

Luli's locro – Argentine stew

Ingredients:

1 cup dried white corn [hominy]
2 medium onions, coarsely chopped
2 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
2 slices, ¼ inch thick, of smoked pancetta or slab bacon, cubed
2 chorizos colorados or other slightly spicy sausage, sliced
2 slices, 1 inch thick, of osso buco [beef shanks], or similar cut
2 ears of fresh yellow sweet corn, with the kernels removed from the cobs
1 tsp. ground cumin
1 tsp. paprika
2 bay leaves
Salt to taste
½ tsp. freshly-ground black pepper
1 ½ circa, butternut squash, peeled and diced small
1 ½ circa, yams, peeled and diced small
1 large baking potato, peeled and diced small
2 plum tomatoes, cut in small wedges
Chopped green onion for garnish [optional]
Chilli oil [see preparation]

Preparation:

Soak the hominy in 2 cups of water overnight (a minimum of 12 hours).

The next day, prepare the chilli oil in advance by soaking a teaspoon of *ají molido* (or crushed red pepper flakes) in a tablespoon of olive oil for 2-3 hours.

Place the onions, garlic, pancetta, chorizo, and osso buco in a large stewpot. Cook over medium heat until the onions are translucent.

Add the fresh yellow corn, cumin, paprika, bay leaves, salt, and pepper. Continue to cook, stirring regularly, for roughly 10 minutes.

Add the soaked hominy, including the soaking water. Add hot water to the pot to about 2 inches above the level of the ingredients. Add the remaining vegetables, stir, and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer, covered, stirring every 15-20 minutes, for at least 2 hours.

At this point, uncover the pot and remove the bay leaves.

Remove the pieces of osso buco and discard the bones.

Cut the meat into bite-sized pieces, and then return it to the pot.

Continue to stir over low heat, and using the back of a wide spoon or spatula, press the ingredients up against the sides of the pot so that the starchy vegetables and tomato break down into the soup (the corn and meat will resist being mashed). As you continue to stir, mash, and cook, the soup should gradually thicken. Continue until the locro reaches the rich consistency of a stew.

Add salt to taste.

Serve in bowls, and garnish with green onions and a touch of chili oil.