



AP Photo/Matthew Mead

Chicken mole served with a side of wild and brown rice.

Chocolate and chicken? Yes, with this amazing mole sauce

By J.M. HIRSCH
AP Food Editor

Don't be fooled into thinking mole (pronounced mole-EH) is just a Mexican chocolate sauce. To start with, though it is rich and decadent, it is savory, not sweet. In fact, depending on how it is made, it can pack significant heat. Most varieties involve some sort of ground nuts or seeds, which give these sauces a stick-to-your-ribs thickness that begs to be paired with hearty meats.

There are many ways to make mole. This version uses raw almonds, which are sauteed with onion, garlic, a few spices, a few chili peppers, some orange juice and tomato paste. The result is balanced and rich, and it won't overwhelm. You will, however, want some warm flour tortillas to sop up the excess. It's that good.

It's worth going out of your way to get Mexican chocolate for this recipe. It's less sweet than most chocolates, and it has a pleasantly grainy texture that — like the almonds — adds body to the finished sauce. If you can't find it, opt for a semi-sweet dark chocolate.

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CHICKEN MOLE

Start to finish: 30 minutes
Servings: 6

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 large yellow onion, diced
- 1/2 cup raw, unsalted almonds
- 4 cloves garlic, whole
- 1 teaspoon cumin seeds
- 1 teaspoon coriander seeds
- 2 to 4 Thai red chilies
- 1/2 cup orange juice
- 1 1/2 cups low-sodium chicken broth or stock
- 6 ounce can tomato paste
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 2.7-ounce disk Mexican chocolate (such as Taza)
- 1 tablespoon vegetable or canola oil
- 2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken thighs
- Kosher salt
- Cooked brown rice, to serve

In a large skillet over medium-

high, heat the oil. Add the onion and saute for 3 minutes. Add the almonds, garlic, cumin, coriander and chilies, then cook, stirring often, for 6 minutes. Add the orange juice and chicken broth, then stir to deglaze the pan. Bring to a simmer, then stir in the tomato paste and oregano. Transfer the mixture to a blender, then add the chocolate. Blend until smooth, then set aside.

Return the skillet to medium-high and heat the vegetable oil. Season the chicken with salt, then add it to the skillet and cook for 3 minutes per side. Return the sauce to the skillet, stirring gently to cover the chicken. Return to a simmer, then reduce heat to maintain. Cover and cook for 5 minutes, or until the chicken reaches 165 F. Serve the chicken over rice, spooning mole sauce over the top.

Gardens, 100-acre park at Indianapolis Museum

By BETH J. HARPAZ
AP Travel Editor

INDIANAPOLIS — There's a lot going on in Indianapolis this spring, between the presidential primary and the Indy 500. For visitors or locals looking to get away from the hubbub, consider a visit to the gardens and nature park on the campus of the Indianapolis Museum of Art. The grounds include an unusual outdoor space for contemplation called "Park of the Laments."

Art lovers will want to start inside the museum, of course, where the collection ranges from Vincent van Gogh to Georgia O'Keeffe to intriguing exhibitions of contemporary art and design.

But make sure to allow an hour or more for exploring the extraordinary grounds outside the museum building. Here you'll find Oldfields Gardens and the 100-acre Virginia B. Fairbanks Art & Nature Park.

The gardens are part of the Lilly House estate. You can tour the historic mansion, which was once the home of J.K. Lilly Jr., an Indianapolis businessman. But on a beautiful spring day, the gardens are the place to be. Every path is lined with colorful flowers and the trees rain down fragrant blossoms in the breeze.

From the gardens, make your way to the Art & Nature Park. You'll find a canal, a lake, fields, meandering paths, outdoor art installations and even an old-fashioned swing set where you can kick your feet up to the sky. The artwork includes "Funky Bones," 20 white benches that form a huge human skeleton. "Funky Bones" was the setting for a scene in the young adult book "The Fault in Our Stars," written by John Green, who was born in Indianapolis.

And don't miss "Park of



AP Photo/Beth J. Harpaz

This April 19, 2016 photo shows flowers and landscaping at Oldfields Gardens, part of the Indianapolis Museum of Art campus in Indianapolis. The gardens burst with colorful flowers in spring but also include rustic meandering pathways.

If You Go...

INDIANAPOLIS MUSEUM OF ART: 4000 Michigan Road, Indianapolis; Museum admission for adults is \$18. Some areas of the IMA campus are free, including the Virginia B. Fairbanks Art & Nature Park. Open Tuesday-Sunday, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. and until 9 p.m. on Thursdays.

the Laments." Walls made of smooth gray stone rise on either side as you descend a staircase into a tunnel, then emerge into a grassy field edged by more stone walls. Whether your laments are personal, political or otherwise, it's a peaceful spot for clearing the mind.



AP Photo/Beth J. Harpaz

This April 19, 2016 photo shows colorful flowers at Oldfields Gardens, part of the Indianapolis Museum of Art campus in Indianapolis. The grounds include rustic, meandering pathways as well as formal gardens.

The fresh flavor of white asparagus is worth searching for

By SARA MOULTON
Associated Press

Here in America we think of white asparagus as the pink elephant of the vegetable world — not even a rumor so much as a hallucination.

It actually has been a staple in Europe for centuries. These days, happily enough, I've been spotting white asparagus more often on our side of the pond.

White asparagus is white because the spears are never exposed to sunlight as they grow. Without sunlight, they produce no chlorophyll. Without chlorophyll, they don't turn green. White asparagus is a little milder and more delicate in flavor than the green variety. It's also rich in nutrients and very low in calories.

At the supermarket, the best white asparagus boasts the same attributes as the best green asparagus: a firm, smooth stalk and a tight top. While I am a fan of any kind of green asparagus — be it pencil-thin or thick as a carrot — thicker is better when it comes to white asparagus. Once you get it home, slice off the bottom half-inch of each spear, then stand the entire bunch up, cut-side down, in a glass or narrow pitcher filled with a few inches of water. Cover the tops with a plastic bag and refrigerate until you're ready to cook them. This little trick, which works equally well with green asparagus, will keep them fresh longer.

White asparagus has a tough bitter peel. Unlike green asparagus (which I only peel when it's more than a 1/3 inch thick), white asparagus must be peeled. Otherwise, it's very hard to chew. Because white asparagus tends to break easily, peeling these guys requires a little extra care. You want to lay each spear on the counter. Then, using a vegetable peeler, peel it from just below the tip to the end of the stalk. Also, white asparagus takes much longer to cook than its green cousin.

I tried both steaming and boiling the asparagus and, surprisingly, found no difference in taste. I'd worried that boiling it might leave the spears waterlogged, but as long as you pull them out of the water when they're tender, that isn't really a problem. Lightly salting the water is key, though. The asparagus absorbs the salt, which points up its flavor, making it taste more asparagus-y. Salting it after you've cooked it will not have the same effect.

Given the relative subtlety of the flavor of white asparagus, I recommend pairing it with similarly subtle ingredients, ones that will harmonize with — but not overwhelm — the asparagus. For this elegant salad, conceived as a treat for Mom on Mother's Day, I teamed the white asparagus with an orange vinaigrette, toasted hazelnuts and aged goat cheese. If you can't find white asparagus, don't sweat it; this recipe will work just as well with the green or purple (but cook them for less time).

Sara Moulton is the host of public television's "Sara's Weeknight Meals." She was executive chef at *Gourmet* magazine for nearly 25 years and spent a decade hosting several Food Network shows, including "Cooking Live." Her latest cookbook is "Home Cooking 101."



AP Photo/J.M. Hirsch

White asparagus is a little milder and more delicate in flavor than the green and purple varieties.

ASPARAGUS WITH ORANGE VINAIGRETTE, TOASTED HAZELNUTS AND AGED GOAT CHEESE

Start to finish: 30 minutes
Servings: 6

- 1/3 cup orange juice
- 2 tablespoons finely minced shallots
- 2 tablespoons white wine vinegar
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1/4 cup vegetable or canola oil
- 2 pounds fresh white asparagus, the bottom 1/2 inch discarded and the spears peeled from just below the tip down the length of the stalks
- 1 cup fresh orange segments
- 2 ounces crumbled aged goat cheese
- 2/3 cup coarsely chopped toasted hazelnuts
- Chopped fresh dill, chives or tarragon, to garnish

In a small saucepan over medium, simmer the orange juice until it is reduced to 2 tablespoons. Add the shallot, vinegar, mustard and salt and pepper. Whisk until the salt is dissolved, then add the oil in a stream, whisking. Set aside.

In a large saucepan over medium-high, bring 3 inches of salted water to a boil. Add half the asparagus and simmer for 6 to 8 minutes, or until tender (take one out, cut a piece off and taste to determine doneness). Transfer the spears to paper towels to drain, then cook and drain the remaining asparagus in the same manner.

On a large platter toss the asparagus gently with two-thirds of the dressing, then season with salt and pepper. Transfer the asparagus to plates and top each portion with some of the orange segments, cheese, nuts, herbs and a little of the remaining dressing.

Nutrition information per serving: 280 calories; 180 calories from fat (64 percent of total calories); 20 g fat (3.5 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 10 mg cholesterol; 140 mg sodium; 19 g carbohydrate; 5 g fiber; 11 g sugar; 8 g protein.