

POBLANO CHILE SAUCE*

This sauce can be prepared with yellow bell peppers instead of poblano chiles. Both sauces go equally well with the chicken and they also complement each other nicely. So follow your mood: earthy poblano or sunny, sweet yellow bell pepper or make half a recipe of each and serve them both.

- ¼ pound fresh poblano chiles***
(4 to 6) or yellow bell peppers (2 to 3)
- 2 garlic cloves**
- 1 large onion**
- 2 teaspoons vegetable oil**
- 1 cup chicken broth**
(8 fluid ounces)

*available at Latino markets, specialty produce markets, and many supermarkets

Lay whole peppers (chiles or bell peppers) on their sides on racks of gas stove burners (preferably 1 to a burner) and turn flame on high. Roast peppers, turning them, until skins are blistered and have brown patches, 3 to 6 minutes. Do not overchar bell peppers; they will lose their bright color. (Alternatively, peppers may be roasted in same manner on rack of a broiler pan under a preheated broiler about 2 inches from heat.) Transfer peppers to a bowl and let stand, covered, until cool enough to handle. Peel peppers (wear rubber gloves when handling chiles). Cut off tops and discard seeds and ribs. Chop peppers. *Peppers may be prepared 1 day ahead and chilled, covered.*

Chop garlic and chop enough onion to measure 1 cup. In a nonstick skillet cook garlic and onion in oil over moderately low heat, stirring, until softened. Skim fat from broth. Stir in broth and peppers and simmer 1 minute. In a blender purée mixture until completely smooth (use caution when blending hot liquids) and season with salt. Makes 2 cups.

CILANTRO-STUFFED CHICKEN BREASTS WITH POBLANO CHILE SAUCE

- 1 teaspoon vegetable oil**
- 1 garlic clove**
- 3 tablespoons finely chopped fresh cilantro leaves**
- ¼ teaspoon salt**
- 4 small skinless boneless chicken breast halves**
(about 1 pound total)
- 2 cups poblano chile sauce (page 113)**

Preheat broiler and lightly brush a shallow baking pan with some oil. Finely chop garlic and in a small bowl stir together with cilantro and salt. Pat chicken dry and trim any fat.

To form a pocket in chicken for cilantro filling: Put a chicken breast half on a cutting board and, beginning in middle of 1 side of breast half, horizontally insert a sharp thin knife three fourths of the way through center, moving knife in a fanning motion to create a pocket. (Opening will only be about 1 inch wide.) Make pockets in remaining chicken breast halves in same manner. Put about ½ tablespoon filling into each pocket and with finger spread evenly. Transfer chicken to baking pan and brush with remaining oil. Season chicken with salt and pepper and broil 5 to 6 inches from heat 7 minutes. Turn chicken over and broil until just cooked through, 3 to 5 minutes more.

Serve chicken with sauce. Serves 4.