

**HOLY MOLÉ POBLANO SAUCE MIX**

A number of recipes appearing here call for “molé sauce” among their ingredients. In the old days (before I had to watch my diet) I had always just used supermarket brands of molé, until one day when I went to purchase some, I began to read the ingredients itemized on their packaging. I have been told that product labels list components in decreasing order of content, so I was amazed to find that oil, sugar, corn syrup, and various starches appeared to be more prominent than the flavorings I thought should be up front. So now I make my own to a more dietetic regimen.

The word molé derives from Nahuatl and means “sauce” or “concoction;” it is a generic name for a number of sauces used in Mexican cuisine, as well as for dishes based on these sauces. I retain the redundant “sauce” designation here to distinguish which. Outside of Mexico, it most often refers the sauce Mexicans call molé Poblano<sup>1</sup>, which is classically served over turkey at weddings, birthday parties, Christmas (thus the holy appellation), and other festive celebrations.

The classic molé Poblano contains twenty to thirty ingredients, including chocolate, but it is not a chocolate sauce. Cocoa is just one of the many ingredients and is not meant to dominate. It helps give the sauce its dark color, which also results from the chiles being used. The classic sauce requires considerable time and patience to make correctly. In the recipe that follows, I have taken shortcuts for time’s sake and to create a dry molé that one can keep on hand for use when needed, for convenience. It is better than molés I find in supermarkets, but not as good as once made for us by the Mexican grandmother of my old friend, Carlos Tapia. To me, the slight loss in overall quality, texture, and taste is an acceptable trade for time and convenience, in this case. The piquancy of chiles is not

<sup>1</sup>“Poblano” means “of Puebla” and refers to the name of the Mexican state.

excessive. Readers desiring more heat may certainly add it in various guises to their own tastes.

**Dry Ingredients:**

- ½ tsp anise seeds
- ¼ cup toasted sesame seeds
- ¼ cup toasted pumpkin seeds
- ½ cup freeze-dried unsalted peanuts (or blanched almonds)
- 4 tbsp pasilla negro chile powder
- 4 tbsp ancho chile powder
- 4 tbsp mulato chile powder
- 4 tbsp guajillo chile powder
- 2 tbsp chipotle chile powder
- 4 tbsp New Mexico chile powder
- 1 tbsp ground black pepper
- 4 tbsp garlic powder
- 4 tsp tomato-flavored bouillon powder
- 2 tsp sodium-free chicken bouillon powder
- ½ tsp ground cloves
- 1 tbsp ground cinnamon
- 1 tbsp ground cumin
- 1 tbsp ground coriander
- 4 tbsp cocoa powder
- 3 tbsp “brown sugar”<sup>2</sup>
- 2 tbsp masa harina corn flour
- 2 tbsp corn starch
- 2 tsp “salt”

**Finishing Ingredients:**

- 5 tbsp molé mix, above
- 1 cup water
- 1 tbsp toasted sesame oil
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- ¼ cup raisins, chopped
- ¼ cup cilantro leaves, chopped

Place the anise, sesame, and pumpkin seeds and peanuts in a blender cup or coffee grinder and pulverize into a powder. Remove to a

<sup>2</sup>Such as Splenda® Brown Sugar Blend.

large mixing bowl, add all other dry ingredients, and mix well. Transfer the mixture to a suitably sized air-tight container until ready to use.

When ready to use, Mix about 5 tbsp of the mixture with the water, sesame oil, lemon juice, and raisins in a sauce pan. Bring to a simmer and cook until thickened. Turn heat to lowest setting and continue to cook for another 5 minutes, stirring regularly, until the flavors blend together into a smooth sauce.

Serve over an intended entrée or use as the condiment in HMFP<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup>*Wholly Holy Molè Frijole Posole*, page 150.