



For the Love of Good Food

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Piri Piri – A Portugese Marinade for BBQ Chicken or Fish

This month's recipe comes from the Algarve. It is a large coastal region of Portugal overlooking the vast waters of the Atlantic, and characterized by rolling hills and valleys, dotted with olive, carob, almond, fig and orange trees.

The Portuguese seafaring ancestors were the first to bring ingredients like pepper, coriander, ginger, curry, saffron and paprika to Europe, not to mention tea, rice, coffee, peanuts, tomatoes and potatoes.

The Algarve's tribute to former Portuguese colony Mozambique is Frango Piri Piri, which is a spiced up version of barbecued chicken. Prior to cooking the chicken is basted in a highly addictive spicy chilli oil, left to marinate, and then charcoal grilled to perfection. It is best served with a fresh salad, bread and a fresh white wine. (In Portugal itself most likely a Vinho Verde, a slightly sparkling white wine.) This marinade is very good used on tiger shrimp that are best split and put on the BBQ in their shells.

Ingredients (serves 4)

1 1/3c. olive oil

4 fresh jalapeno peppers, coarsely chopped

2 fresh poblano peppers, coarsely chopped

1 tbsp. crushed red pepper

1 tsp. salt

8 turns freshly ground black pepper

1 tbs. minced garlic

1 lemon cut into quarters

4 portions of chicken or prawns or firm white fish (you could also use pork)

1. Combine all of the ingredients up to the pepper in a saucepan and cook over a high heat. Cook, stirring, for 4 minutes, then add garlic, remove from the heat, and allow to cool to room temperature.
2. When the mixture is cool, pour it into the bowl of a food processor and pulse 16 times. Pour the sauce through a funnel into a clean bowl or jar, cover and leave to sit for 7 days before using for best results. Keeps up to 2 months at room temperature. It makes about 3 cups.
3. When ready to cook, marinate the meat or fish for at least 2 hours, then place in a hot skillet or on the BBQ for about 20 minutes depending upon the size of the individual pieces. Baste with the oil while cooking, and then serve with the lemon wedges. Accompany with simple salad and bread.
4. I came across an Emeril Lagasse recipe for Jicama Orange Salad that goes really well with Piri Piri. Combine all the following ingredients together in a bowl, toss and refrigerate until served (Overnight if desired). 2 c. diced, peeled jicama; 3 peeled seedless oranges cut into sections; 2 tbsps. Orange juice, ¼ c. finely chopped red onions; 3 tbsps. Finely chopped red bell pepper; 3 tbsps. Chopped fresh cilantro; ½ tsp. salt; ground black pepper to taste.

P.S. Those who don't eat chilli can make an instant marinade with 2 tbsps. Paprika, and add lemon juice prior to cooking.