

Ajiaco

For soup:

1 whole chicken, cut into pieces
6 quarts of water
1 small bunch of parsley
1 small bunch cilantro
3 bay leaves (traditionally quascas is used instead of the parsley, cilantro and bay leaves)
2 carrots, cut into thirds
2 stalks of celery, cut into thirds
1 large white onion, cut in half
1 leek, cut in half, cleaned well, whites only
6 chicken bouillon cubes
1 tbsp kosher salt
3 ears of corn
3 lbs Russet potatoes, peeled and diced into 1 inch cubes
4 lbs red potatoes, peeled and diced into 1 inch cubes
4 lbs Yukon gold potatoes (traditionally papas criollas are used, if you can find them), peeled and diced into 1 inch cubes
kosher salt
black pepper

To serve:

Aji salsa (recipe follows)
Capers, drained
Avocado, diced + lemon/lime juice to avoid browning
Cilantro leaves
Sour cream

Place chicken pieces in large pot or Dutch oven, cover with 6 quarts of water. Bring pot to a boil.

In a cheesecloth tied shut with kitchen twine, put parsley, 1 small bunch of cilantro, and bay leaves (or quascas). Once the pot has come to a boil, skim the fat that floats to the top off with a spoon and discard. Continue doing this for about 10 minutes, then add the herbs, carrots, celery, white onion, leek chicken bouillon cubes, and 1 tbsp kosher salt. Bring back to a boil, reduce to a simmer and let cook for about 30 minutes or until the chicken is cooked through and tender.

Remove chicken from the pot and set aside to let cool. Add corn and cook for about 10-15 minutes, or until kernels are tender. Remove from pot and set aside. Remove carrots, celery, onion and leek from the pot and discard.

Add all the potatoes to the pot. If you are prepping as you go (which you should) add them in this order: Russet, red and Yukon (or papas criollas). Bring the pot

to a boil, partially covered, reduce to simmer and cook for an hour or longer, until Yukon potatoes are falling apart. Cut ears of corn into thirds and add to the pot after about 30 minutes (also take out the herb bouquet at this time).

While the potatoes are cooking and once the chicken is completely cooled, remove all the skin and bones from the chicken and shred the meat. Depending on the timing, you might want to throw the shredded chicken into the fridge while the rest of the meal is prepared. Re-warm the chicken carefully/slowly before serving.

Taste soup for seasonings. Add a generous amount of black pepper and adjust salt (you will probably need to add quite a bit more salt, ~1.5 tsp). While the potatoes are cooking, you can smash them against the side of the pot to break up the potatoes and thicken the soup. Alternatively, at the end, you can smooth it out a bit with an immersion blender. Make sure to leave plenty of big chunks of potato, but blend enough to give a nice thick texture to the soup.

To serve the soup, ladle into a big bowl and top with shredded chicken. At the table pass around Aji salsa, capers, avocado, cilantro and sour cream to top the soup.

(Servings: 8-10, Cook time: 3 hrs., Difficulty: Easy)

Aji

from Fine Cooking

4 scallions (white and light green parts only)
1 medium tomato, peeled and seeded
1 small white onion, peeled
2 fresh Scotch bonnet or habanero chiles or 2 fresh hot red chiles, stems and seeds removed (wear gloves, and don't touch your eyes)
3 Tbs. fresh cilantro leaves
3 Tbs. white vinegar
1/4 tsp. kosher salt

In a food processor, pulse all the aji ingredients until they're finely minced. Transfer to a serving bowl.