

Calabrian Chile Oil-Drenched Chicken-in-a-Pot with Vidalia Onion Rings, Whole Lemons, and Quickie Zippie Mayo

Serves 4-6

If you can, seek out the Trader Joe's Bomba Calabrian Chile Oil condiment. It's what inspired this recipe in the first place – and is also super affordable compared to other Calabrian chile sauces out there.

Remember! This recipe isn't about the crispy skin, but you won't miss it, because you're never going to get this caliber of pan sauce anywhere else.

I dig serving everything atop rice, but greens, toasty bread, or a fun slaw are all winner options, too.

One (6.7-ounce) jar chopped calabrian chiles in oil, preferably Trader Joe's Bomba sauce, about $\frac{3}{4}$ cup

7 garlic cloves, peeled and finely grated with a microplane, divided

5 anchovies, chopped

1 heaping tablespoon honey

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup olive oil, divided, plus additional for drizzling

Kosher salt

3 lemons, plus additional for serving, if desired

One (3 $\frac{1}{2}$ - to 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ -pound) chicken

6 sprigs thyme

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup mayonnaise

2 large Vidalia onions, peeled and thickly cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch rings

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup Spanish olives with pimentos, for garnishing (optional)

1. In a medium bowl, stir to combine the chile oil, 6 of the grated garlic cloves, anchovies, honey, 2 tablespoons of the olive oil, and 1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon salt. Zest 1 lemon and add the zest to the marinade, reserving the zest-less lemon for later.

2. Slide your pointer finger underneath the skin of the breasts and legs, separating the skin from the meat, and spread a few spoonfuls of the marinade into the pockets you've just created. Place the chicken in a gallon-sized, resealable plastic bag, and add the thyme sprigs. Pour the rest of the marinade all over the exterior of the chicken, press out the air and seal the bag, and use the plastic bag to smooch and squish the marinade to coat every inch of the bird. (Also use the bag to distribute the marinade that you spooned under the skin, if you haven't already.) Transfer to the refrigerator and let sit at least 2 hours and up to 2 days in advance.

3. Preheat the oven to 450 degrees.

4. Make the Quickie Zippy Mayo: Zest and then juice the second lemon. Place the zest into a medium bowl, along with the mayonnaise, the remaining clove of grated garlic (you can start with half of the clove and increase to taste), and 1 tablespoon of the lemon juice. Reserve all additional lemon juice to throw in the pot when it's time to roast the chicken. Stir to combine and season with salt. Refrigerate until serving.

5. Using a sharp knife, cut off ½-inch from both ends of the reserved, zest-less lemon that you used for the marinade, as well as the remaining whole lemon. Set one of the lemons (doesn't matter which) on the cut end, so that it stands up straight. With your knife, remove the entire exterior of the lemon, following its rounded shape, so that you are left with only the lemon flesh: no peel, and no white pith. Slice the lemon crosswise into 4 or 5 rounds. Repeat with the remaining lemon.

6. Place onion slices in a large Dutch oven with a tight-fitting lid. Note: do not use a cast iron pot unless it's an enamel one, like a Le Creuset; the acid from the lemon will react in funky ways! Drizzle onions with the remaining 2 tablespoons of olive oil and season with salt. Transfer the chicken, along with the thyme sprigs and any remaining marinade in the bag, on top of the onions. Scatter the peeled lemon rounds around the bird, tossing a couple of them into the cavity. Add ¼ cup water to the pot, plus any reserved lemon juice you have from the lemon you squeezed for the mayo. Lightly drizzle the chicken with olive oil and season the exterior with a bit of salt.

7. Cover the pot and transfer to the oven. Roast, *without opening the lid*, for 1 hour and 15 minutes. Remove from the oven and let rest, 10 minutes. Uncover, and transfer chicken to a cutting board by lifting it out with a wooden spoon inserted into the cavity. (Before transferring the chicken to the board, tip the bird as you're holding it with the spoon to let any cooking juices drain into the pot.) Carve, seasoning chicken pieces and cooking liquid to taste, and serve, with plenty of sauce, onion rounds, lemony mayo, and if desired, Spanish olives and additional lemon wedges.