Christina Benedict

**Nana’s *Fricasé de pollo Cubano***

*Prep Time: 10 minutes Cook Time: 1 hour Yield: 4 servings*

Most people tend to think all Latin American foods are spicy, so it usually doesn’t surprise me when friends are hesitant to taste my Nana’s (pronounced Nah-Nah) Cuban cuisine. Let me set the record straight: Cuban food is not spicy – it uses *spices* (like oregano and garlic) to make dishes *savory*. If you’re reluctant to try Cuban food, just one bite of Nana’s *fricasé de pollo* will change your mind.

 Nana grew up in pre-communist Cuba, and learned how to cook at a young age. As Nana tells it, every day she would come home from school and watch intently as her in-house chef prepared the meals from scratch. Needless to say, Nana knows her way around a kitchen. Her food is the main event of every family gathering (which is pretty much every weekend), and has become one of the most important symbols of my family’s Cuban heritage.

Of all the Cuban dishes my Nana cooks, a general crowd pleaser is her *fricasé de pollo* (Chicken Fricassee, for those of you who don’t speak Spanish – or “chicky fricky,” if you prefer the term coined by my 5-year-old cousins). A hearty, yet healthy dish, *fricasé de pollo* is a chicken stew of sorts – just less soupy. The chicken, mixed with bell peppers, pimento-stuffed green olives, and a variety of spices, make for a mouthwateringly good meal. *Muy sabrosa!* The best part? All the ingredients are cooked in one pot. If you’re a busy person, you can even leave the ingredients stewing in a crockpot while you attend to other matters. When the *friccasé* is ready to be eaten, scoop the finished product over a bed of rice, play *La Bamba* on repeat, and enjoy a taste of Cuba!

***Fricasé de pollo: Receta y ingredientes***

*½ cup orange juice 6 cloves garlic, peeled and minced 1 ½ tsp. salt ½ tsp. fresh ground black pepper 4 lbs. boneless, skinless chicken breast ½ cup flour (for dusting chicken) ⅓ cup olive oil 1 cup red potatoes, peeled and cubed 2 cups chopped onion 1 cup chopped bell pepper 1 cup tomato sauce ½ cup pimento-stuffed green olives 2 packets Goya Sazón Completo 1 tsp. oregano*

1. In a bowl large enough to hold the chicken pieces, whisk the orange juice, garlic, salt, and pepper together.
2. Allow the chicken to marinate in the refrigerator for a minimum of one hour (however, it is prefered to let them marinate overnight).
3. Remove the chicken from the marinade (do not discard!) and lightly dust the pieces with flour, salt, and pepper.
4. Heat the olive oil in a pot and add the chicken pieces, browning each side (a few minutes per side).
5. Once the chicken is browned, add the potatoes, onions, green peppers, tomato sauce, olives, Goya, oregano, and the reserved marinade to the pot.
6. Cover and reduce heat to low. Simmer the fricasé until the chicken and potatoes are tender - about 45 minutes to an hour. Serve over rice.