



Mardi Gras Chicken and Andouille Gumbo

Nothing says Mardi Gras like a good Cajun meal, and nothing is more satisfying than a hot serving of Gumbo spiced with the addition of andouille, an authentic spicy Cajun pork sausage. The key to this dish is to take the time to make an authentic brown roux.

8 servings

Ingredients

1 large chicken cut into 8 pieces
1 pound andouille sausage, cut on the bias into 1-inch pieces
5 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon butter
6 tablespoons flour
2 large onions, diced
1 large green bell pepper, medium dice
1 cup celery, chopped
3 garlic cloves, minced
2½ quarts chicken stock
1 tablespoon fresh thyme, minced
3 bay leaves
1/8 teaspoon ground cloves
¼ teaspoon allspice
1 teaspoon cayenne pepper (or more to taste)
1 tablespoon Creole seasoning blend (available in most supermarkets)
½ cup scallion, minced

Equipment

Very large deep sauté pan or Dutch oven

Preparation

Prepare the chicken by cutting it into pieces.

[Chef's Note: We prefer relatively small pieces, so we cut breasts and thighs in half, leaving the skin on.]

Season lightly with salt, pepper and a little of the Creole seasoning. Heat a heavy-bottomed sauté pan over medium-high heat, and add enough oil to coat the bottom of the pan. When it shimmers, add the butter and then the chicken pieces, skin side down. Sauté the chicken in oil until browned on both sides, and the skin is nicely crisped. Remove the chicken from the pan and add the andouille sausage. Fry the andouille for 4-5 minutes and remove to the same bowl as the chicken.

Prepare the roux:

Make a brown roux by adding the flour to the remaining fat in the pan. Using a wire whisk, stir constantly, incorporating the flour and the fat until all lumps are gone and a smooth paste is achieved. Cook the roux for 15-20 minutes over medium heat until it's nicely browned and nutty in aroma.

[Chef's Note: If the roux is a little too dry, add a touch of oil until you are able to easily whisk the roux as it cooks. If it's too runny, add a little flour at a time until the roux is thick but still fluid.]

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Finish the Gumbo:

Once the roux is dark, add the onions, bell peppers, celery and garlic and cook, stirring, until the vegetables are softened and given off a little of their liquid. Add the chicken stock, thyme, bay leaves, ground cloves, allspice, cayenne and the remaining Creole seasoning. Add the chicken pieces and andouille back into the pan along with any juices that have accumulated. Bring to a boil, then lower the heat and simmer the gumbo for another 20-30 minutes, until the vegetables are cooked through, the chicken is tender and the liquid has thickened. When the gumbo is finished, remove from the heat and add the sliced scallions. Serve while hot over white rice or red beans and rice.

Variations

Gumbos can, of course, come in many forms. A popular way to make gumbo is with seafood. Replace the chicken stock with seafood stock, and use shrimp (heads-on is most authentic to Louisiana cuisine), crab meat and even oysters. However, the seafood should be added at the end of the cooking time so they are not overcooked. If using crabmeat, steam the crabs and pick out the meat, adding it in at the end just until heated through.

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