

Braised Chicken & Prawns with Smoked Paprika and Sherry

A sort of surf-and-turf inspired by Spanish flavors. The chicken absorbs the rich flavors of the sherry and paprika while slowly cooking in the vinegar-laced sauce. Spanish smoked paprika or Pimentón has a warm, smoky and rounded flavor that comes from smoke-drying the red peppers over oak fires. Pimentón comes in three different types or heat levels: Dulce or Sweet, which is mild and light orange; Agridulce or Medium Hot, which is darker and spicier; and Picante or Hot, which is typically made from a combination of different types of peppers and is darker red and spicy. For this recipe we combine the sweet and hot paprika. You can skip the hot paprika and add a pinch of cayenne.

6 SERVINGS

Canola oil
 6 skin-on, bone-in chicken thighs (about 3 lbs [1.36 kg] total)
 Sea salt
 Freshly ground black pepper
 ½ cup (68 g) garlic, thinly sliced
 1 tbsp (14 g) unsalted butter
 1 tbsp (8 g) all purpose flour
 2 tbsp (16 g) Spanish sweet smoked paprika, plus more for garnish
 2 tsp (5.4 g) Spanish hot smoked paprika
 1 cinnamon stick
 4 fresh bay leaves
 1 ½ cups (360 ml) amontillado sherry
 ⅓ cup (80 ml) sherry vinegar
 3 cups (720 ml) chicken stock or water
 1 cup (250 g) San Marzano tomatoes, crushed
 6 large head-on prawns
 ¼ cup (17 g) flat leaf parsley, roughly chopped

Preheat oven to 350°F (177°C).

In a large, enameled cast-iron skillet or medium casserole, heat 2 tablespoons (30 ml) of canola oil until shimmering. Season the chicken thighs generously with salt and black pepper. Place the chicken thighs, skin-side down, in the skillet and cook over moderate heat until golden brown, about 3 minutes per side. Transfer the chicken thighs to a plate. Add 1 tablespoon (15 ml) of oil and garlic to the skillet and cook over moderate heat, stirring continuously for about 5 minutes, until the garlic is toasted and starts to brown lightly. Add 1 tablespoon (14 g) of butter to the pan and melt over moderate heat, add the flour and stir continuously, for 30 seconds. Add both paprikas, cinnamon stick and bay leaves, cook for 30 seconds, stirring continuously, to bring out the flavor of the spices. Stir in the amontillado sherry and bring to a boil, about 1 minute, using a wooden spatula to scrape up the browned bits from the bottom of the skillet. Add the sherry vinegar, chicken stock and crushed tomatoes, season with salt and bring to a boil.

Nestle the chicken thighs, skin-side up, and any drippings in the skillet. Transfer the skillet to the oven and braise, uncovered for about 1 hour, until the chicken thighs are very tender.

Meanwhile, peel the prawns, leaving the head and tail intact. Run a sharp paring knife down the back of each prawn, just deep enough to be able to remove and discard the vein. Nestle the prawns in the sauce around the chicken thighs and continue to cook for about 5-8 minutes, until they are cooked through. Remove from oven and let rest for a few minutes. Discard the cinnamon stick and bay leaves and garnish with parsley and a light dusting of paprika.

