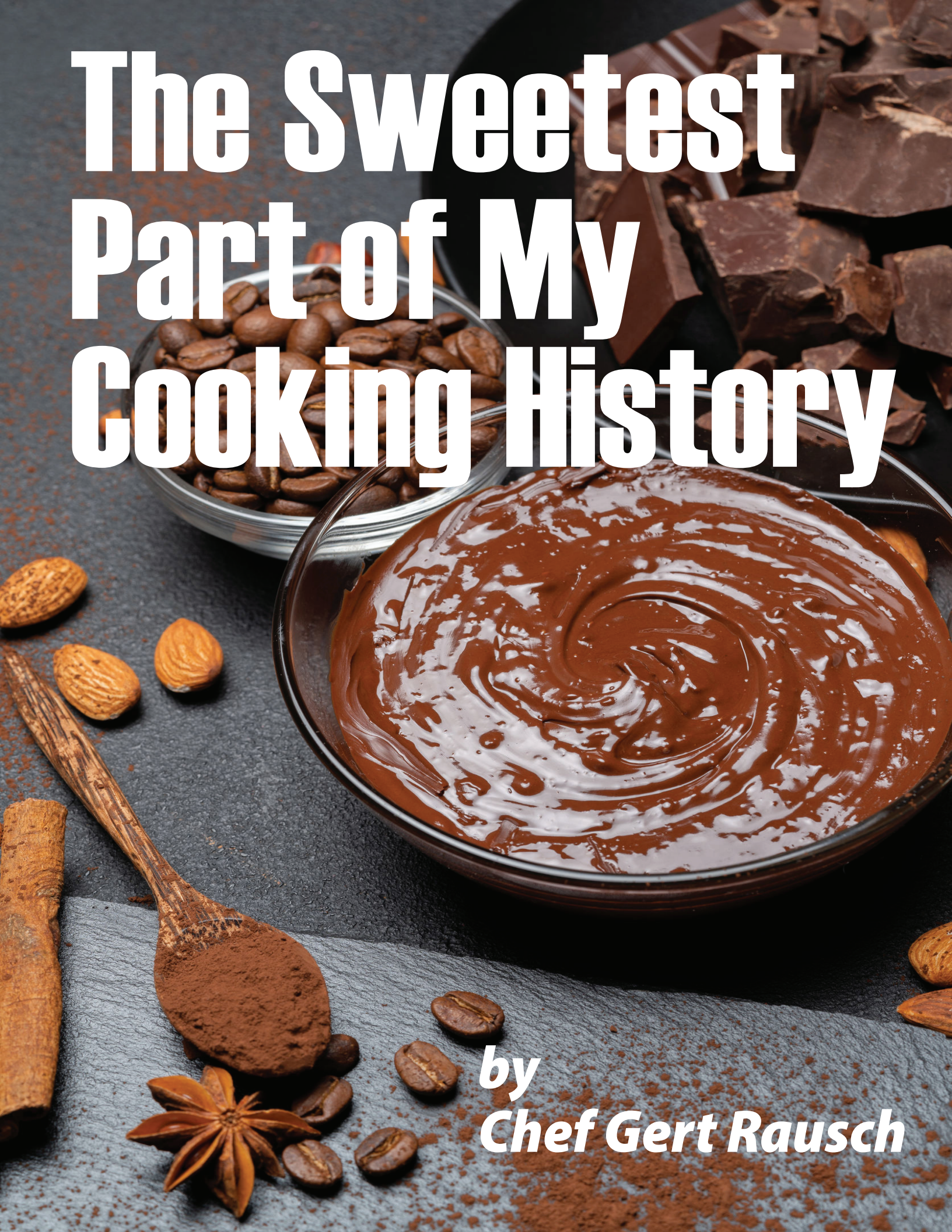


The Sweetest Part of My Cooking History

A still life composition featuring chocolate, coffee, and spices. In the foreground, a glass bowl is filled with smooth, glossy melted chocolate, showing a spiral pattern. To its left, a glass bowl contains dark coffee beans. Scattered around are almonds, a cinnamon stick, a star anise, and a wooden spoon filled with cocoa powder. The background is dark and textured, with more chocolate pieces visible.

by
Chef Gert Rausch

The Sweetest Part of My Cooking History

By Gert Rausch

During my time of traveling and cooking around the world, I tasted many dishes made out of chocolate. I watched some of the great pastry chefs create masterpieces out of chocolate that made mouth-watering displays in the windows of chocolatier shops in Belgium and France. The cakes displayed in the pastry shops, restaurants, and cafes in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland traditionally were presented daily with coffee each afternoon around 3:00 pm.



I've tasted the famous Sachertorte at the Hotel Sacher in Vienna. This created quite an uproar as other shops in Vienna decided to also call their cakes Sachertorte as well due to the popularity of the Hotel Sacher's creation. The Emperor of the holy roman empire, Franz Joseph had to intervene and declare a law that only the Hotel Sacher could use the name Sachertorte.

Some history for you. The nuns in Oaxaca came up with some delicious moles to serve to the rich and the royalty of the church.

Cortez brought it to Europe, and instantly became one of the favorite drinks for the ladies of the royal courts for hundreds of years. In Mexico, it was the drink of choice for the Aztec, Toltec, Mayan, and Inca rulers for thousands of years before Cortez. And dating back further in history, hunters and gatherers of the Amazon Delta enjoyed the cacao nuts. So, when someone asks me if I have heard how popular chocolate is now becoming, I respectfully disagree. LOL.

From Xocoalt to Chocolate ... a Sweet Story

It was in 1502 during the fourth trip to the new world that Christopher Columbus first saw the cacao plant, at this point without even realizing the value of his finding, he left Guanaja Island (currently Honduras). But before he left, he collected some cacao beans to take back to Spain. But despite his assurance that these were highly appreciated by the natives, the Spanish court rejected the new product.



Almost three decades later, Herman Cortes, somewhat more cunning than the admiralty, discovered the enormous value that cacao had amongst the Aztecs. In a letter he wrote to King Charles I, the Conqueror of Mexico, he described the fruit very much like almonds that the natives sold this grounded for storage and used it as a currency throughout the territory to buy all things necessary at the markets.

The Aztecs and probably the Mayans before them made the “xocoatl,” which means bitter water in the Nahuatl language. The process to make this beverage consisted of toasting and grinding the beans forming a paste that was then diluted with water and beaten until obtaining foam. Finally, it was mixed with achiote, honey, or vanilla and served cold to the noble class of the time.

In his book, the true story of the conquest of new Spain, chronicler Bernal Diaz del Castillo wrote the following. “They brought glasses made out of fine gold filled with a beverage prepared with good cacao with its foam, and that Montezuma would be served this drink by women who would serve him the drink with the utmost care and respect.

The importance that the cacao plant and beans had for the ancient MesoAmerican has been documented here and it’s been seen that cacao has been an offering to the God of Rain.



The chronicle tells that Cortes introduced the consumption of this bitter and spicy beverage to the Spanish court in the 16th century and that soon thereafter women became fans of this drink which they drank in small sips and mixing it with pepper.

With the intermarriage of the nobility and their travels through Europe, the drink became very popular. Soon after that in 1657, the chocolate cupcake became a hit in the English courts and noble houses.

Rumor has it that the clergy contributed to the chocolate conquest of Europe. And that the nuns from the convent in Oaxaca were the first to add cane sugar to their recipe, which was then heated and served similar to hot chocolate.

For Spain, this crop was considered the “money plantation”, resulting in its spread throughout Central America, Ecuador, Venezuela, and Brazil. From there came other regions such as Africa and the Island colonies of Portugal and Spain closer to the African coast.

In the 18th century, cacao was consumed by social class around the same time as the first steam machines appeared. As a result, the cost of processing chocolate dropped. And around this time some of the most famous chocolate shops were consolidating among them, Joseph Fry’s in England, The French Chocolate and Tea company in Paris, and the Maya Chocolate Factory in Italy.

The 19th century was good for the chocolate industry and in 1828 Conrad Van Houten, a Dutch chemist found a way to separate the fat of the cacao to obtain butter and powder (cocoa). Following this, in 1847, Joseph Fry’s heirs capitalized on this Van Houten’s discovery by mixing the cacao butter with sugar and into a ground paste, inventing the first bar of solid chocolate. At this point, the public stopped drinking chocolate and began biting bars of chocolate, sensual self-indulgence.



In 1875, Swiss Daniel Peter, managed to mix the cacao with powdered milk created by Henri Nestle, thus creating the chocolate that is most famous for its soft and sweet taste. Years later, the Swiss developed the process of conching, a new process that evenly distributes the cocoa butter within the chocolate mass, creating a smoother mixture and richer taste.

The sweet story comes to a milestone with Milton Hershey who in 1894 started to produce his famous filled chocolate as well as his chocolate bars that traveled the world. Chocolate is a story of emperors and sweet-toothed nobles that ends on the chocolate-covered fingers of a kid about the chocolate enthusiastically.

Making Chocolate and Planting Chocolate

To better understand how chocolate is made you need to first understand the entire process from the fields where the cacao is grown, the skillful hands of the farmers who have experimented with their plants for decades until they get the best cacao seeds.

During the dry season, men and women set out to collect fruit. For this, they use scissors pallanas (instruments used for harvesting), and caperinas (mantles used to carry fruits). After they've gathered the fruits, they take shelter under the cacao trees and begin opening the cacao pods looking for the beans. In some areas, this process is known as "martajar" and is done by using a small machete to harvest the beans.

The cacao beans are surrounded by a sweet pulp that has a similar flavor to that of a custard apple. Next, they're taken to the fermentation boxes that are set either parallel to each other or on top of the other. The beans will be kept in these boxes for anywhere from 5 to 7 days. It is during this fermentation process that the cacao acquires all its aroma and flavor that characterizes it. After this process has ended, it's time for the intense tropical sun to do its job in drying the beans. This process can take up to 4-5 days, and it's during this time that the beans get their brown color. Once the humidity has been completely extracted, the cacao is ready for its journey through chocolate factories around the world where a long and sweet flavor odyssey awaits.

Many of the great chocolate factories work closely with the farmers that provide the beans. They are constantly making advances in better farming techniques and being evolving next-generation bio-responsible farming. These improvements are not only for sustainable agriculture but also to help their profit margins as well.

Making Couverture

The elaborate process of making the paste begins with the washing and roasting of the beans, a process that increases the aroma, facilitates the removal of the skin, and the brushing of the seeds in this process.

The next step is roasting the beans. The beans are placed in large rotating ovens where they will be heated to 100-120° C. The goal of this step is to lower the humidity and acidity of the beans, thus allow the aroma to be released.

Since the toasting process makes the skin explode, the beans go through a sieving machine to remove all the skins which are then used to make cacao powder and compost for gardens.

Now that the beans are toasted and peeled, they are now ready to be mixed. This is when the magic begins. It is at this point when different types of cacao are brought together to create a unique flavor in a craft that requires much experience as intuition.

Finally, the beans are ground and beaten at a constant temperature for 18 to 72 hours. The amount of time that the chocolate is beaten has a direct influence on its texture. After being ground and beaten the cacao separates into lard, a fluid, and as a paste that is then homogenized and heated to 100°C before it solidifies and is turned into couverture chocolate, and thereafter there is the only delight.

Jewels of the Forest

Cacao is native to upland and floodplain forests of the Amazon Forests in the southern part of the Orinoco Basin and the contiguous Guianas.

The exact distribution of wild cacao in the Amazon is unclear because people have moved the plant around from area to area for a long time. The tasty pulp surrounding the seeds or beans of cacao was likely appreciated by early hunters and gathers in the Amazon. Cacao may have been confined originally to the central and western parts of the Amazon and up to the foothills of the Andes. Just as more people started arriving and going in different directions into the Amazon Basin thousands of years ago, they soon started moving the tree around.

Cacao is an understory tree, dispersed by monkeys, but the first humans to come into contact with cacao learned to snack on the succulent mesocarp and eventually took the plant to Central America where the making chocolate originated. How cacao reached Central America remains a mystery. Basil Bartley, a world authority on cacao genetic resources thinks that cacao may have been transported over a mountain pass in the Andes to the humid coast of northern Peru and Ecuador. From there it may have been taken along the pacific coast to Central America.

Mexico and Guatemala discovered that a fine fulfilling beverage could be made by fermenting the seeds, then roasting them. Wild cacao in Mexico is genetically distinct from the cacao found in South America, suggesting that it has been in Central America long enough to evolve.

Not only did people extend cacao's range, but they also increased the density of the useful tree inadvertently by discarding seeds at campsites and villages or deliberately by planting seeds or transplanting seedlings.

How far east cacao was found before humans arrived is a matter of conjecture. Almost a century ago, the Swiss botanist Jacques Hubert remarked on how difficult it is to differentiate truly wild cacao from feral populations, and cacao is generally considered native to both upland and floodplain forests.

Wild cacao is arguably one of the most valuable biological resources in the Amazon, at least concerning agriculture. The search for building genetic resistance to diseases and pests in cacao is essential because excessive application of pesticides triggers environmental damage and human health concerns. “Witches-broom,” caused by a fungus, is one of cacao’s most serious enemies and has devastated plantations of cacao in several parts of the world including Bahia-Brazil.

The Amazon forest can help buffer cacao against current and future environmental shocks. This underscores the importance of diverse sources of genetic resistance to battle new diseases and pests from time to time. Such as vascular diseases in southeast Asia and fish-bone diseases in Papua New Guinea, answers to such challenges to cacao production may well lie with wild cacao in the forest of the Amazon.

Cacao growers have been aware of the problems of the world's chocolate industry for a long time. In 1938 an agronomist from Trinidad’s Department of Agriculture, F. J. Pound, set out to comb the Western Amazon for sources of resistance to cacao diseases, especially witches-broom. Two sources in his collection, Sca6, and Sca8, from the Scavina farm near Iquitos in the Peruvian Amazon, proved resistant to witches-broom and have been bred into much of the cacao grown in the areas where the disease occurs.

Both selections produce beans that are too small for commercial production so they crossbred with more desirable types. But new sources of resistance are needed because viruses have evolved into numerous varieties or pathotypes and must be found definitively among the wild relatives of the cacao.

The Wild Relatives of the Cacao

Ever since ancient times the inhabitants of the Amazon jungle have used and domesticated the wild relatives of cacao that lie hidden within the green mantle of the Amazon region. Among these relatives is the macambo which is probably the most famous of all, as it is one of the best-known fruit trees in the Western Amazon region. Although it’s usually distributed throughout the lowlands, it can also be found on the eastern slopes of the Andes at 2,625 ft. When ripe its large fruit that measures 15 to 20 cm, boasts an intense yellow coloring and the skin is characterized as deep and rough. The macambo or majambu is cultivated in orchards or gardens in the main cities of the Amazon region in these areas, and the fruit is covered with its flat and round seeds, which can be turned into an exquisite treat when toasted.

Another wild relative of the cacao is the cacahiullo or sachá cacao. A small tree of the undergrowth found in riversides of flood table areas, whose round fruit is gathered in the rural areas of the Amazon region for the sweet flavor of its pulp.

Last, but not least, is the copazu, or white cacao that grows in the firm land forests of the Amazon region, a particularly high area out of the reach of seasonal floods. And unlike its commercial relative, the copoazu has more pulp than seeds, resulting in its soft and sweet flavor used to make ice creams, refreshments, marmalades, jellies, and homemade sweets. Its high calcium, phosphorous, and vitamin C content. In addition, there is a high percentage of protein and fatty acids found in its seeds and an ideal source of nourishment and promise for the food industry.

Cepicafe and the White Cacao

There is an interesting varietal in this story. These varietals are not found in the humid forest of the high jungle, where most of the cacao production of the Amazon basin is located, but in the tropical forest of the Pacific, on the western flanks of the Peruvian north. It is here in the village of Palo Blanco, among mangoes and lemons, and surrounded by forests where you'll find the crown jewel. The white or porcelain cacao. A variety which unlike its common relatives has whitish seeds instead of a violet interior. Experts say that the whiter the seed the less bitter the chocolate and this is the reason why the cost per ton of the porcelain cacao is twice as much as that common cacao.

The small producers from Piura have understood the importance of the fruit that grows in their parcels of land and have established the Coffee Growers Central Association of Piura-Cepicafe. This has helped them get their superior product into many foreign markets. A French owner of Vintage plantations and a small producer of fine chocolates, visited the region and left with a clear message, "just as it occurs in France with wine." Piura could become the destination known for its high-quality chocolate and soon compete with Venezuela's porcelain cacao. In addition to cacao beans, Chouard is also thinking about buying the pulp to make marmalade and believes will duplicate the profits of the producer.

This story is wonderful for all the folks living and working with the fruits of their labor, they will have a better life for their families.

The Story of the Cacao

The story has been a great success. Many villages and regions have formed cooperatives, making it possible to send their products to the world markets. And to encourage better and better products many of the great makers of chocolates actively help growers to produce the best crops possible.

During my lifetime as a chef and traveler. I have seen and experienced the great traditions of growing cacao and then making the chocolate visiting factories in Switzerland, Belgium, and Hershey in Pennsylvania. And I've watched some of the great pastry chefs creating masterpieces out of chocolate-like sculpture.

I will give you some recipes of foods I have tasted and learned how to cook from people around the world. I would like to start with Mexico where nuns at the convent in Oaxaca, Mexico came up with the idea of adding cane sugar to the recipe making something resembling hot chocolate.



Moles are probably the first sauces created with chocolate. The story goes that a nun in the convent in Oaxaca created something very close to today's chocolate bars, and they are the basis for the seven classic moles of Oaxaca. The mole symbolizes the essence of life, the ladies of the house took great pride in preparing the mole sauce and would have heated discussions about which household served the best. The following recipe

comes from a lady I cooked with in Austin, Texas I met while she was promoting Mexican cuisine and culture at a restaurant called Fonda San Miguel, the first to serve authentic Mexican food in the area.

CHICKEN MOLE

Ingredients

- 2 medium white onions, peeled and quartered
- 1 head of garlic, roasted and peeled
- 2 cinnamon sticks, 4 inches long
- 5 whole cloves
- Salt to taste
- 2 chickens cut in pieces, or 4 whole chicken breasts, approximately
- 4 ¼ pounds total

The Sauce

- ¼ cups lard or vegetable oil
- ½ medium white onions, peeled and quartered
- 8 garlic cloves, peeled
- 2 cup almonds, blanched
- 1 cup roasted, unsalted peanuts
- 1 cinnamon stick, 4 inches long
- 4 whole cloves
- 16 black peppercorns
- 1 croissant, torn into pieces
- 4 large, ripe tomatoes, roasted
- 8 dried chilies, washed, very lightly roasted, seeded, and deveined, and soaked in hot
- ½ cup water
- 2 slices white onion

For the Garnish

- 1 can chiles largos or chiles jalapeños, pickled, about 8 ounces (optional)
- ¾ cup finely chopped blanched almonds or peanuts,
- 3 tablespoons finely chopped fresh parsley.

Prepare the Chicken

1. Bring the water to a boil in a large saucepan.
2. Add the onion, garlic, cinnamon, cloves, salt, and chicken.
3. Simmer for 25 minutes or until the chicken is partially cooked.
4. Allow it to cool in the broth.
5. Then remove chicken from the broth and reserve broth chicken and broth.
6. Strain the broth.

Prepare the Sauce

1. Heat $\frac{3}{4}$ cup lard in a large saucepan.
2. Add the onions, garlic, almonds, peanuts, cinnamon, cloves, peppercorns, and croissant.
3. Cook for 25 minutes. If the mixture is in a blender or food processor.
4. Add tomatoes and chilies and puree the mixture.
5. Heat the remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ cup lard in a saucepan.
6. Brown the onion slices.
7. Stir in the pureed mixture and cook until releases its fat and you can see the bottom of the pan when the mixture is stirred.
8. Add 2 to 3 cups of reserved chicken and cook for an additional 25 minutes.
9. Correct the seasoning.

To Serve

Serve the almond mole from a large clay pot, garnished with canned chiles, chopped almonds or peanuts, and chopped parsley. Accompany with freshly made corn tortillas.

SHRIMP AND MASA DUMPLINGS MOLE

- 4 ripe plum tomatoes
- 2 medium white onions, peeled
- 6 large clove garlic, peeled
- 10 dried chilcosle or 8 dried chiles anchos, seeded and deveined
- 6 dried chiles guajillos or New Mexico chiles, seeded and deveined
- 10 ripe tomatillos, husked, and boiled
- 14 black peppercorns

- ½ cinnamon stick
- 1 tablespoon achiote (annatto) seeds ground
- 4 whole cloves
- ¼ teaspoon cumin seeds
- ¾ cup vegetable oil or lard salt to taste
- ½ cup fresh masa (corn dough)
- 6 cups fish stock
- 2 ½ pounds salted striped mullet, or any dried fish cut into 2 inches and soaked in water to
- Cover for 1 day with 2 changes of water
- 1 ½ pounds shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 4 to 6 fresh hoja santa leaves or 10 fresh avocado leaves

Ingredients for the Dumplings

- 1-pound fresh masa
- 1/3 cup water
- ½ tablespoon lard or bacon drippings
- Salt to taste
- ½ cup chopped cilantro or epazote

Ingredients for the garnish

- 2 medium white onions, peeled and finely chopped
- 1 cup finely chopped radishes fresh lemon juice to taste
- Salt to taste

Preparation of the Mole

1. Preheat a comal or a heavy skillet and roast tomatoes on all sides, turning them often.
2. Roast the onions, garlic, and chiles.
3. Soak the roasted chiles briefly in water
4. Drain the chilies and place in a blender or a food processor with the tomatoes, onions, garlic, tomatillos, and spices, and puree
5. Heat the oil in a large saucepan
6. Add the pureed chile mixture and stir-fry until the oil separates from the sauce.
7. Season with salt

8. Dissolve the masa in a little of the fish stock and stir the mixture into the sauce
9. Remove the fish from the soaking liquid, and pat dry
10. When the sauce thickens, add the fish, shrimp and hoja santa leaves to the sauce.
11. Simmer uncovered for another 20 minutes over medium heat

THE CITY OF PUEBLO MOLE

- 2 cups butter
- 1 onion, chopped
- 8 cloves garlic, peeled
- ¼ cup sesame seeds
- ¾ cup almonds
- ¾ cup peanuts
- ¾ raisins
- 1 cup pitted prunes
- 1 ½ ripe, male plantain, peeled
- 1 teaspoon coriander
- ½ teaspoon anise
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 1 butter horn or croissant, torn into pieces
- 1 onion, peeled
- 1 head garlic
- 3 large tomatoes
- 10 tomatillos
- 2 tortillas
- 6 cups chicken broth, hot
- 2 slices onion
- Salt to taste

Ingredients and Preparation for the Chiles

- 30 minutes mulatos, slit lengthwise and deveined
- 16 chiles anchos, slit lengthwise and deveined
- 16 long chilies pasillas, slit lengthwise and deveined
- 3 chiles chipotles, slit lengthwise and deveined
- 1 ½ onion, chopped
- 6 cloves garlic, peeled
- Salt to taste
- ½ pound baker's chocolate in 4 pieces
- 4 tablespoon sugar
- 8 to 10 cups chicken broth

Ingredients for the Chicken

- 20 cups water
- 6 thighs
- 12 breasts, halved (or 24 roasted, boned Cornish hens)
- 3 carrots, peeled
- ½ celery stalk, chopped
- 6 bay leaves
- Salt to taste

Ingredients for the Garnish

- ½ cup sesame seeds, toasted

Preparation

1. Prepare the stew with hens marinated in salt, pepper, butter, and a bit of garlic for 1 hour in the bottom of the refrigerator.
2. Bake them in a preheated oven at a high temperature for 40 minutes or until golden brown.
3. Cool, split the breast and arrange them on the thighs.

Note: Always make more sauce than needed, since stew can be poured over fried or poached eggs.

You can also make enmoladas (stew-filled pie with flaky crusts) or crepes filled with chicken, cheese, and cream. Another simple way to serve it is over red rice. The sauce freezes well in hermetically sealed containers.

TUNA STEAK

Recipe from the former Aqua Grill sandwich, Ma which I was a partner with chocolate and port reduction.

Ingredients

- 4 tuna steaks 140 gr each
- 50 gr. powdered paprika
- 20 gr. ground black pepper
- Olive oil and salt
- Port and chocolate reduction
- 1 chopped small shallot
- 1 garlic clove
- 1-piece red dried chili
- ½ cup Port wine/30 grams bitter chocolate olive oil

Preparation

- Dip tuna into paprika and pepper mixture.
- Seal the steak in a heavy saucepan on both sides of the grill set aside.

Sauce Preparation

1. In a small saucepan place, all the ingredients reduce until it has a smooth texture.
2. Stir in

Serving

Cut the tuna steak, arrange on a plate, sprinkle olive oil around the fish, and pour Port wine sauce on top serve with a beautiful mixed salad. It can be served lukewarm.

P.S. We also had other specials were chocolate-infused sauces were used the likes of veal chops in Macadamia nuts with a chile, peppercorn demiglace. Chocolate ravioli filled with Foie Gras or chocolate risotto.

CACAO MARTINI

Ingredients

- 2 oz. passions fruit extract
- 2 oz. pisco (you can also use vodka or gin)
- ¼ oz. sugar syrup
- 2 oz. chocolate liquor
- 1 oz. Frangelico / ice

Preparation

Chill the glass with ice, using a shaker filled with ice, mix the passion fruit extract with pisco, and then the Frangelico and ice cubes.

Serve in two phases:

First the chocolate liqueur and then the passion fruit mix. Decorate with a chocolate piece.

CHICKEN NOGALES

Sometimes you don't know if you've gone too far until you've gone too far.

Ingredients

- 8 poblano chilies
- ½ small white onion, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tablespoon olive oil
- ½ lb. boar tenderloin, in ¼ dice
- 2 tablespoon golden raisins
- ¼ cup prunes, pitted, diced
- 2 tablespoon dried apricots, diced
- ½ cup pear, diced
- ¼ cup green apples, diced
- ¼ cup dried pineapple, diced
- ¼ cup small plantain, diced
- 1 Roma tomato, diced
- 3 tablespoons brown sugar

- 1/8 teaspoon cinnamon
- Pinch of cloves
- Pinch of nutmeg
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 teaspoon red chili flake
- 1 teaspoon thyme
- ½ teaspoon oregano
- ½ ground black pepper
- 2 teaspoon oregano
- 2 teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoon sherry
- 2 tablespoons achiote paste and 4 tablespoons water (puree together and set aside)
- 8 oz. boneless skinless chicken breasts seeds of 2 pomegranates

Preparation

1. Blister and peel skin from 8 poblanos. Remove seedpod, leaving pepper whole set aside.
2. Sauté onion and garlic in olive oil. Add diced boar and cook for 3 minutes in a very large sauté pan.
3. Add raisins, prunes, apricots, pear, apples, pineapple, plantation, tomato, and brown sugar. Simmer until mixture begins to thicken, about 10 minutes.
4. Add cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, bay leaf, red chili flakes, thyme, oregano, ground pepper, sherry, and salt simmer, stirring constantly until mixture thicken, about 8-10 minutes. Remove and cool.
5. Sandwich chicken breast between sheets of plastic wrap. Pound with mallet or bottom of skillet until ¼ thick.
6. Rub both sides of the breast with achiote puree.
7. Lay each roasted poblano on a chicken breast filled with the fruit/boar stuffing and roll-up.
8. To roll the breast in plastic, center the stuffed breast lengthwise in the middle of an 18x12 piece of plastic wrap. Fold the plastic over the breast and roll- Grasp the plastic on each side of the breast and do loop de loops until you have a big chicken bubble with strands coming from each side. Cross the strands over the bubble and tie in a square knot (right over left, left over right).

9. Put the plastic-wrapped, stuffed chicken poblanos into boiling water and cook for 12 minutes.
10. Remove from water, undo plastic, wrap and slice into 4 medallions.

GOAT CHEESE SAUCE

Ingredients

- 1 cup chardonnay wine
- 2 tablespoons red onion, small dice
- 2 tablespoons garlic, chopped
- 2 cups heavy cream
- 1 teaspoon each: dried basil, oregano, tarragon, and thyme
- 8 oz. local goat cheese
- 1 cup Monterey jack cheese, shredded
- ¼ cup sour cream
- 1 teaspoon salt

Preparation

1. Combine wine, red onion, and garlic and reduce to medium-high heat until almost dry
2. Add heavy cream
3. Heat and reduce by almost half, over medium heat
4. Reduce heat to low and whip in herbs, goat cheese, jack cheese, and sour cream. Reserve for service.

POMEGRANATE SAUCE

Ingredients

- 3 cups bottled pomegranate juice

Preparation

1. Warm juice in a saucepan over medium heat until it is the consistency of syrup.
 - a. If fresh pomegranates are in season, do not make the sauce, just sprinkle with red pomegranate seeds.

WHITE CHOCOLATE TOMATILLO SAUCE

A recipe from Hudson's on the Bend. A restaurant I owned in Texas with my partner Jeff Blank

Yields 3 cups of white chocolate tomatillos sauce.

Ingredients

- ½ cup chicken stock
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic
- 1 tablespoon red onions finely diced
- 2 cups tomatillos husks removed and quartered
- 1 jalapeno chopped
- ¼ cups almonds
- 2 tablespoons sesame seeds
- 2 times juice and zest
- 2/3 cup white chocolate
- ½ tablespoon cornstarch
- 1 tablespoon salt and pepper mix

Preparation

1. Separately toast almonds and sesame seeds in a dry skillet until brown.
2. Puree stock, garlic, onion, tomatillos, jalapeno, sesame, lime juice, and zest in a food processor.
3. Transfer to a saucepot, bring to a simmer over medium heat, and incorporate chocolate, stirring until smooth.
4. Combine cornstarch and water. Stir into sauce. Bring to a boil and remove from the heat.
5. Puree cilantro in a blender with ½ the hot sauce return to pot. Adjust seasoning with salt and pepper mix.

This sauce goes well with shrimp, lobster, grilled/fried fish, chicken, and meats