



ANSON MILLS

Posole Rojo (Pork and Hominy Stew)

Yield

6 main dish portions

Time

Day 1: 30 minutes active time (but about 3 hours total cooking time) to make the stock and soak the hominy corn; Day 2: About 2 hours to cook the hominy, cook and shred the meat, prepare the chile purée, and finish the stew

Cooking Remarks

A good braise depends on flavor depth, and flavor depth depends on a multi-phased cooking approach. We use a compound stock for this recipe: the first, wrested from meaty pork bones (smoked and raw), becomes a base for stewing the pork itself, a bone-in shoulder. A pig's trotter and a couple of smoked hocks offer this dish a stunningly silky and glycerol mouthfeel and a rich undercurrent of flavor. If you are unable to find a pig's trotter and don't want to mail order one, feel free to use fresh pork hocks or meaty chicken bones in their stead—along with the smoked hocks. We use basic procedure and ingredient proportions for the Smoked Ham and Chicken Stock recipe already online at ansonmills.com. If you're using all pork products for the *posole rojo*, plan on simmering the stock for 6 hours instead of 4, adding additional water to the pot if it simmers down too much.

You will need to trim the skin from the pork shoulder with a boning knife.

Not surprisingly, we are big proponents of sustainably raised, heritage breeds of pork. For this dish, we ordered all pork products from Flying Pigs Farm in Shushan, New York, well within the local radius of where I (Kay) live and develop recipes. Flying Pigs products are, without exception, simply superb. The folks there will split the trotter(s) for you so that the collagen in the bones will enhance the stock more readily. Make this request on the phone if you call to place an order, or in the comments box on their website if you order online.

A number of small boutique operations like Flying Pigs exist throughout the country, and we encourage you to seek out one in your area. Heritage Foods is another terrific venue for the purchase of sustainably raised pork (and other meats and poultry).

After the stock, *posole rojo*'s second tier of flavor comes from its infusion of chile paste made from toasted dried chiles and aromatics. It's worth the trouble of finding dried chiles that have life in them, indicated by a hint of suppleness in their leathery skins.

Equipment Mise en Place

For this recipe, you will need a large Dutch oven, a chinois or fine-mesh strainer, a large and a medium heatproof bowl, a teakettle, a *comal* or medium cast-iron skillet, a pair of tongs, a second medium bowl, a rubber spatula, and a blender.

Ingredients

1 large garlic head, separated into cloves, cloves peeled, and 4 cloves set aside
1 large yellow onion, peeled and cut into quarters
1 (4-pound) bone-in pork shoulder roast, skin removed
2 Turkish bay leaves
½ teaspoon black peppercorns
Fine sea salt
2 recipes (2 quarts total) Smoked Ham and Chicken Stock (see Cooking Remarks), made with
 1 or 2 fresh pig's trotters (about 2 pounds) or 2 pounds of fresh pork hocks in lieu of the
 chicken wings, and 2 pounds of smoked pork hocks
2 ounces (8 medium) New Mexico chiles
0.5 ounce (2 medium) pasilla chiles
3 cups water
½ teaspoon ground cumin
3 cups Fresh Whole Hominy
2 ounces tortilla chips, finely crushed (¾ cup)
⅓ cup juice from 1 juicy orange, one half of the juiced orange reserved and stuck with 2 whole
 cloves
Freshly ground black pepper
1 to 2 spoonfuls adobo sauce from canned chipotle chiles en adobo

for the garnishes

6 ounces green or napa cabbage, finely shredded (3 to 4 loosely packed cups)
8 ounces (about 1 cup) Mexican crema or sour cream (optional)
Fine sprigs of fresh cilantro
Freshly chopped scallions
2 ounces (½ cup) lightly salted pumpkin seeds, toasted

Directions

1. Day one: Combine all the garlic except the 4 reserved cloves, 3 of the 4 onion quarters, the pork, bay, peppercorns, and ¾ teaspoon salt in a large Dutch oven. Cover with the stock and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat to low and simmer, covered, until the pork is fork tender, about 3 hours. Remove from the heat and cool the pork in the broth for 1 hour, then transfer it to a large plate. Strain the broth through a chinois or fine-mesh strainer set over a large heatproof bowl (do not press on the solids in the strainer), and refrigerate it overnight. When the pork is cool enough to handle, shred it into bite-size pieces, discarding the fat, gristle, and bone. You should have just over 1¼ pounds of meat. Place it in a bowl, cover, and refrigerate until ready to use.

2. Day two: Bring the water to a boil in a teakettle. When it boils, turn off the heat. If the chiles appear dusty, wipe them clean with a damp paper towel. Heat a *comal* or medium cast-iron skillet over medium-low heat until hot, about 3 minutes. Add a few of the chiles and toast them on both sides, using tongs to lightly press them against the surface of the pan, until fragrant and ever-so-slightly darkened, 1 to 2 minutes. Do not allow the chiles to blacken or char or they may taste bitter. Pull the tops off the toasted chiles to remove the stems, shake out the seeds, and toss

the chiles into a medium heatproof bowl. Toast and seed the remaining chiles in the same fashion. Pour the hot water over the chiles, place a small plate on top of them to keep them fully submerged, and let stand until softened and plump, about 30 minutes.

3. Remove the chiles from the water; pour the water through a fine-mesh strainer and reserve. Coarsely chop the remaining 4 garlic cloves and add them to a blender along with the softened chiles, the remaining onion quarter, the cumin, and $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of the chile soaking water. Purée until smooth, scraping down the sides of the blender as needed and adding up to $\frac{1}{4}$ cup more of the chile water to obtain a smooth texture. Pour the purée through a fine-mesh sieve set over a medium bowl to remove bits of skin and seeds; work the mixture back and forth with a rubber spatula to force it through. Scrape the bottom of the sieve occasionally to remove the purée that is clinging to it.

4. Spoon off the fat from the surface of the chilled broth; add 2 or 3 tablespoons of this fat to a large Dutch oven and discard the rest. Heat the fat over medium heat until shimmering. Pour the strained chile purée into the pot, and cook to lock fresh garlic flavors into the paste, stirring frequently, until the paste is slightly thickened and has darkened in color, about 3 minutes. Add the broth, the shredded pork, and the hominy and bring to a boil, then reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer, uncovered, stirring occasionally, for about 25 minutes. Add the crushed tortilla chips, orange juice, the clove-studded orange half, and adobo sauce, if using, and continue to simmer, stirring occasionally, to blend the flavors, about 20 minutes longer. Taste for seasoning, then remove and discard the orange half. Ladle the stew into bowls and serve, passing the garnishes separately.