Chicken Filling

This is a general-purpouse chicken filling that can be used for many recipes including Pastelão, risolis, pastéis. It is also delicious in a simple pressed sandwich or as a topping for pizza. I got this recipe from my mother and I know that she uses it frequently.

Ingredients:

- 1 chicken
- 2 clove of garlic
- 1/2 Tablespoon of salt
- 1/4 tablespoon of freshly grounded black pepper
- 2 Tablespoon of flavourless cooking oil (such as canola or sunflower)
- 2 cup of water
- 1 medium onion
- 1 teaspoon of honey
- 1 16 oz can of Italian tomatoes
- 1 Tablespoon of corn starch
- 3 perfect hard-boiled eggs (see Julia Child’s Master Recipe)
- Italian parsley

Procedure:

1. Season the Chicken
   - Cut up the chicken (alternatively use chicken breasts only).
   - Sprinkle chicken with salt.
   - Place the chicken in a closed container and put it in the refrigerator for at least to 1 hour (up to 12 hours).

2. Brown the Chicken
   - Heat up the cooking oil on a heavy-bottom sautee pan in moderately high heat.
   - Lightly brown the chicken on all sides.
   - Peel and split garlic cloves in half and add to the pot.
   - Add 1 cup of water, bring to a boil, reduce the heat and simmer until the chicken is tender (remove the breast earlier so that they don't dry).
   - After removing the breasts, keep cooking until all the water have evaporated. Only the fat and brown bits should be in the pan.
   - Remove the remainder pieces of chicken to a platter to cool off.

3. Make the Tomato Sauce
   - Drain all the fat to a small container and reserve.
Add 1 cup of water to the solids in the pan, scrape and let it simmer until you have a rich broth in the pan scraping all the broth from the pan with a rubber spatula.

Pour broth into a small container and reserve.

Dice the onion in very small dice.

Add 2 Tablespoons of the reserved fat to the pan and heat up in moderately high heat.

Add the diced onion and sauté for 5 minutes until the onion start wilting.

Add 1 teaspoon of honey to the onion and continue sautéing until golden brown.

Add the can of tomatoes and the reserved chicken broth.

Let simmer until most of the water has evaporated and the fat is separating from the tomato sauce.

4. Debones and dice the chicken

In the meantime, remove the meat from the cooled chicken. Discard bones, skin, and veins.

Dice the chicken meat in very small dice.

5. Finish the filling

When the tomato sauce has reduced, add the diced chicken and cook for a few more minutes stirring.

If the filling will be used inside a pastry, such as in pastelão, mix the one tablespoon of cornstarch in 1/4 cup of cold water and stir until dissolved. Add the cornstarch slurry to the hot filling and stir until it is thickened.

Pour into a glass or metal bowl, let it cool completely (can be refrigerated for up to three days before use, it can also be frozen and thawed before using).

The filling can be used as is for many applications. It may be also be flavoured with different fresh herbs for several variations. Suggestions include basil, sage, rosemary, oregano, chives. I suggest using only one herb each time and only in a moderate amount.

6. Add the eggs (right before assembly)

Boil 3 eggs using Julia Child’s Master Recipe for Perfect Hard-Boiled Eggs from "he Way to Cook".

Dice the cooled boiled eggs into very small dice and add to the cooled filling (it is easier to dice if you separate the whites from the yolks first.

Chop up some Italian parsley very finely and add to the filling.

Freshly grind the black pepper into the filling. Stir well.