

Pollo al Ajillo

Roughly translated as “Chicken in Garlic Sauce”, this dish is ubiquitous on restaurant menus throughout Spain. That being said, this recipe bears little resemblance to the clear sauces found in restaurants. My father, a chef, made this hearty dish on Sunday nights in the winter.

Description

Cut chicken in a thick, yellow almond-garlic sauce served over yellow saffron rice.

Ingredients (Ajillo only)

(as you get used to making this, feel very free to change the proportions)

Chicken, cut up
Chicken Stock, 16 oz.
Almonds (slivered, chopped), ½ cup
Onion, 2 medium to large, chopped
Garlic, 8-10 cloves, chopped
Olive Oil
White Vinegar, ½ cup
Saffron
Cumin
Salt & Pepper

Procedure

1. The chicken thighs, legs, breasts and wings need to be cooked. Season them with salt, pepper and garlic powder and either fry them in olive oil (messy) or bake them at 350°.
2. Begin the sauce by sautéing the chopped onion in olive oil until they become golden/yellow. Use medium heat so they don't brown or burn too quickly.
3. Add the chopped garlic and almonds to the onions. Let them cook together—again, don't let them burn.
4. Add the vinegar. Let it bubble a little.
5. Grind four or five strands of saffron in a mortar and pestle. It will reduce to a dark red powder.
6. Pour the chicken stock into the mortar and into the onions. The stock washes all of the finely ground saffron into the sauce. (It's too expensive a spice to leave any behind.)
7. Season with cumin. It's a very strong spice and can easily overpower. This dish

gets its flavor from the cumin so don't be too spare with it.

8. Add the cooked chicken and drippings to the sauce and mix in. The chicken should be covered with the yellow liquid. The exterior seasoning of the chicken should add salt and pepper to the flavor.
9. Thicken the sauce as follows. (This is where my Dad diverged with everyone else. My kids and I love the sauce thick. My wife doesn't like thickened sauces. You decide.) In a small jar with a lid, combine one heaping teaspoon of corn starch with a few ounces of water. Close the lid and shake vigorously until there are no lumps. Now, add this to the sauce, stirring to spread the white thickener evenly throughout the yellow liquid. The sauce will progressively thicken as it cooks.
10. Lower the heat and let the dish simmer while you spend the next 20 minutes making the rice.

Spanish Saffron Rice (not Uncle Ben's please.)

Ingredients

Extra long grain rice, one cup
Chicken Stock, two cups
Bay leaf
Garlic, one clove
Olive Oil
Saffron
Salt

11. Sauté one chopped clove of garlic in a few table spoons of olive oil to flavor the oil.
12. Stir in a cup of extra long grain rice and sauté the kernels in the seasoned oil until they become translucent.
13. Grind three or four strands of saffron in a dry mortar and pestle. It will reduce to a dark red powder, as above.
14. Add the chicken stock by pouring through the mortar as above. Toss the bay leaf into the liquid and add some salt. Stir once to make sure all is mixed and wait for the liquid to boil. Once it boils, reduce the heat to low and cover for 20 minutes. All the liquid should be gone and the rice should be perfect.

Serving Instructions

Place a bed of rice on the plate, put one or two pieces of chicken on top and cover with the sauce. Serve with something that isn't yellow as well as some crusty bread.