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I AM A FILIPINO

AND THIS IS HOW WE COOK



ADOBONG MANOK AT BABOY

Classic Adobo

THE CLASSIC ADOBO most commonly known in homes and in restaurants throughout the Philippines and in America, *adobong manok at baboy*, has a silky, fatty, sour sauce. The ingredients for this dish—soy sauce, vinegar, black peppercorns, bay leaves, garlic, chicken (*manok*), and pork (*baboy*)—are easy to find in any grocery store. Despite the simplicity of the ingredients, you'd be surprised at how different the dish can taste from cook to cook, based on shifts in cooking time or a predilection for sour or salty. Some people add coconut milk; some cooks add a bit of sweetness in the form of sugar, honey, ripe fruit, or even preserves to round out the adobo's sharp acidity and saltiness. Think of it like you do music: the notes are familiar, but the arrangement is what makes it unique. This is a "dry" adobo, which is less saucy. Try this method at least once, then adjust the proportions to your own preferences. Serve it with rice and crunchy cucumber relish. **SERVES 4 TO 6**

1 cup (240 ml) white sugarcane vinegar (see Key Ingredients, page 42)

1 cup (240 ml) soy sauce

10 garlic cloves, minced

2 teaspoons whole black peppercorns

3 tablespoons fruit preserves, jam, or jelly, such as blueberry or fig

3 bay leaves

2 bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs

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1 pound (455 g) fresh pork belly, cut into 1-inch (2.5 cm) cubes

2 tablespoons vegetable oil

4 to 6 cups (800 g to 1.2 kg) cooked white rice (see page 40), for serving

Cucumber-Tomato Relish (see page 123; optional)

Notes: This recipe requires long marinating, preferably overnight.

You could make this dish without the pork belly; just double the amount of chicken pieces.

In a large ziplock bag or nonreactive container, stir together the vinegar, soy sauce, garlic, peppercorns, fruit preserves, and bay leaves until the preserves are thoroughly combined. Add the chicken and pork belly, seal the bag or container, and marinate in the refrigerator for at least 6 hours, or preferably overnight.

Transfer the chicken, pork, and marinade to a large Dutch oven or heavy-bottomed pot with 4 cups (1 L) water and bring the liquid to a boil over high heat. Immediately reduce the heat to medium and simmer for 30 minutes, or

> recipe continues →

BULALO

Bone Marrow Soup

BULALO IS A RUSTIC SOUP with flecks of bone marrow and brawny beef shank bones swimming in a deceptively light but heartily satisfying and deeply flavored broth. The components are remarkably pared down, and the quality of ingredients and subtle technique are what make this dish magnificent. Bulalo is made from flavorful bones (cows are usually grass-fed in the Philippines), plus onions, peppercorns, potatoes, and other vegetables. Time is the most crucial element; slow cooking allows the broth to pull all the flavor from the bones. Bulalo is a specialty in the region of Cavite south of Manila near Taal Lake, whose steep bluffs are surrounded by some of the best land for raising beef cattle. The area is home to many *bulalohan*, little eateries serving bulalo. *Sawsawan* is a must on the table to season the soup to your liking—for this dish, try fish sauce, chopped chiles, and calamansi juice or vinegar. **SERVES 8 TO 10**

When you add corn and cabbage to the soup, as we do, bulalo is sometimes called *nilaga*, which is also the Tagalog term for “boiled.” Some people also add bananas or plantains. Another common variation is *kansi*, a blend of bulalo and *sinigang* soured with a tart Filipino fruit called *batwan*.

5 pounds (2.3 kg) beef shanks, preferably grass-fed

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

¼ cup (70 g) whole black peppercorns

½ cup (75 g) whole garlic cloves (about 10), smashed with the side of a knife

4 bay leaves

2 medium white onions, thinly sliced

1 bunch scallions, thinly sliced

2 cups (280 g) coarsely chopped peeled potatoes

¼ pound (115 g) napa cabbage, thickly sliced

1 ear fresh corn, cut crosswise into 1-inch-long (2.5 cm) pieces

Fish sauce

Sawsawan (see page 34), for serving

In a large stockpot, bring 1 gallon (4 L) water to a boil.

Season the beef shanks liberally with salt and pepper. Add them to the boiling water and let the water come back to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium-low so the water simmers. Skim off any impurities from the top.

Add the peppercorns, garlic, bay leaves, and onions and cook the beef shanks for 2½ to 3½ hours, until the marrow is tender. Keep an eye on the pot: Add water as needed to keep the ingredients just covered.

Add the scallions, potatoes, cabbage, and corn and cook for 10 minutes more, or until the potatoes are cooked through. Taste and season with fish sauce.

Serve in deep bowls with sawsawan alongside, making sure each serving has some beef, onions, potato, cabbage, and corn.



ATSARA

Pickled Vegetables

ATSARA, ALSO KNOWN AS ATCHARA, is a combination of shredded green papaya, carrots, bell peppers, and radishes pickled in a sweet and slightly spicy vinegar brine. It's simple to make and easy to store, and it brings a vibrancy to stews, grilled meats, or fried fish. Atsara is versatile enough to add to sandwiches, eat with pork chops, top a burger, or use anywhere else you'd normally have a slaw or a tart and tangy pickle. And if you don't like things spicy, just omit the chile or use less of it. **MAKES ABOUT 1 QUART (1 L)**

FOR THE VEGETABLES

2 cups (340 g) shredded green (unripe) papaya

1 cup (170 g) shredded daikon radish

1 medium red bell pepper, cut into long matchsticks

1 medium green bell pepper, cut into long matchsticks

2 large carrots, peeled and cut into long matchsticks

2 teaspoons kosher salt

FOR THE BRINE

2 cups (480 ml) distilled white vinegar

1½ cups (300 g) sugar

1 tablespoon minced fresh ginger

1 teaspoon kosher salt

1 garlic clove, minced

1 small bird's-eye chile (see Key Ingredients, page 37), minced

¼ cup (35 g) raisins (optional)

Make the vegetables: Spread the papaya, daikon, bell peppers, and carrots out on a baking sheet. Sprinkle them with the salt and let them sit for 1 hour.

Meanwhile, make the brine: In a medium saucepan, bring the vinegar and sugar to a boil, stirring until the sugar has dissolved. Reduce the heat to medium, then add the ginger, salt, garlic, and chile and simmer for 5 minutes.

Put the salted vegetables in cheesecloth or several layers of heavy-duty paper towels and squeeze out as much of the liquid as you can into a bowl or the sink.

Pack the drained vegetables into a 1-quart (1 L) glass canning jar and add the raisins (if using). Pour in the brine, top with the lid, and store in the refrigerator. These are ready to eat immediately, but the flavor and texture will improve after 24 hours in the fridge, and will get even better over time. They will keep in the fridge for several weeks.



PINAKBET TAGALOG

Simmered Vegetables with Shrimp Paste

PINAKBET IS AN ICONIC VEGETABLE DISH that was originally cooked in a traditional clay pot called a *palayok* over an open fire. Long beans, eggplant, and okra were simmered together in the pot with a healthy dollop of the fermented seafood paste called *bagoong*. Occasionally the pot would be shaken so that everything mixed together, but the vegetables were left to cook until they shriveled up (*pinakbet* means “shriveled”). We call this version Pinakbet Tagalog because we make it with bright pink *bagoong alamang*, made only with fermented shrimp, rather than *bagoong isda*, which is made from fish and is typical of pinakbet from the Ilocos region. It’s funky, bitter, salty, slightly sweet, and uniquely Filipino. **SERVES 4 TO 6**

2 tablespoons vegetable oil	¼ cup (30 g) seeded bitter melon (see Note, page 70), cut into 2-inch (5 cm) half-moons
4 garlic cloves, minced	
2 small tomatoes, diced	⅓ cup (30 g) Chinese long beans or green beans, cut into 2-inch (5 cm) pieces
¼ cup (60 ml) bagoong alamang (see Key Ingredients, page 35)	
½ pound (225 g) kabocha or acorn squash, peeled, seeded, and cut into 2-inch (5 cm) chunks	⅓ cup (35 g) whole okra
1 Asian eggplant, cut into 2-inch (5 cm) chunks	Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
	4 to 6 cups (800 g to 1.2 kg) cooked white rice (see page 40; optional)

In a large saucepan, heat the vegetable oil over medium heat. Add the garlic and cook, stirring often, until it is just beginning to brown, about 3 minutes.

Add the tomatoes and cook, stirring occasionally, until they are very soft and falling apart, about 10 minutes.

Stir in the bagoong and reduce the heat to medium-low. Add the vegetables in layers: the squash, the eggplant, the bitter melon, the beans, and then the okra. Cover the pot tightly and cook for about 6 minutes, or until the vegetables are tender.

Mix the vegetables together in the pot and season with salt and pepper.

Serve hot, with rice, if desired.

Ilocos Norte, the region from which pinakbet originates, is Filipino farm country; it's a place where vegetables have long been revered as the main attraction. Thus meat and seafood in this region are used more like a flavoring in dishes rather than a foundation. Some recipes for pinakbet call for *bagnet* or fried pork belly. The *silong* (pictured here) is a traditional rattan *palayak* (clay pot) holder. It's used to remove a hot pot from the cooking fire.





PANSIT PALABOK

Rice Noodles with Shrimp Sauce

PANSIT (PRONOUNCED PAN-SIT) SIMPLY MEANS “NOODLE.” It’s the word that follows *pansit* that tells you either the type of noodle in the dish or the style of preparation. Here *palabok* refers to both. *Pansit palabok* is a luscious, buttery, bisque-like shrimp sauce tossed with white rice noodles and topped with *tsitsaron*, crisp-fried pork rinds. Loosely translated, *palabok* means “sauce,” and the original dish was made from ground shrimp heads and shells blended with annatto seeds, water, and cornstarch. I grew up with the kind that was made by opening a seasoning packet labeled “palabok.” You added water to make a gelatinous sauce that tasted mildly like shrimp. This version takes at least an hour and begins with an annatto-shrimp stock that is the foundation of the sauce. The traditional flavorings, which are sometimes referred to as *sahog*, include not just the pork rinds but also smoked fish, eggs, and scallions. To make the dish ultra decadent, you can add sea urchin, or *hayop ng siotsin*; the urchin’s rich, buttery flavor and bright orange color make the finished dish even more divine. **SERVES 4 TO 6**

½ cup (1 stick/115 g) unsalted butter

¾ cup (95 g) all-purpose flour

2 to 3 cups (480 to 720 ml) warm shrimp stock (recipe follows)

Fish sauce

2 tablespoons vegetable oil

1 tablespoon minced garlic

1 pound (455 g) raw jumbo shrimp, shells removed and reserved, shrimp halved lengthwise and deveined (see Notes)

1 pound (455 g) squid bodies, cut into thick rings

1 pound (455 g) palabok noodles (see Notes), cooked, drained, and kept warm

¼ cup (25 g) crushed pork rinds

1 cup (300 g) diced smoked tofu

¼ cup (2.5 g) tinapa or bonito flakes (see Notes, page 130)

1 lemon, cut into quarters

Notes: Ideally you would use the shells from the shrimp to make the stock: peel the shrimp, then refrigerate both the shrimp and shells separately until you are ready to use them.

Palabok noodles, or cornstarch noodles, are found in Filipino supermarkets and are often labeled “special palabok cornstarch noodles.” If you can’t find them, use thick rice flour noodles, also called rice stick noodles. Cook in a large pot of boiling water until they are just al dente, then drain and keep warm until ready to use.

In a small saucepan, melt the butter over medium heat, then whisk in the flour and cook, whisking continuously, until the flour and butter are totally combined and have turned a light blond color.

Immediately whisk in 2 cups (480 ml) of the warm stock and bring the mixture to a boil, then stir and simmer over low heat until the sauce thickens, about 10 minutes. If it gets too thick, add a little more stock. Season with fish sauce, then set the sauce aside and keep hot.

> recipe continues →

ARROZ CALDO

Savory Rice Porridge

ARROZ CALDO—RICE SIMMERED WITH A LITTLE ginger, garlic, and chicken stock until soft and supple—ranks with *tinola* (page 110) as an excellent cold remedy. The Chinese likely introduced it to us as the similar dish called congee. Some scholars theorize that our Spanish colonizers didn't care to learn the Chinese names of things, so they renamed them in their own language, hence *arroz caldo*, which means "rice broth" in Spanish. In some parts of the Philippines, the same dish is also known as *lugaw* or *goto*. No matter what you call it, arroz caldo is a perfect lunch or *meryenda* snack; serve it with a splash of lemon juice and fish sauce.

This porridge is made with two types of rice—equal parts jasmine and glutinous rice (a trick I learned from my father). The glutinous rice will hold its shape longer than regular rice throughout the simmering process. Try experimenting with whatever toppings you like, from scallions to roasted Brussels sprouts to shaved raw beets. **SERVES 4 TO 6**

Note: Some people like to cook their arroz caldo until the grains of rice have started to break down and disintegrate, but we like them to retain just a little bit of texture. If they do get too soft, it's okay—the dish will still taste good.

8 cups (2 L) chicken stock
(see page 179)

2 cups (370 g) uncooked jasmine rice or equal parts jasmine and glutinous rice (see Note)

¼ cup (35 g) minced garlic

¼ cup (25 g) minced fresh ginger

Kosher salt

1 lemon, quartered, for serving (optional)

Fish sauce, for serving (optional)

In a large saucepan or stockpot, stir together the stock, rice, garlic, and ginger. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally to make sure the rice doesn't stick to the bottom, then reduce the heat until the liquid is just at a simmer. Cook, uncovered, stirring frequently, until the arroz caldo is thick and starchy, and the rice is soft but the individual grains are still distinct, at least 30 minutes, or more, if necessary.

Season with salt and serve hot with a squeeze of lemon and a splash of fish sauce, if desired.

