

MOLE ALPHABET

INGREDIENTS

Roast 1

- 4 guajillo chiles
- 4 huacle chiles
- 4 dried (not brined) chipotle chiles

Roast 2

- 12 dried cloves
- 3 whole allspice spheres
- a 2 inch piece of mexican cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon of anise seeds
- 1/3 of a nutmeg

Roast 3

- 1/2 tablespoon of dried marjoram
- 3 bay leaves
- 1/2 tablespoon dried mexican oregano
- 2 teaspoons cumin seeds

Roast 4

- 2 tablespoons dark grape raisins
- 3 large pitted prunes
- 3 tablespoons unsalted peanuts
- 5–7 pecans
- 7–10 almonds

Roast 5

- 2 large tomatoes
- 1/2 large white onion
- 3 garlic cloves with their skins on

Roast 6

- 1 charred tortilla
- 2/3 of an overripe plantain
- A 2 inch piece of ginger
- 4 cups chicken stock

You will probably find the guajillo and chipotles in most mexican markets. If you can't find them substitute chile chipotle with a smokey flavored chile like morita or pasilla, guajillos for smooth costeños or criollos, and huacles for spicier chile de árbol or pico de perico.

PROCESS

To roast the chiles just lay them on a very hot comal or large flat pan. It's very easy to burn them so constantly move them around. It won't take more than three minutes and if you're not feeling very confident you can toast them one by one. As soon as their skin starts shining with oils and you get the slightest sniff of chili smell take them off the fire. Chiles with thinner skin will be ready sooner than thicker ones. Let them cool and remove all the seeds and veins.

Wipe your comal or pan with a dry towel and toast the dry spices. Move them around so they don't burn on any sides, again as soon as it starts smelling like spices remove them from the pan. The sturdier cinnamon and nutmeg might take a bit longer than the rest of the ingredients in this group. At this point it's easier to grate the nutmeg and cinnamon so do it before they've cooled down.

Again, wipe the comal with a dry towel and toast the leafy spices very quickly. This shouldn't take more than a minute. Wipe the comal and toast nuts and dried fruits. The raisins and prunes will become oily which will help toast the nuts. Remove the raisins and prunes when their skin starts to shine and it starts to smell like caramel. Keep roasting the nuts until they are lightly brown.

Wipe your comal once more and roast the whole tomatoes, onion and garlic cloves. Turn them constantly to try and get all sides charred and blistered. When the garlic cloves start turning deep brown remove them, let them cool and peel them. As the onion heats you can separate the layers and spread them around the pan so you have more charred spots on it. The tomatoes should take the longest, up to twenty minutes depending on how juicy they are.

Once all the ingredients are toasted use a food processor or potent blender and process together with the tortilla, ginger and plantain for about three minutes. This will allow all the ingredients to yield their oil and integrate into a grainy paste. Texture should be like a grainy nut butter.

Put this paste in a large pot and add chicken stock. Cook for fifteen to twenty minutes then run through a fine mesh sieve or colander so you're left with a smooth sauce. If it's too runy you can process with a warm tortilla and sieve again, if it's too thick you can thin it with more chicken stock.

And there you have it, the easiest, fastest mole ever. Make sure you have some fresh tortillas to dip into the warm mole when it's done. It's the cook's prerogative to have the first serving! Mole will be good frozen for two months and refrigerated for up to two weeks. Make sure every time you reheat it you bring it up to a boil and let it simmer for a two to three minutes.

This recipe is better after a day of two when the flavors have sat together for long enough to combine. Enjoy!