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## HOW TO MAKE MOLE NEGRO, JUST IN TIME FOR DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS

Oct 27, 2015

Chicken, chilies and chocolate seem like an unlikely combination for a mouth-watering Mexican sauce, but if you add another 27 ingredients, exercise a lot of patience and use a good recipe, you're on your way to knowing how to make mole negro.

Mole is Spanish for sauce, and mole negro is a rich, dark, nearly black sauce that is a Oaxacan specialty. In Oaxaca, a state located in Southwestern Mexico, the centuries-old dish (<http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2012/03/how-to-make-the-best-mole-negro/254938/>) is traditionally served on special occasions, such as Día de los Muertos (the Day of the Dead). During this Mexican holiday (which begins on November 1), it's believed that the spirits of dead loved ones return to visit the living, and knowing how to make a good mole negro just might help raise the dead.

Mole negro's popularity has traveled well beyond Oaxaca, with Mexican restaurants throughout the U.S. serving dishes that feature the deeply seasoned sauce. [Taqueria Los Anaya](http://taquerialosanaya.com/) (<http://taquerialosanaya.com/>), a small, family-run restaurant in the historic West Adams district of Los Angeles that has received numerous accolades for its tacos, is one example. A specialty of the house is the mole negro made from a generations-old family recipe. Owners Jose Manuel, Gerardo and Juan Carlos Anaya are from Guadalajara, Mexico, and they sure know how to make mole negro. Jose Manuel, who

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goes by Manny, says, "We have it in the blood."

(1) "My mom and grandma used to make mole," Manny explains. "It's a process." The Anaya family recipe uses at least 30 different ingredients, including four different kinds of dried chilies — chilhuacle negro, guajillo, pasilla and ancho — as well as several types of seeds, tomatoes, onions, plantains, thyme and oregano. Using the right chocolate is essential, Manny says, and "the only one to use is [Nestlé Chocolate Abuelita](http://www.nestleusa.com/Brands/Baking/Abuelita) (<http://www.nestleusa.com/Brands/Baking/Abuelita>)," the type used to make Mexican hot chocolate.

Manny says it takes about four to five hours to make the mole: "It's not easy, but it's what people like. The one we make in Mexico used to use lard. The closest to lard here is shortening or sunflower oil." The ingredients are fried in shortening, added to the pot, cooked in chicken stock and laboriously tended to. The result is an amazing complement to chicken and turkey (or shredded pork) that is smooth, just the right amount of spicy and layered with flavor.

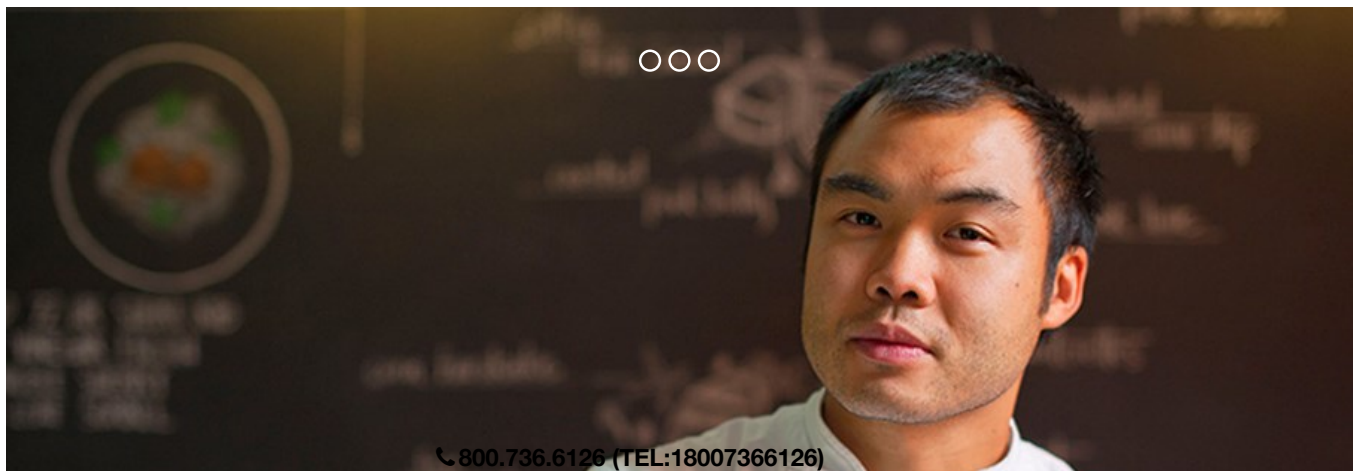
Manny and the Anaya brothers consider it an honor to represent Mexico through its traditional dishes, and serving negro mole to restaurant patrons gives them a chance to show their culinary heritage. "We put a lot of passion into our cooking," Manny says. "We do it for our country."

Although Manny Anaya isn't about to give away his family's secret recipe for how to make mole negro, here's an authentic [recipe](http://www.justapinch.com/recipes/main-course/chicken/black-mole-from-oaxaca-mole-negro-de.html) (<http://www.justapinch.com/recipes/main-course/chicken/black-mole-from-oaxaca-mole-negro-de.html>) you might try if you can't get to Los Angeles (<http://www.chefs.edu/los-angeles>) anytime soon.

Photo credit: Jose Manuel Anaya

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