

Peruvian Roast Chicken and Aji Sauce

Because this spiced roast chicken is consumed by millions of Peruvians daily, Peru's cultural institute has declared it part of the country's national heritage. Makes sense to us. Crispy spiced skin, juicy meat that flavors potato wedges, a kicky sauce on the side ... we'd be happy to eat it daily as well, it's that addictive. Save us a drumstick!

Ingredients

aji sauce

3 jalapeño peppers, seeds removed if you want a milder sauce
1 clove garlic
1 cup fresh cilantro leaves
1/4 cup sour cream
1/4 cup crumbled cotija cheese
1½ tablespoons lime juice, from a small lime
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
2 tablespoons olive oil

chicken

4 cloves garlic
1/4 cup vegetable oil
Juice from 2 large limes (about 1/4 cup)
1 tablespoon paprika
2 teaspoons ground cumin
1 teaspoon sugar
1 teaspoon dried oregano
1 teaspoon kosher salt
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 (3½-pound) whole chicken
8 Yukon gold potatoes, scrubbed and cut into wedges (about 2½ pounds)
1/4 pound guanciale, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 teaspoon kosher salt

Directions

for the aji sauce

Place the jalapeños and garlic in small food processor and chop until fine. Use a rubber spatula to push everything down and add the cilantro, sour cream, cheese, lime juice, salt and olive oil. Process until well combined. Keep refrigerated until ready to use. The sauce be made a day ahead.

for the chicken

Put the garlic in the food processor, and chop until small pieces. Use a rubber spatula and push the garlic pieces down. Add the oil, lime juice, paprika, cumin, sugar, oregano, salt and pepper and process until well blended.

Separate the skin from the chicken carefully with your fingers around the breast and legs. Put half of the marinade evenly underneath the skin of chicken. Then place the chicken in a large re-sealable plastic bag and pour the remaining marinade in the bag. Rub the chicken with sauce to coat and press the air out of the bag. Seal and marinate in refrigerator for 24 hours.

Preheat oven to 425 degrees.

Toss the potato wedges with guanciale, olive oil and salt in a 9-by-13-inch baking pan. Remove the chicken from the bag. Spread the wedges into an even layer, tie the chicken legs together and place the bird on top of the potatoes.

Bake for 25 minutes, turn the temperature down to 375 degrees, rotate the roasting pan and continue to roast for another 50 to 60 minutes. The chicken should be at 165 degrees when checked in the thigh area with a thermometer. Allow to rest for 25 minutes before carving and serve with the potatoes and aji sauce.

total time: 1 hour 30 minutes, plus 24 hours for marinating

active prep: 35 minutes

serves: 6

difficulty: *easy*