be cooked 1 day ahead and chilled in broth, uncovered, until cool, then covered. Skim off fat if desired before reheating.

ARROZ CON POLLO

CUBAN CHICKEN WITH RICE

Adapted from Caridad Yanes Nieblas

SERVES 8

ACTIVE TIME: 1 HR START TO FINISH: 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ HR

Staff photographer Romulo Yanes knows arroz con pollo—his mother, Caridad Yanes Nieblas, made it often. This version, based on her recipe, creates a very moist rice, infused with intensely >



Arroz con pollo is a study in culinary harmony. Chicken, vegetables, chorizo, and rice simmer together for the ultimate one-dish meal.

flavorful chorizo and a generous amount of beer, which contributes a malty tang. We've removed the skin from the chicken to help the garlicky marinade penetrate the meat.

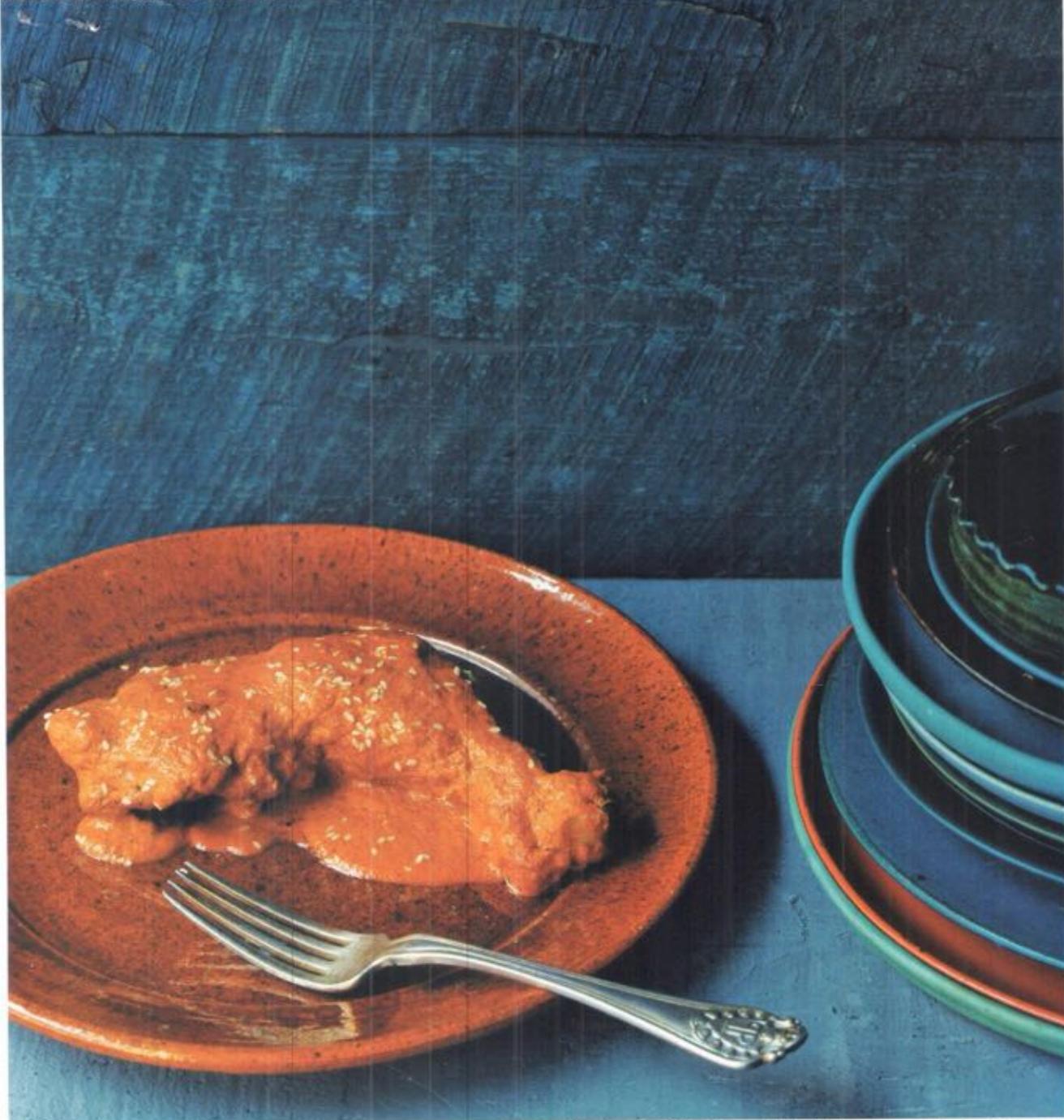
FOR MARINATING CHICKEN

- 3 large garlic cloves
- 2 tablespoons distilled white vinegar
- 2 teaspoons dried oregano, crumbled
- 4 chicken breast halves with bone, halved crosswise
- 4 chicken drumsticks
- 4 chicken thighs

FOR RICE

- 3 oz Spanish chorizo (cured sausage), skin discarded and sausage cut into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch-thick slices

- 1 tablespoon annatto oil (recipe on page 178) or olive oil
- 2 medium onions, chopped
- 1 green bell pepper, chopped
- 3 large garlic cloves, chopped
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 2 teaspoons dried oregano
- 1½ teaspoons paprika
- 2 Turkish bay leaves or 1 California
- 1 lb tomatoes, seeded and chopped
- 1 (12-oz) bottle beer (not dark)
- 1½ cups reduced-sodium chicken broth
- 2 cups long-grain white rice (14 oz)
- ¼ cup drained rinsed bottled pimiento or roasted red-pepper strips >



Blended chiles, peanuts, and sesame seeds make a luxurious sauce for *tlatonile de pollo*, with just enough heat to keep you coming back for more.

MARINATE CHICKEN: Mince and mash garlic to a paste with 2 teaspoons salt, then transfer to a large bowl. Stir in vinegar and oregano.

► Remove skin and excess fat from chicken, then toss chicken with marinade until coated and marinate, covered and chilled, at least 1 hour.

COOK CHICKEN AND RICE: Cook chorizo in annatto oil in a 6- to 7-quart heavy pot (12 inches wide) over medium-high heat, stirring, until some fat is rendered, 2 to 3 minutes. Add onions, bell pepper, and garlic and cook, stirring, until softened, about 5 minutes.

► Add cumin, oregano, paprika, 1½ teaspoons salt, and bay leaves and cook, stirring, 1 minute.

► Add chicken with marinade to chorizo mixture and cook,

uncovered, over medium heat, stirring frequently, 10 minutes. Stir in tomatoes, beer, broth, and rice and bring to a boil, making sure rice is submerged.

► Reduce heat to medium-low, then cover mixture directly with a round of parchment or wax paper and cover pot with a tight-fitting lid. Cook, stirring once or twice, until rice is tender, 20 to 30 minutes.

► Remove from heat and let stand, covered, 5 minutes. Discard parchment paper and bay leaves, then scatter pimiento strips over rice.

COOKS' NOTE: Chicken can be marinated up to 2 hours. □

For information about the Latino ingredients, see KITCHEN NOTEBOOK, page 189, and SHOPPING LIST, page 202.