

THE RANCHO GORDO GUIDE TO  
POSOLE

POZOLE AND PREPARED HOMINY

*Whatever you call it, you cook it and you get happy!*



ALL SORTS OF WAYS TO MAKE A CLASSIC DISH

# POSOLE

I'm happy to address again one of the most confusing name systems in English and Spanish. Sometimes we share elements of our cultures across borders and they morph into something new. The best thing to do when you are talking about living cuisines is to relax and not get too caught up in what is "authentic."

When dried corn is cooked and then soaked in cal (calcium hydroxide, or lime), the skins on the kernels loosen, and with a little rubbing and rinsing, they float away. The treated corn that is left is called nixtamal. If you had not treated the corn with the cal and tried to cook it, you would be very frustrated—even several days later. The miracle of nixtamal is that the corn not only cooks properly but also releases the niacin that it contains, making the treated corn healthier and easier to digest than the whole grain.

In Mexican shops in the U.S., you'll see corn, but unless you are in specific parts of the Southwest, it likely has not been treated with cal. Many folks just getting started in Mexican cooking have tried to cook this untreated corn, and the results have been a mess. From my experience in Mexico, you can buy nixtamalized corn in some markets, in the refrigerator section of specialty stores, or most commonly in a can. Native Americans took the

nixtamal a step further and dried it again, giving us prepared hominy, or posole. It's really nothing more than dried nixtamal.

In Mexico, the corn is called maiz. The finished dish, which is a rich stew with the cooked corn added, is called pozole. In the United States, the grain is called posole and the finished dish is also called posole. Now relax and get over all of this name calling and make something delicious! You wouldn't believe how much this conversation upsets people! I say call it what you like.

**TO COOK OUR WHITE CORN POSOLE,** soak it in water to cover generously for at least 6 hours and then drain it and discard the water. Fill a large pot with fresh water, add the posole and a cut-up yellow or white onion, and put the pot over medium heat. Bring the water to a simmer and cook. Like many foods, you can cook posole at a higher heat, but you risk the kernels falling apart, which isn't a good thing in this case. The water the posole cooks in isn't particularly good once the posole is done, so I discard the water and add the posole to whatever dish I'm making. I know others who use it. Soaked posole cooked at a gentle simmer should take about 2 hours. Use a lid to control the intensity of the boil.

Two cups of dried hominy will yield about 6 cups of cooked posole. Store covered in the refrigerator, with the cooking liquid, for about 5 days. You can also freeze it.

# POSOLE VERDE

This is a simple, easy way to enjoy posole. It's pretty typical for the American Southwest.

I wouldn't try it with canned hominy.

Obviously you could use a good vegetable stock if you wanted to make this vegetarian or vegan. You could also some shredded poached chicken if you wanted, but once you start loving this dish, sometimes you want a simple version to show off the corn and the vegetables.

*1/4 pound Rancho Gordo White Posole (prepared hominy)*

*1 1/2 onions, white or red, peeled and halved*

*Salt*

*4 garlic cloves, peeled*

*15 to 20 tomatillos, paper skins removed*

*2 poblano chiles*

*1 serrano chile*

*2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil*

*1 cup coarsely chopped cilantro*

*2 teaspoons Rancho Gordo Mexican Oregano*

*1 1/2 quarts vegetable or chicken broth*

*Freshly ground black pepper*

Soak posole overnight in water to cover generously. Drain.

Place it in a saucepan with fresh water to cover generously.

Add 1/2 onion, bring to a simmer, cover partially and cook at a gentle simmer until the corn kernels are tender, 2 to 3 hours; many will split open. Season with salt and cool in the liquid.

On a hot, dry griddle or skillet, roast the remaining halved onions, garlic, tomatillos and chiles, turning occasionally, until they are charred and slightly softened, 15 to 20 minutes. Work in batches if necessary.

Put the roasted poblano chiles in a paper bag to steam until cool.

Transfer the other vegetables to a bowl and let cool, collecting their juices.

Skin the poblanos, discarding seeds and stems. Discard the serrano chile stem but don't skin or seed.

Put all the roasted vegetables in a blender, in batches if necessary, and puree until smooth.

Heat the oil in a large stockpot over moderate heat.

Add the vegetable puree and adjust heat to maintain a simmer. Cook, stirring occasionally, for 10 minutes to blend the flavors.

In the blender, puree the cilantro, oregano and 1 cup of the broth. Add to the vegetable mixture along with 4 cups additional broth.

Drain the posole and add it to the pot. Season with salt and pepper and return to a simmer. Thin with additional broth if necessary. Serve in warm bowls.

# FISH AND POSOLE STEW

Fish or seafood pozole is traditional for Christmas Eve and it's a fun tradition. It's not as heavy as the inevitable Christmas dinner just around the corner but it's special enough to incorporate into your family's celebration.

Please free to play around with the seafood and fish combinations until you find one that stikes just that right chord for you.

*3 tablespoons of olive oil*  
*3 Guajillo chiles, wiped clean, seeded and cut into pieces*  
*2 cups chopped tomatoes (used canned if tomatoes are out of season)*  
*1 red onion, chopped*  
*2-3 cloves garlic, crushed*  
*6 cups of light chicken broth*  
*1 1/2 tablespoons Mexican Oregano*  
*Salt*  
*1 1/2 cups cooked White Posole (prepared hominy) (see page 2 for cooking instructions)*  
*1 pound mussels, scrubbed clean and debearded*  
*1 pound talapia, rock cod or snapper, cut into 1 inch pieces*

Heat the oil in the bottom of the pot. You're only going to use one pot for this meal, but make sure it can hold all the stock and ingredients. When warm, fry the chiles until they just turn colors and smell vibrant, about a minute or so. Remove them and place them in a blender jar. Add the onion and garlic to the oil and sauté until almost soft, about 4 minutes. Transfer the onions, garlic and any remaining oil to the blender jar. Add the tomatoes and blend until smooth.

Place a food mill over the pot and pass the ingredients from the blender. You can also push the mixture through a fine sieve with a wooden spoon. Cook on medium heat for about 6 or 7 minutes, then add the broth and when the liquid reaches a soft boil, add the oregano, posole and the fish. Cook four minutes or so until the posole is warmed through and the fish is barely cooked. Add the mussels and cook briefly until the mussels open, about 4 or 5 minutes.

Serve with chopped onion, chopped cilantro, chili powder and quartered Mexican/Key limes if you like.

# VEGETARIAN HEIRLOOM BEAN POSOLE

Beans in pozole is somewhat rare in Mexico. There's a very good version in Guerrero, but it uses fresh corn instead of nixtamalized posole. Maybe they find it too starchy to team the beans with the dried corn. I like it, especially when you add some squash like our Julia Newberry has done with this recipe.

*1 head garlic*  
*1 teaspoon plus 1 tablespoon olive oil*  
*1 medium onion, diced*  
*2 tablespoons Rancho Gordo New Mexican red chile powder*  
*1 (15-ounce) can diced tomatoes*  
*1-2 teaspoons salt*  
*1 tablespoon Rancho Gordo oregano Indio*  
*4 cups vegetable broth*  
*2 cups water or bean-cooking liquid*  
*4 cups cooked Rancho Gordo white corn posole/hominy (see page 2 for cooking instructions)*  
*2 cups cooked Rancho Gordo Rio Zape beans*  
*Juice of 2 limes*  
*2 small calabacitas (small squash) or zucchini, quartered lengthwise and thinly sliced*

*Suggested garnishes:*

*Lime wedges*  
*Sliced radishes*  
*Shredded cabbage*  
*Cilantro*  
*Cubed avocado*  
*Fried corn tortilla strips*  
*Aged cojita cheese*

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Drizzle the garlic with 1 teaspoon olive oil and wrap in foil. Roast until soft and fragrant, about 30 minutes. Once cool, squeeze garlic from husks and roughly chop. Set aside.

In a large pot, saute the onion in 1 tablespoon olive oil over low heat until soft, about 10 minutes. Add the reserved garlic, chile powder, tomatoes (with juice), salt, oregano, broth, and 2 cups water or bean-cooking liquid and simmer for about 10 minutes to blend the flavors.

Add the posole and beans and return to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer for about 20 minutes. Add the zucchini and lime juice and cook until the zucchini is just tender, about 10 minutes. If desired, add more salt or lime juice.

Remove from the heat and serve with garnishes of your choice.

Serves 6-8

# POSOLE ROJO

This is Rancho Gordo's go-to recipe for Posole Rojo. Our dried posole/hominy replaces canned hominy with none of the rubberiness or gummy texture.

*1 tablespoon olive oil*  
*2 medium white onions, chopped fine*  
*8 cloves garlic, minced*  
*1/3 cup tomato paste*  
*3 tablespoons Rancho Gordo New Mexican Red Chile Powder*  
*1 tablespoon Rancho Gordo Mexican Oregano*  
*3 1/2 cups chicken broth*  
*4 cups cooked Rancho Gordo White Corn Posole/ Prepared Hominy (see page 2 for cooking instructions))*  
*7 cups (approx) shredded, poached chicken (about 2 pounds)*  
*Salt and pepper*  
*Garnishes: Any combination you choose of diced avocado, chopped cilantro, finely chopped white or red onions, chile powder, crumbled queso fresco, thinly sliced radishes, and lime wedges*

Heat oil in 5-quart pot over medium heat. Add onions and garlic and cook until soft. Add tomato paste, chile powder, and oregano, stirring until all ingredients are warmed through and well mixed. Add 4 cups water, broth, and posole. Bring to a boil and then reduce to a low simmer for about half an hour. Add chicken, stir and then add salt and pepper to taste. Serve in individual bowls and allow your guests to garnish as desired.

Serves 8

# POSOLE WITH PORK AND CHIPOTLE

I have the feeling that in a previous life Lorna Sass and I had some kind of oddball vaudeville routine. From the minute I met her, I felt like our timing was in synch and I was reuniting with an old pal. She very well may have this effect on everyone but I'm choosing to believe I'm special! Sass is mostly known for her seminal books on pressure cooking but lately she's really opened up my eyes to the world of interesting grains beyond wheat. Of course this includes lots of New World grains like quinoa and amaranth so I'm more than interested. Her latest book, *Whole Grains Every Day Every Way*, is a winner and includes the following recipe.

*2 cups dried Rancho Gordo White Posole (prepared hominy)*  
*1 pound pork shoulder, trimmed and cut into 1 1/2 inch cubes*  
*salt and freshly ground pepper*  
*2 tablespoons olive oil*  
*1 large onion diced*  
*2 large cloves garlic, minced*  
*1 tablespoon tomato paste*  
*1 1/2 teaspoons dried Mexican Oregano*  
*2 large bay leaves*  
*1 pork bone (optional)*  
*2 cups crushed tomatoes in tomato puree*  
*1 to 2 chipotles in adobo, membranes and seeds removed, finely minced, plus 1/2 teaspoon adobo sauce*  
*1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro for garnish (optional)*  
*Whole trimmed radishes, for serving (optional)*

Soak the hominy overnight in 12 cups (3 quarts) of water. Drain, reserving liquid.

Season the pork well with salt and pepper. Heat the oil in a heavy 4-quart pot over high heat. Brown the pork well in three to four batches (making sure not to crowd the pot), 2 to 3 minutes on each side. As you finish each batch, transfer it to a platter and set aside.

Reduce the heat to medium high. If there is fat in the pan, spoon off all but 1 tablespoon. Add the onion and cook, stirring frequently, until lightly browned, about 4 minutes. Add the garlic and tomato paste and cook, stirring constantly for an additional minute.

Stir in 8 cups (2 quarts) of the hominy soaking liquid, the soaked hominy, oregano, bay leaves and 1/2 teaspoon salt. Add the pork bone (if using). Over high heat, bring the mixture almost to a boil. Reduce the heat to low, cover and simmer for 1 hour. Stir in the tomatoes, chipotle and adobo sauce, and the browned pork, along with any juices accumulated on the platter. Set the cover slightly off center and continue simmering until the pork is fork-tender and the hominy is done (it will be chewy but the center should be soft and somewhat creamy), an additional 45 minutes to 1 1/2 hours. Skim off any fat that rises to the surface. Add more hominy soaking liquid or water if the mixture becomes too thick and threatens to stick to the bottom of the pot.

Remove the pork bone and bay leaves. Adjust the seasoning. Serve in large bowls. Garnish individual bowls with cilantro and serve a bowl of radishes for accompaniment.

# BRYANT TERRY'S HOMINY AND SPINACH IN TOMATO-GARLIC BROTH

*As much as I love traditional pozole, I also like finding new ways to use our prepare hominy. I've been on a tomato-garlic sauce kick lately. I use it in beans, I poach eggs in it and when I saw Bryant Terry's recipe for hominy taking a bath in it, I knew I had to try it. I did, it's killer and I'm really happy to be able to share this recipe with you, from Bryant's latest book, **Afro Vegan**. The cuisine is plant-based but you'd have to be a pretty cold fish not to be taken in by Bryant's enthusiasm and creativity, even if you're a confirmed carnivore.*

*1 cup dried Rancho Gordo Posole / Prepared Hominy, soaked in water overnight and drained well*  
*2 tablespoons extravirgin olive oil*  
*1/2 cup diced carrot*  
*1/2 cup diced red onion*  
*1/4 teaspoon coarse sea salt*  
*7 cloves garlic, minced*  
*1 (28-ounce) can plum tomatoes with juices, chopped*  
*5 cups vegetable stock, homemade or store-bought*  
*Sunflower oil, for deep-frying (about 4 cups)*  
*1 cup packed minced spinach*  
*Freshly ground white pepper*  
*2 tablespoons minced flat-leaf parsley*

Put the hominy in a medium saucepan and add enough water to cover by 2 inches. Bring to a boil over high heat. Decrease the heat to low, cover, and simmer until tender, 1 1/2 to 2 hours. Drain well. Transfer 3/4 cup of the cooked hominy to a clean kitchen towel and rub gently to dry more thoroughly. To make the broth, warm the oil in a large saucepan over medium-low heat. Add the carrot, onion, and salt and sauté until the vegetables are soft but not browning, 5 to 7 minutes. Add the garlic and sauté until fragrant, 2 to 3 minutes. Stir in the tomatoes and stock.

Increase the heat to medium-high and bring to a boil. Immediately decrease the heat to medium-low, partially cover, and simmer until starting to thicken, about 45 minutes. Meanwhile, line a plate with paper towels.

Warm about 2 inches of sunflower oil in a small saucepan until hot but not smoking (about 375°F), about 5 minutes.

Gently add half of the dried 3/4 cup hominy. Fry, stirring occasionally, until lightly golden, 4 to 5 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer to the lined plate to drain. Repeat with the remaining dried hominy.

Strain the broth through a fine-mesh sieve, pressing down on the solids to extract as much liquid as possible. (Compost the solids.) Return the broth to the saucepan and stir in the unfried hominy. Place over medium-low heat, bring to a simmer, and cook for 10 minutes. Stir in the spinach, cover, and cook for 1 minute. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve topped with 2 heaping tablespoons of fried hominy and garnished with the parsley.

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