

## **Cooking through the Collection Ep5 – “Quintessential Filipino Cooking”**

[00:00:00] Hello and welcome to Cooking Through the Collection. My name is Melissa and I'm a librarian and home cook. I do a lot of research on wanting to expand my repertoire of cooking, and so I've challenged myself to walk through the stacks of my library's cookbook collection. And grab things I've never tried before. So let's see what I've selected this week.

Food and identity are forever entwined. As someone who is adopted, my parents knew that one of my birth parents was Filipino and tried to include some of that culture in my childhood. I would visit the homes of my parents' colleagues who tried to teach me how to cook Filipino food. As I've gotten older, I've tried to teach myself more Filipino recipes.[00:01:00]

I can make chicken adobo very well, a vinegar and garlicky chicken dish and Pancit Canton noodles, and a more Chinese stir fry style. So this podcast was the opportunity to try to make something from my heritage. I have little connection with. The cookbook I've selected is "Quintessential Filipino Cooking: 75 authentic and classic recipes of the Philippines."

By Liza Abganlog. It's a compact but colorful book of photographs and recipes and it seems really approachable from all the ones I was able to pull from the collection. I've chosen two dishes, barbecue chicken, on page 55, and I'm not gonna say this right and I feel bad about it. Sinangag garlic rice on page 81.

I've had garlic rice from the Jollibee fast food chain, but I'm guessing this is gonna probably be better. So let's get into the kitchen and start cooking.

So I'll be starting the chicken barbecue recipe on page 55. It requires an overnight marinade, so [00:02:00] again, advantage of reading ahead. It says we're gonna need three pounds of boneless skinless chicken thighs. I'm gonna be making this recipe a little bit smaller, because I have 2.3 pounds, but it'll be okay cuz the marinade's a marinade. And it says: cut it, slicing each thigh crosswise into one inch thick strips. That's pretty straightforward. We can do that. I love chicken thighs. My husband unfortunately doesn't, so I don't cook them as much as I would personally enjoy.

But hey, we'll work with what we got. I enjoy it if we get a whole chicken and we cut it up. So that's usually what I end up doing to enjoy it myself. Boneless, are just so much easier than bone in. I've noticed a lot of the Filipino recipes that I have tried do use the bone and chicken, but they're much longer cooks.

Since these are gonna be on skewers and they're being grilled, bone in obviously would cause a lot more problems. So being able to [00:03:00] easily purchase boneless, skinless chicken thighs is great. That did not used to be the case. This is gonna make a fair amount of chicken, so I'm probably going to freeze some so I can have some future meals, cuz I'm probably not gonna be able to eat them all.

So, we're cutting them across. It was actually the last package in the store of this, that actually surprised me. Usually there's a fair amount of them, but I'm appreciative that they had it there. I did have to do a little bit of hunting, but that's okay. So we're gonna throw out the package, make sure it doesn't leak all over everything. Gonna throw it out. I'd already washed my hands beforehand, but we're going to wash them again because raw chicken never fun.

Okay, the next step is in a large resalable bag combined, the garlic, lemon juice, soy sauce, chili sauce, ketchup, and lemon lime soda. So I need five cloves of garlic. That is a lot of garlic, so I'm gonna do something that Alton Brown would be horrified by. I'm gonna use a garlic press. Don't tell him on social. I don't think he really cares. [00:04:00] But I've also learned that a lot of the recipes that I have tried that are Filipino recipes use a fair amount of garlic. So if you're garlic adverse, this might not be the cuisine for you. These are some of the biggest garlic cloves that I've seen, so I'm gonna probably use fewer.

They are quite, quite large. I'm not complaining. I love garlic, but I'm gonna use two gigantic cloves. I think that's gonna be more than enough. So we'll do a quick peel. And we're going to place it in the press. Yeah, Alton Brown's wife, Elizabeth has a garlic press and he hates it. And then the ongoing joke is when fans mail them things, they mail them garlic presses and she finds it funny. He does not. It's amusing. I think it's his reaction that's amusing. I know that my husband feels the same way about my facial reactions to things which have gotten me in trouble in the past.

So I'm gonna clean a little bit of the pulp out of the press because I've learned if you leave it in there and it [00:05:00] dries, it is a lot harder to clean out. This one is also one of the ones that has a little kind of push grate on the lid on the other side, so it's easier to get the garlic out of the press, but as I said, you give it a rinse if you're not gonna be washing it immediately. It does make it easier for later cleaning.

So the next ingredient is one quarter cup lemon or calamansi juice. It is from a package, it does say product of USA. It has calamansi juice, cane sugar, and honey. So I need a quarter cup. This is a, this is two cups, so I'm going to figure

out what to do with this juice, cuz that that seems like a lot. We're gonna do a quarter cup directly into the bag. The bag is so much easier for disposal. I've tried to cut down plastic bag use, which I've gotten better at. But yeah, I have to find out something to do with all this calamansi juice. It's obviously not fresh, but hey, maybe I'll look up online. If anyone has ideas to share, please share with me on social media.

We're [00:06:00] going to need a half cup of soy sauce. We always have one of the larger containers here. I do use the less sodium. I prefer it. I know not everyone does, but I do need a little less sodium in my life. Okay, we finished that up. Put it away. Next ingredient is a third cup of sweet chili sauce. I have the Maggi brand sweet chili sauce. It does say it's mild. I need a third of a cup. This does not have a squeeze lid. I wish it did. It'll make it go a lot faster. But hey again, we'll work what we got, but it's kind of the consistency of honey. So I'm gonna be here for a minute.

I'll give it a little shake. I just don't wanna spray it everywhere. Chili sauce is kind of what I thought about duck sauce growing up, but there's actual chiles in it. There's definitely more flavor, so give it a shot with Thai spring rolls, egg rolls, things that you would dip in.

I actually haven't tried them on chicken tenders. Maybe that's a future thing. And then, half a cup of ketchup. That is a lot of ketchup, but this is also a lot of [00:07:00] chicken. There's a lot of sweetness in this recipe. I hope I enjoy this. I have a feeling if I put in other vegetables and things that will help. And then we need a cup of lemon lime soda. I was trying to look for some sort of, interesting Mexican soda or something and unfortunately I was unable to find it, but I was able to find lemon lime Sprite, not my. Woo. Not my favorite lemon lime soda. Does anyone remember Slice from eighties and nineties? That was my favorite. I'm afraid to shake it, but it definitely is gonna need a little bit of a zhuzh cuz there's a lot of thick ingredients and then a lot of water ingredients.

It's interesting, there's no onion or anything in here but, okay, so we're gonna place the chicken in the bag and I said this is a lot of chicken. That's okay. I do need lunches for the week. I'm gonna give it a little bit of stir in the bag before I close the bag. Also, the bag is fizzing a lot because of the soda. I wonder it didn't say to let it go flat, so I did not do that again.

Washing [00:08:00] the hands cuz chicken handling. So it says add the chicken seal and tossed to coat the chicken completely. Marinate in the refrigerator overnight. I thought it was only gonna be a few hours. Turns out it's overnight. So I am worried about the bag leaking. I do try to keep it upright. I'll have to

obviously occasionally shake it, not shake it, squish it. So what I'm gonna do is I am gonna put it on a plate with a bit of a lip to make sure that if it does leak, it's somewhat contained. So we're gonna place this in the refrigerator and we'll cook it up tomorrow.

I wanted to learn more about calamansi, so I went onto Spruce Eats and here's what I found. Calamansi limes are a native Filipino citrus fruit, which are believed to be a hybrid of kumquats and mandarin oranges. I can tell you I love mandarin oranges. The bright tart flavor of calamansi limes lends them to being used in a number of ways.

Besides being juiced and going into [00:09:00] beverages, (aha, that's what I need to look up for the extra juice), the sliced fruits are also frequently served alongside spicy and savory dishes, where their juice is then squeezed over curries, noodle dishes, meats, seafoods, and soups. Yeah, definitely makes sense to put it into the marinade.

So now I'm going to be making the sinangag, the garlic rice. It's pretty straightforward. It's a fried rice with a lot of garlic in it. It's gonna have three tablespoons of vegetable oil that we're gonna heat over medium high heat, and then we're gonna add six cloves of chopped garlic. I told you I wasn't joking about garlic in the recipes.

Especially in this cookbook, we're gonna let that lightly brown for about two minutes, and that's what I'm worried about in this recipe cuz garlic burns so easily. I think I'm gonna put the temperature a little lower just out of the safety and security of my meal. I don't wanna ruin it. I made the four cups of cooked cold rice. I had done some research and it should be long grain rice and I [00:10:00] really wasn't sure what to do. So I just grabbed my favorite, which is jasmine. And so I cooked four cups of that total. It was about one and a half cups of the dried rice to three cups of water. I brought it up to a boil, brought it down to a simmer for 15 minutes.

Then I turned it off and let it sit for another 10, and then just let it cool down safely. You don't wanna throw it warm into the fridge. That is a safety hazard. It can grow things that will make you ill. But yeah, so if you have leftover rice, this is what we usually do with fried rice. It helps keep it so it doesn't clump the same way and it can actually get a little bit of crispy, not too mushy.

And then we're gonna add salt to taste so it seems straightforward. So it says six clothes of garlic and I'm bringing out the garlic press again and I'm doing three clothes this time three gigantic cloves. But we're gonna do some.

Doing some crushing. The reason I chose this recipe is twofold. I am cooking dinner right now and I'm not doing the chicken for dinner cuz it needs to marinate [00:11:00] overnight.

I'm actually doing some flounder and I'm, I was wondering what would be a really flavorful side dish and this one jumped out at me, so that's why I've decided to make it so I'm using canola oil, that's the neutral vegetable oil choice in our household. I'm sure you could use safflower, Peanut and this would also work well.

So we're gonna see if this actually is getting warm. Gotta swirl it around the pan. I have a wooden spoon. We're getting close to being able to put it there. I really am worried about burning it. Add the garlic. It says two minutes to brown, which just seems like such a long time. So I'm gonna watch it cuz then you is gonna cook it for another five minutes to fry it. So I'm going to be careful. I'm gonna set it for two, but I am going to keep moving it. I wanna make sure there's no hotspots. Everything has a chance to evenly brown. It smells delicious already. A lot of my recipes, I don't want the garlic to brown. That means we've gone too far. So I have to just be a little bit more mindful here. I'm gonna [00:12:00] turn it up a little bit more. It has very lightly browned. As I said, I'm worried. So it says add the rice and stir breaking up any clumps. So I did turn up the temp a little bit. I'm now up to six, but I think I'm gonna have to move a little bit faster. So I'm gonna have my container of rice and I'm gonna break it up. Try not to dump it all at once. And it came out one big clump, so the breaking up the clump comment was the right thing to do. And it says, we're gonna do this, stirring frequently for about five minutes, and then we're gonna season. So let's break it up.

This is a lot of rice. I thought about breaking in a half. I'm like, no, let's not do that. And now I'm looking at it and I'm going, oh wow. Let's go to making multiple lunches for this week. Right? So we're gonna try to make sure that the garlic gets mixed into the rice, kind of using the backside of my wooden spoon.

Press down on the pan to break up the [00:13:00] clumps. It's also helping pick up the garlic off the pan so it's not having direct contact. I think that's a good method. It's interesting that it says this could be served with like a runny egg or a cured meat. I think it'll work with chicken. At Jollibee, it's one of the potential sides with the fried chicken or the palabak, or any of the other dishes. I really enjoy the Jollibee fried chicken. A restaurant opened up in our area, not close by, and I've had the fried chicken. I've had the peach mango pie. If you have one in your area, definitely recommend it.

Yeah, so I'm going to keep stirring frequently. It is sticking to the bottom a little bit, so I'm going to do a little bit more scraping, which I could not do with the non-stick pan. Because a little bit of crispiness is good in this kind of rice. I'm not looking for perfectly fluffy. So I'll be back when it's time to pull it out.[00:14:00]

And we are back. I'm pulling the rice off the stove and turning off the burner, but it said season with salt to taste. This rice had no salt in it at any point. I didn't season it when I was cooking it from scratch, so I'm going to probably put about a half a teaspoon of salt. Do some stirring. Hopefully it won't need too much because we're gonna be putting other flavorful things with this, but it's a fair amount of rice, so I wanna give it some chance of seasoning. So I think we're good. And so the things I'm serving it with are not for the review today, but hey, I wanted to use a recipe multiple times, so let me serve this up. And we'll see how it goes.

Hi. So we are just doing a super quick taste test of the sinangag rice. It's garlic rice. We both like garlic. [00:15:00] We both like garlic a lot. This is a garlic positive household. Yes. So we're not talking about the other stuff on the plate, which is flounder with calamansi juice and vegetables. So just let me know what you think of the rice.

The garlic really if, if you like garlic, you're gonna like this rice. The garlic is, it's there and it's powerful and it's tasty and I really like it. This is a really good rice. So you like this as a side dish? Something a little bit different. It's not just steamed rice. It is fried. So there is oil in it.

Right, but it's not like a heavier fried rice with other things. No, it doesn't feel heavy at all. If you hadn't told me that, I would've assumed this was steamed rice. That's how it tastes. But it's wonderful. I really like it. Fat is flavor. That's right. Okay, so we got a thumbs up on this one. I agree. Very tasty.

Good morning podcast listeners it's the next day. And I'm gonna actually cook the chicken . Remember we marinated it overnight and now I'm going to make the basting sauce. So we start with a half a cup of soy [00:16:00] sauce. I'm gonna do a quarter of a cup of brown sugar as I normally do, I am going to pack the measurement because I want to make sure that it is accurate. So quarter of a cup of brown sugar. Yeah, again, this is a really sweet recipe. Hopefully I like it cuz there's a lot. Otherwise, let's just say some of my coworkers may get to try it out. So we did the brown sugar. Now we're gonna do more sweet chili sauce. Luckily, I bought another package cuz I finished that so we're gonna do a quarter of a cup of sweet chili sauce. I'm using container with the handle to

make it a little bit easier when I'm at the grill, we need a half a cup of ketchup. There is so much ketchup in this recipe.

And that's all of it. Mix well and set aside. I'm gonna use a silicone brush to brush it on the chicken while it's grilling. So I'm gonna use the brush, kind of mix it up cuz you know the brown sugar is gonna need to dissolve and the ketchup and the soy sauce are completely different textures. While doing this, I am preheating the grill.

So the next step, which I actually [00:17:00] don't think I need, you would thread the chicken pieces onto bamboo skewers about three pieces on each stick. I have a Weber gas grill. I know. Don't shame me, it's not charcoal. It has narrow cast iron grates and I don't lose stuff other than asparagus through it. So I don't think I'm gonna need to do that. If you do have wider grill grates or you're gonna put this over the fire or something, I would definitely make that change. And this could be medium heat on the grill, but obviously we preheat on high. I'm gonna take the chicken out of the fridge. I'm going to dry off these pieces because wet meats do not brown. They kind of boil and we don't want that. So I'm gonna dry everything off with a paper towel, and then we'll get to grilling. So I will be back.

So I am outside my grill. It takes about 15 minutes for my grill to preheat. And so it says that we're gonna grill this on medium heat, so I'm going to turn down to medium [00:18:00] on all three burners. Since this is so much chicken, I decided to do on all three burners and I had already given it a wipe down. So let's get these on the grill. It is flaring up. There is a lot of sugar in here, so hopefully we don't have too much of a flare up, but, exciting at the moment. Woo. Okay. Very exciting at the moment. So we're going to close the lid and it says we're going to be grilling the chicken, turning and basting every couple of minutes until cook through about 12 to 15 minutes. So what I'm going to do, gotta go back inside, rinse the plate that had the rock chicken. Since we're going to be cooking the chicken, we want to put it when it's done on a clean plate.

Some of these pieces are on the larger side, so I think they're probably gonna take closer to that 15 minute window. So we will set a timer for the 15 and I'll come back occasionally and give it a turn. So let's see how this goes.[00:19:00]

Okay, so I'm back. I've been out here every two minutes flipping over the chicken and giving it a baste. So, let's see. I can't have an extra mic out here cuz I would literally set it on fire. So let's see if you can hear it sizzle. Ooh, this is looking good. There's a few pieces that are on the thicker side that I may let go a little longer. I'm gonna give 'em one last little bit of a flip to get the sauce that

was on the top. Seared. There's some little pieces that I'm ready to pull off, but this has been the 15 minute mark. I didn't cut these as evenly as I could have, so that's why I think I'm gonna go a little longer cuz there's a few pieces that are a little fatter and I can tell you raw chickens not where it's at. The one thing I will say is that this is a very sticky sauce, not shocking with the amount of sugar, so I would definitely prep the grill grates with a paper towel with oil or use grill spray, whatever your preference is cuz this is going to be making a mess.

So this is our little last bit of searing.[00:20:00] The sauce still has a bit of time to adhere. And I think we are good. So I'm going to take these off the grill, let them cool down a little bit, and then it is time for us to taste the dishes together.

So I have reheated some of the sinangag garlic rice, which we had last night with our dinner and I've served up some of the barbecue chicken, but I also have added green beans because I feel like there's gonna need to be vegetables to cut through all this sweetness. It is beautifully lacquered in color and grilled.

You can go on my social media accounts and take a look. So here we go. As expected. It is really sweet. There's so much ketchup and other things in there. Let's try it with the rice. I think this is better than having it with regular steam rice, which is what it recommended. It definitely helps cut through the sweetness cuz it's got all that garlic. So let's try it again [00:21:00] together. One last bite, maybe I'll add some green beans to it as well. Cuz I think it's so sweet, it needs something to cut through it. This is delicious. I think it needs to have all these other things added to it to balance it out. It kind of reminds me of the Chick-fil-A Polynesian sauce. I've only had that twice. I don't eat there. This is delicious. I'm going to enjoy my lunch.

So here are my final thoughts on "Quintessential Filipino cooking: 75 Authentic and Classic Recipes of the Philippines" by Liza Agbanlog. It is a beautiful cookbook. It is easy to use, easy to read. It talks about substitutions, which is great. One of the things I want to note is that it said to serve this with Achara for the barbecue chicken on page 170. And when you go to page 170, you have 166, 167, 168, 169, 172. So there's a picture of what I think the achara is cuz I went into the glossary and it says it's pickled green papaya recipe [00:22:00] 170. So that's unfortunate. I'm guessing that that pickled green papaya, which I don't know if I'm allergic to it, I don't know if I wanna find out. That acid, I think would've been really helpful in that chicken cuz the chicken was so sweet.

I don't know if there's any other errors in the book, but I did enjoy the recipe. I would like to try some more. If I was gonna borrow it or buy it? I think I'm gonna keep borrowing it for now, play with some more recipes, and then



determine if I wanna buy it. So, yeah, that's it for this episode. Thank you for joining me on Cooking through the Collection.

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