

GUAM CHAMORU MOTSIYAS STOVE-TOP RECIPE

Motsiyas, pronounced mowt-see-dyas, is a mixture of chopped chicken, lots of leafy greens like pumpkin tips or spinach, herbs like mint and tomato leaves, green beans, onions, seasonings, hot pepper, lemon juice, and coconut milk. A summary of an old recipe from the 1950s is that a whole chicken is deboned, leaving the skin attached to the neck. The legs, wings, bony parts, and giblets are saved to be browned and cooked in broth in a large pot. The white meat is chopped, mixed with diced veggies, and stuffed into the skin. This wrapped chicken is simmered in the pot with the rest of the chicken till done.

Another, more modern method, is to steam the chicken mixture wrapped in chicken skin, banana leaf, or foil. CHamoru motsiyas, in most recipes, end up cooking to something firm like a sausage. Motsiyas, the word, is very similar to the Spanish word, morcilla, a type of sausage.

I don't recall having motsiyas as a kid. However, I do remember taking notes from a friend's friend in 1995 – who ended becoming my mother-in-law, Doris Quinene, in 1996. My MIL cut the whole chicken in half, front to back, and I carefully took the skin off. She deboned the meat, chopped it up fine, did her magic in the pot, filled the skin, and secured the ends with shish kabob sticks. Finally, the packages were simmered, seam side down. My notes from 1996 said it was “GOOD” – with underlines denoting that it was really good.

I never got around to making this until now, 2020. I intended on wrapping my trial-run in banana leaves but ran out of time. Thus, I cooked it on the stove and ended up with such a delicious side dish. If you wrap this mixture in foil, I'm not sure that you want to put too much lemon juice in it – but the lemon sure does make it yummy.

This is a stove-top version of motsiyas that is thick, more like a side dish NOT a soup. I will be working on the wrapped version soon. There is not enough chicken in this mixture for it to become firm after cooking. This stove-top motsiyas recipe is delish with rice, fish, and dinanche.

This is an adaptation of my mother-in-law's recipe from 25 years ago – omg!

INGREDIENTS

Set 1

2 to 4 tablespoons vegetable or coconut oil to replace the fat that would have come from the chicken skin

Set 2

5 boneless, skinless chicken thighs, chopped fine

1 – 16 oz bag of frozen, chopped spinach, squeezed to drain water or 1 ½ cups of thawed, squeezed spinach

1 cup diced yellow onions

¼ cup finely chopped mint, packed, or whole rectangular package of mint from the store

¼ cup finely chopped basil, packed, or whole rectangular package of basil from the store

1 ½ teaspoons table salt

2 teaspoons garlic powder

1 teaspoon black pepper

Hot pepper to taste *optional

2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

½ cup chicken stock or water

2 ½ cups thick coconut milk

Tools: *large bowl, large pot, large rubber spatula or wooden spoon*

DIRECTIONS

Pour oil into a large pot and swirl it around. Set aside. DO NOT preheat this pot.

In a large bowl, combine the all the remaining ingredients. Mix till well incorporated with a rubber spatula or large wooden spoon.

Transfer the mixture to the pot then place the pot on the burner. Turn the heat to medium. Stir mixture every now and then until you see more water in the pot – it gets released from the veggies and chicken as they cook. Bring to a gentle “boil” then cover – you’ll see the liquid bubble up, but should not be boiling like soup. Simmer for 5 minutes, check and stir. Simmer another 5 minutes.

Taste then add more seasoning if needed.

Recipe courtesy Paula Quinene of Paulaq.com.