

Pollo Chipotle – Comfort du Jour

Besides being simple and delicious, this dish is also relatively healthy, as I used cream cheese rather than heavy cream to thicken the spicy sauce. This eliminated the need for flour in earlier stages of cooking it. Serve it on a bed of easy brown rice with chopped cilantro, alongside a simple salad with fresh tomato and slices of ripe avocado.

INGREDIENTS (4 SERVINGS)

1 lb. boneless, skinless chicken breasts
2 Tbsp. expeller-pressed canola oil
1/2 large yellow onion, chopped
2 cloves fresh garlic, smashed and sliced
3/4 tsp. kosher salt
1/4 tsp. sweet Spanish paprika
1/2 tsp. ground cumin
Several twists of freshly ground black pepper
1 or 2 Tbsp. pureed chipotle with adobo sauce* (see recipe notes)
1 cup low-sodium vegetable broth*
A couple of pinches of dried Mexican oregano*
4 Tbsp. cream cheese, room temperature (this is a quarter of a standard package)

*RECIPE NOTES

To make the puree, empty the entire contents of a small can of chipotles in adobo sauce into a food processor or blender. Pulse a few times, then run continuously until the sauce is completely smooth. Use amount to taste.

I prefer the flavor of vegetable broth in most recipes, but for this dish, you could certainly use chicken broth. I still recommend a low-sodium version, as this helps with controlling the overall amount of sodium in the dish.

Mexican oregano is very different from the easier-to-find Mediterranean oregano. It's in the verbena family, with a citrusy and slightly floral flavor. Search it out online, in a Mexican market, at Whole Foods or the spice section of World Market. If you can't get it, dried marjoram would be a better substitute than regular oregano.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Pat the chicken breasts dry with paper towels and place them on a parchment-lined plate or small baking sheet. Transfer it to the freezer for about 15 minutes, which will make the chicken easier to slice thinly in the next step. While the chicken firms up, prep the remaining ingredients.
2. Slice the chicken breasts crosswise into strips approximately 1/4" thick. Sprinkle them with a pinch of the salt.
3. Place a large skillet over medium heat. Swirl in canola oil and heat until shimmering. Add onions and sauté until softened but not browned. Add the rest of the salt, spices and garlic and stir until fragrant.
4. Add the chicken strips, a few at a time, and toss frequently until no pink remains.
5. Stir in chipotle puree, and then add vegetable broth, stirring until puree is evenly distributed. Bring to a gentle boil, then reduce heat to low and simmer for up to one hour with a cover slightly ajar, until the chicken is fully tender, and the sauce is reduced to half its starting volume. Crush the Mexican oregano in your hand and add it to the skillet toward the end of the simmering time.
6. Swirl in the cream cheese, one tablespoon at a time, until melted and emulsified with the rest of the sauce. Spoon the sauce over cilantro rice.