

"Pipian" (with an accent on the "a") is difficult to translate. My Spanish-English dictionary says simply "fricassee," and the dictionary of the Spanish Royal Academy defines it as a New World stew made with meat, chicken, turkey, or other fowl with salt pork and almonds. The Spanish Academy notwithstanding, some versions are based around seafood, and vegetarian versions can also be found.

Chicken Stew with Almonds (Pollo en Pipian de Almendra)

3 lbs (1.35 Kg) chicken pieces
3 cups (750 ml) chicken stock
2-3 scallions (spring onions), green and white parts,
coarsely chopped
2-3 sprigs cilantro (coriander)
1 carrot, coarsely chopped
6 ancho* chilies, seeded, torn into pieces, and soaked
in warm water for 1 hour
1/2 cup (125 ml) blanched almonds, toasted and
pulverized in a blender or food processor
2 Tbs (30 ml) vegetable oil
1/4 tsp (1 ml) ground cinnamon
1/4 tsp (1 ml) dried oregano
A pinch ground cloves
Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

* Available in finer supermarkets and Hispanic specialty shops

Combine the chicken, stock, scallions, cilantro, and carrot in a large pot and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat and simmer covered for 45 minutes. Remove the chicken pieces, strain and reserve the stock, and return the chicken pieces to the pot. Puree the soaked ancho chilies along with a little of the soaking liquid in an electric blender or food processor. Heat the oil in a skillet over moderate heat and saute the chili mixture and pulverized almonds for 5 minutes, stirring frequently. Add about 2 cups (500 ml) of the reserved chicken stock to make a medium-thick sauce. Stir in the seasonings and pour the sauce over the chicken. Cook over moderate heat for 10 minutes, or until the chicken is heated through. Serves 4 to 6.

Bon appetit from the Chef at World Wide Recipes