

Festival Chiles Rellenos de Picadillo, Mexican-Jewish Style

A Sephardic Jewish take a traditional Mexican dish

By: Shmuel Gonzales, The Barrio Boychik

This dish is my Sephardic Jewish take on blending the flavors of a most famous traditional Mexican dish during this season, *chiles en nogada*; roasted poblano chiles filled with spiced meat and dried fruits. Though this new recipe of mine is swapping out the walnut cream sauce for a tasty parve (non-dairy) *tehina* sauce made of toasted sesame seeds. This dish has all the flavors of Mexico, with a Middle Eastern twist!



The chiles:

- 6 poblano chiles (use only poblano chiles for this dish); roasted over a flame, and removing the charred skins and seeds

Easy instructions for Roasting Chiles:

- Preheat oven broiler.
- Rinse pepper thoroughly to remove dust particles. Place peppers evenly in a single layer on a foil-lined cookie sheet. Pierce each chile with a knife.
- Place under broiler. Watch them closely as the skin will blister and turn black within minutes. Turn the peppers after 3 to 5 minutes to blister all sides evenly. When done, the pepper skins should be evenly blistered and mostly black.
- Place roasted peppers in a plastic bag, and when cool, peel off blackened skin. Using a small sharp knife, carefully slit roasted chiles open along one side. Remove seeds, leaving stems attached. Set aside to fill later.

The picadillo:

- 1.5 lbs ground beef or dark turkey meat
- kosher salt
- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- ½ a medium onion, finely chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, peeled and finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1/2 teaspoon allspice
- 1 cup of crushed, fire roasted tomatoes

- 1/2 cup of golden raisins
- 2 Tbsp blanched and slivered almonds, roughly chopped
- 1 green apple, peeled, cored, chopped
- 1/2 of a fresh peach, pitted, chopped
- 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
- 1 ounce white cooking wine

The sauce:

- 1 to 1.5 cup prepared tehina sauce (sesame seed paste)
 - * If making the sauce from scratch: blend 1 cup hulled **light tehina** (do not use dark tehina) with 3/4 cup water, the juice of one lemon and blend with 3 pieces of garlic, salt to taste; blend until creamy. Salt to taste.
 - ** *If you want to alternatively try a non-dairy walnut sauce, like the traditional sauce; mix 1 cup blanched walnuts with the skins rubbed off, 1 cup almond milk, 1 cup cut-up bolillo with the crust removed, 1 tbs sugar, 1 tsp white wine, salt to taste; blend until creamy.*

Garnish:

- 1/2 cup pomegranate seeds
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley or cilantro

DIRECTIONS

1. In a large skillet, over medium heat, add oil. Add onions and sauté until translucent, about 2 minutes add garlic and continue to cook for another minute.
2. Add ground meat, salt and pepper, and add all spices and vinegar.
3. After 8 minutes of stirring and breaking up meat and meat is cooked add pureed tomatoes, peaches, apples, and wine. Stir and cook for 5 minutes uncovered. Cover and cook for an additional 5 minutes to steam and soften fruit.
4. Add raisins and almonds and combine and let cook for an additional 10 minutes uncovered. While mixture is cooking make the sauce.
5. Assemble the poblanos by generously stuffing them with filling.
6. Pour the sauce over the poblanos; and garnish with chopped parsley or cilantro, and pomegranate seeds.

