

BRAISED CHICKEN WITH MUSHROOMS AND ROASTED PEPPER–LEMONGRASS SAMBAL

This warming dish is my Asian coq au vin. That French classic uses wine to flavor and a nice tartness to chicken simmered with mushrooms and other good things. Here, the tartness comes from the sambal, which also adds spicy taste. I have very fond memories of dishes like this one, the kind that perfume the house with wonderful smells, so I recommend it as a cool-weather treat. I also suggest you double the recipe, as “leftovers” are even better the next day.

Serve this one with rice.

Serves 4

2 pounds bone-in chicken thighs, with skin

- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
- 2 tablespoons grapeseed or canola oil
- 1 pound button mushrooms, sliced 1/4 inch thick
- 2 large onions, sliced 1/4 inch thick
- 4 cups Master Chicken Broth or low-sodium canned chicken broth, plus additional, if needed
- 1 1/4 cups Roasted Pepper–Lemongrass Sambal

1. Season the chicken with salt and pepper. Heat a heavy 2- to 3-quart saucepan or small stockpot over high heat. Add the oil and swirl to coat the pan. Add chicken, skin side down, and sauté until brown, 6 to 8 minutes.

2. Turn the chicken, add the mushrooms and onions, and sauté until the vegetables are soft, about 5 minutes. Add the stock and 1 cup of the sambal. The liquid should cover the chicken; if not, add more stock. Correct the seasoning with salt and pepper. Bring to a simmer and cook, covered, until the chicken almost falls from the bone, 45 minutes to 1 hour. Place the chicken in pasta bowls and spoon 1 tablespoon of sambal over each serving. Serve with rice on the side.

ROASTED PEPPER–LEMONGRASS SAMBAL

Unlike Traditional Spicy Sambal, this is not knock-your-socks-off fiery, though it does have some heat. It is deliciously tart-sweet with an intriguing smokiness, due to the roasted peppers. I fell in love with roasted peppers on my first trip to Spain; these Western flavor-makers plus Eastern lemongrass yield an outstanding table condiment for your favorite seafood or meat dish—or use it as a “salsa” with tortilla chips. Store this in a jar with a tight lid.

Makes 2 cups

Lasts 2 weeks, refrigerated

- 1 tablespoon grapeseed or canola oil
- 5 medium shallots, minced
- 5 stalks of lemongrass, white part only, minced
- 2 cups rice wine vinegar
- 10 medium red bell peppers, roasted (see Ming’s Tip, left), peeled, seeded, and roughly chopped
- 2 red jalapeño chiles, roasted (see Ming’s Tip, left), peeled, seeded, and cut into 1/8-inch dice
- Salt to taste

1. Heat a wok or heavy sauté pan over medium heat. Add the oil and swirl to coat the pan. Add the shallots and sauté until lightly browned, about 2 minutes. Add the lemongrass and sauté until soft, about 4 minutes. Add the vinegar, scrape the pan to deglaze it, then add the bell peppers and the jalapeños.

2. Reduce the heat to low, add the salt, and cook until the liquid has reduced by three quarters, 15 to 20 minutes. Remove the sambal from the heat and let it cool. Use or store.