

RECIPES

Red Chile Sauce Salsa de chile rojo

I call this chile sauce because, unlike say enchilada sauce it is not a single purpose item. It can, in fact, be used as an enchilada sauce, a salsa, or on items such as chilaquiles, eggs, and vegetables. However, more often it is used as an ingredient in other items, such as in the pinto bean recipe or as part of a ranchero sauce. It is also extremely versatile and infinitely customizable because it can be made with different kinds of chiles or combinations thereof. My favorites are New Mexico, guajillo, or ancho chiles in the portions listed in the recipe.

Ingredients

Either 8 mild to medium-hot New Mexico dried red chiles, 12 guajillo chiles, or 4 medium-size ancho chiles, stemmed, seeded, toasted in a dry skillet until fragrant but not burned, and rehydrated in hot water for 20 minutes, with 4 cups soaking water reserved.

4 cloves garlic, chopped

1 teaspoon dried leaf oregano

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 teaspoon rice vinegar

2 bay leaves

$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt, or to taste

Directions

1. Blend the sauce ingredients. Put the toasted and rehydrated chiles in a blender, add the garlic, oregano, and 2 cups of the chile soaking water and blend for two minutes, or until thoroughly pureed. Add the remaining water and blend another minute.

2. Cook the sauce. Heat a large saucepan over medium heat, add the olive oil and stir in the blended sauce ingredients. Add the vinegar and bay leaves, bring to a boil and cook at a medium simmer until the sauce is just thick enough to coat the back of a spoon, or the consistency of a very thin milkshake, 15 – 20 minutes. If the sauce thickens too much, add a little more water. If it is too thin, cook it a little longer. Add the salt and simmer another minute. Makes about 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups.