

Oapan Fiesta Mole, from Mexico

1. Take bite-size pieces of chicken breast (other meats or fish are possible as well, I love this with seared tuna best). Cook over high heat in wok until 2/3 to 3/4 cooked but not done. Set aside.
2. Take four whole chiles, cook over high heat for two or three minutes, in oil. Set aside, let soak in cool water.
3. Take a chopped white onion (not yellow!), cook over high heat in wok, a few minutes. Set aside.
4. Puree the onion and chiles (de-stemmed, I use puta chiles but this is optional, many kinds of chiles will work) in a food processor or Cuisinart (they pound with a stone roller at this point!). Set aside.
5. Cook green pumpkin seeds, “pepitas,” in the wok for a few minutes until they all start popping. Puree and set aside. This is what gives the dish its unique flavor. Many supermarkets have pepitas, all Latin groceries do.
6. Puree two full-size tomatoes in a food processor. Set aside. You may substitute a few tomatillos for one of the tomatoes for extra flavor, if you wish.
7. You are now ready to start.
8. Put oil in the wok, cook two chopped garlic cloves for a few minutes. Add the pureed onion, tomatoes, pumpkin seeds, and chiles. Mix together. That is your sauce base. In fact it is a good sauce base for many dishes.
9. Put the chicken back in. Have the whole thing simmer over low heat for five minutes. The easiest mistake to make is to cook the chicken for too long at this point and let it get too dry.
10. Serve with white rice. If you’ve used seared tuna instead of chicken, add some white beans to the mix.
11. Note that if the final mix is too dry to be a real sauce, add more tomatoes. Subtract chiles if this is too hot for you.
12. In Oapan, where they paint amates, they make a dish like this for weddings and fiestas.