



Pozolillo Verde

Green Pozolillo

From *Dining with the Dead* by Mariana Nuño Ruiz and Ian McEnroe / image by Ian McEnroe Photography

Serves 4 to 6

I fell in love the first time I tried this pozolillo. This dish got its diminutive name *pozolillo*, meaning "little pozole," due to its easy, hour-and-a-half preparation. This fresher, lighter pozole is made with fresh white corn kernels sliced off the ear, rather than dry nixtamalized corn cooked into hominy. It is usually made with pork, but I often make it with chicken for a lighter broth.

Adding green tomatillos to the broth gives it a bright-green color and a pleasant, fresh, tangy

flavor. It is best to prepare this kind of pozole at the beginning of corn season when the corn is tender and fresh. At home, this is one of our favorites.

Chicken stock:

- 12 cups water
- ½ medium white onion
- ½ head of garlic
- ½ bunch of cilantro
- 3 sprigs fresh mint
- 2 bay leaves
- ½ teaspoon dry oregano
- ½ teaspoon dry thyme
- 2 carrots
- 1 celery stalk
- 2 teaspoons sea salt
- 4 to 4½ pounds whole chicken, skin on, cut in half or pieces

Green sauce:

- 2 pounds green tomatillos, husks removed and rinsed
- 3 large poblano peppers, stems and seeds removed, coarsely chopped
- ½ medium white onion
- 4 cloves garlic
- 1 large bunch fresh cilantro
- ½ teaspoon Mexican dry oregano
- 2 teaspoons sea salt
- 2 to 3 serrano peppers
- 2 tablespoons corn or safflower oil
- 10 to 12 ears of white corn, dekerneled

Garnish:

- 1 head iceberg lettuce or green cabbage, finely shredded
- 1 large red onion, finely diced
- 1 bunch of red radishes, thinly sliced
- 1 to 2 avocados, sliced
- 4 to 6 limes, cut in quarters ½ pound Mexican crema ½ pound queso fresco, crumbled
- Corn tostadas

Make the pozole:

1. In a large pot, add 12 cups of water, onion, garlic, cilantro, mint, bay leaves, oregano, thyme, carrots, celery, and sea salt. Add the chicken. Bring to a boil, cook for 5 minutes, then reduce heat to a slow simmer. With a ladle, remove all the white foam that forms as it cooks. Cook for about 40 to 50 minutes, until chicken is tender. Once the chicken is cooked, remove the chicken and aromatics and vegetables and sieve the broth. Let the chicken cool down until it reaches a comfortable temperature. Remove and discard the skin and shred the chicken. Set aside.
2. In a blender, add the tomatillos, poblano peppers, onion, garlic, cilantro, oregano, salt, and one serrano pepper. Add one serrano at a time and taste in between blending so you can measure how spicy it is. The serranos in this recipe are used to add flavor, not heat, as one would season with black pepper. Add a ladle of the chicken stock from the pot to help with the blending. Blend to a smooth puree.
3. In a large, deep pot add 2 tablespoons of cooking oil and warm over medium-high heat until oil is shimmering. Add the blended tomatillo sauce to the oil and cook for 5 minutes. (Note: Introducing the sauce to the hot oil will cause it to splatter; keep your hands and arms away by using a long-handled ladle to avoid burns.) After the sauce is sautéed, add the chicken stock and the corn kernels. Bring to a slow simmer and cook for about 25 to 30 minutes. The broth will change color from emerald green to a bright sage green. At this point taste to adjust for salt. Add the shredded chicken to warm through.
4. Serve piping hot and garnish with shredded lettuce, chopped onions, slices of radishes and avocado, a squeeze of lime, a dollop of crema, crumbled queso fresco, and tostadas.

NOTE: If you want a shortcut to recipe preparation, use pre-made chicken stock (in equal amounts to the water), and a prepared rotisserie chicken, shredded.

SUSAN'S RECIPE NOTE: I held back 3 cups of the stock to avoid thinning the soup too much. The yield on the stock can vary depending on how much evaporation occurs. I saved it for my next pozole!