***MOLE*** (spanish pronunciation: [[ˈmole]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:IPA_for_Spanish)) ([mexican spanish](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mexican_Spanish" \o "Mexican Spanish), from [nahuatl](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nahuatl) *mulli* or *molli*, "sauce" or "concoction") is the generic name for a number of [sauces](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sauce) used in [mexican](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mexico) cuisine, as well as for dishes based on these sauces. Outside of mexico, it often refers to a specific sauce which is known in spanish by the more specific name [*mole poblano*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#Poblano)*.* In contemporary mexico, the term is used for a number of sauces, some quite dissimilar to one another, including black, red, yellow, colorado, green, almendrado, and [pipián](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pepita). The sauce is most popular in the central and southern regions of the country with those from [puebla](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Puebla) and [oaxaca](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oaxaca) the best known, but 60% of the mole eaten in the country comes from [san pedro atocpan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/San_Pedro_Atocpan) near [mexico city](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mexico_City). The popularity of the sauce, especially at major celebrations, is such that 99% of all mexicans have tried at least one version of it.

All mole preparations begin with one or more types of chili pepper. The classic moles of central Mexico and Oaxaca, such as mole poblano and mole negro, include two or more of the following types: ancho, pasilla, mulato and chipotle:other ingredients can include black pepper, [achiote](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Achiote), guaje (*[leucaena leucocephala](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leucaena_leucocephala" \o "Leucaena leucocephala)*), [cumin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cumin), [cloves](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clove), [anise](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anise), [tomatoes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tomato), [tomatillos](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tomatillo), garlic, sesame seeds, dried fruit, [hoja santa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hoja_santa) and many others. Mole poblano has an average of 20 ingredients; mole almendrado has an average of 26, and Oaxacan moles can have over 30. Chocolate, if used, is added at the end of cooking. The ingredients of mole can be grouped into five distinct classes: chiles, sour (tomatillos), sweet (dried fruits and sugar), spices, and thickeners (nuts and tortillas)

The ingredients are all roasted and ground into a fine powder or paste depending on the ingredients used. This roasting and grinding process is extremely laborious and if done by hand, takes at least a day. Traditionally, this work was shared by several generations of women in the family, but after the arrival of electric mills, it became more common to take the ingredients to be ground.  Moles made in families are all different as each have had their own varieties passed down for generations, with the making of it reserved for special events in large batches.

***Mole*** (spanish pronunciation: [[ˈmole]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:IPA_for_Spanish)) ([mexican spanish](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mexican_Spanish" \o "Mexican Spanish), from [nahuatl](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nahuatl) *mulli* or *molli*, "sauce" or "concoction") is the generic name for a number of [sauces](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sauce) used in [mexican](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mexico) cuisine, as well as for dishes based on these sauces. Outside of mexico, it often refers to a specific sauce which is known in spanish by the more specific name [*mole poblano*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#Poblano)*.* In contemporary mexico, the term is used for a number of sauces, some quite dissimilar to one another, including black, red, yellow, colorado, green, almendrado, and [pipián](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pepita). The sauce is most popular in the central and southern regions of the country with those from [puebla](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Puebla) and [oaxaca](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oaxaca) the best known, but 60% of the mole eaten in the country comes from [san pedro atocpan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/San_Pedro_Atocpan) near [mexico city](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mexico_City). The popularity of the sauce, especially at major celebrations, is such that 99% of all mexicans have tried at least one version of it.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-tipico-0)

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| **Contents**  [[hide](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce))]   * [1 History](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#History) * [2 Preparation and consumption](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#Preparation_and_consumption) * [3 Varieties](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#Varieties)   + [3.1 Poblano](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#Poblano)   + [3.2 Oaxaca](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#Oaxaca)   + [3.3 San Pedro Atocpan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#San_Pedro_Atocpan)   + [3.4 Other](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#Other) * [4 Popularity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#Popularity) * [5 See also](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#See_also) * [6 References](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#References) * [7 External links](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#External_links) |

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mole_(sauce)&action=edit&section=1)**] History**

Three states in Mexico claim to be the origin of mole, Puebla, Oaxaca and [Tlaxcala](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tlaxcala).[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-astasio-1) The states with the best known moles are Puebla and Oaxaca, but other regions in Mexico also make various types of mole sauces.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-demystifying-2)

Moles come in various flavors and ingredients, with chili peppers as the common factor. However, the classic mole version is the variety called mole poblano, which is a dark red or brown sauce served over meat. The dish has become a culinary symbol of Mexico’s [mestizaje](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mestizaje), or mixed indigenous and European heritage, both for the types of ingredients it contains as well as the legends surrounding its origin.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-demystifying-2)

The most common version of the legend takes place at the Convent of Santa Rosa in [Puebla](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Puebla,_Puebla) sometime early in the colonial period. Upon hearing that the archbishop was going to visit, the convent nuns went into a panic because they were poor and had almost nothing to prepare. The nuns prayed and brought together the little bits of what they did have, [chili peppers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chili_pepper), spices, day-old bread nuts and a little chocolate and more. They killed an old turkey they had, cooked it and put the sauce on top; and the archbishop loved it.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-demystifying-2)[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-holymole-3)

A similar version has a monk by the name of Fray Pascual inventing the dish, again to serve the archbishop of Puebla. In this version, he knocks over or the wind blows a bunch of spices into pots in which turkeys are cooking.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-demystifying-2)[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-mexonline-4) Other versions of the story substitute the [viceroy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Viceroy) of [New Spain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Spain), such as [Juan de Palafox y Mendoza](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Juan_de_Palafox_y_Mendoza) in place of the archbishop.[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-kbautista-5)

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:MaravillasMoleSPA.JPG)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/skins-1.18/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:MaravillasMoleSPA.JPG)

Selling mole mixes at the Feria Nacional del Mole in San Pedro Atocpan

Modern mole is a mixture of ingredients from three continents, North America, Europe and Africa, making it the first international dish created in the Americas.[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-peligro-6) Its base, however, is indigenous. [Mesoamericans](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mesoamerican) had a preparation they called "mulli" (sometimes spelled molli or chilmulli). The word means "sauce" in Nahuatl (or chili pepper sauce in the case of chilmulli).[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-92percent-7)[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-milyun-8) In his book called the *General History of the Things of New Spain*, [Bernardino de Sahagun](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bernardino_de_Sahagun) says that mullis were used in a number of dishes including those for fish, game and vegetables.[[10]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-feriamole-9) Theories about the origins of mole have supposed that it was something imposed upon the natives or that it was the product of the baroque artistry of Puebla, but there is not enough evidence for definitive answers.[[11]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-october-10)

While chili pepper sauces existed in pre-Hispanic Mexico, the complicated moles of today did not. They did not contain chocolate, which was used as a beverage, and in all of the writings of Sahagun, there is no mention at all of it being used to flavor food.[[12]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-coe-11) Most likely what occurred was a gradual modification of the original mulli sauce, adding more and different ingredients depending on the location. This diversified the resulting sauces into various types.[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-92percent-7)[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-milyun-8) Ingredients that have been added into moles include nuts, peanuts, [pine nuts](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pine_nut), [sesame seed](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sesame_seed), pumpkin and/or squash seeds, [cilantro](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cilantro), seedless grapes, [plantains](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plantain), garlic, onion, cinnamon, chocolate and more. What remained the same was the use of chili peppers, especially [ancho](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancho), [pasilla](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pasilla), [mulato](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mulato_pepper) and [chipotle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chipotle), and the consistency of the sauce.[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-92percent-7) The true story of how mole developed may never be truly known as the first recipes did not appear until after the [Mexican War of Independence](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mexican_War_of_Independence) in 1810. But the Nahuatl origin of the name probably defines its Mesoamerican origin.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-demystifying-2)

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mole_(sauce)&action=edit&section=2)**] Preparation and consumption**

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Commercial_Mole.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/skins-1.18/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Commercial_Mole.jpg)

Jars of commercially available Mole Negro and Mole Rojo, as sold in Oaxaca, Mexico.

All mole preparations begin with one or more types of chili pepper.[[13]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-blendingnyt-12) The classic moles of central Mexico and Oaxaca, such as mole poblano and mole negro, include two or more of the following types: ancho, pasilla, mulato and chipotle.[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-milyun-8) Other ingredients can include black pepper, [achiote](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Achiote), guaje (*[Leucaena leucocephala](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leucaena_leucocephala" \o "Leucaena leucocephala)*), [cumin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cumin), [cloves](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clove), [anise](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anise), [tomatoes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tomato), [tomatillos](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tomatillo), garlic, sesame seeds, dried fruit, [hoja santa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hoja_santa) and many others.[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-milyun-8)[[10]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-feriamole-9)[[13]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-blendingnyt-12) Mole poblano has an average of 20 ingredients; mole almendrado has an average of 26, and Oaxacan moles can have over 30.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-tipico-0)[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-mexonline-4)[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-92percent-7) Chocolate, if used, is added at the end of cooking.[[13]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-blendingnyt-12) According to [Rick Bayless](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rick_Bayless), the ingredients of mole can be grouped into five distinct classes: chiles, sour (tomatillos), sweet (dried fruits and sugar), spices, and thickeners (nuts and tortillas).[[14]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-13)

The ingredients are all roasted and ground into a fine powder or paste depending on the ingredients used. This roasting and grinding process is extremely laborious and if done by hand, takes at least a day.[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-lonelyplanet-14) Traditionally, this work was shared by several generations of women in the family, but after the arrival of electric mills, it became more common to take the ingredients to be ground.[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-mexonline-4)[[16]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-moletortilla-15) Moles made in families are all different as each have had their own varieties passed down for generations, with the making of it reserved for special events in large batches.[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-mexonline-4)[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-milyun-8)

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:PineNutMoleSPA.JPG)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/skins-1.18/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:PineNutMoleSPA.JPG)

Piñon mole

The resulting powder or paste is mixed with water, or more often broth, and simmered until it is pungent and very thick.[[13]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-blendingnyt-12) It is most often prepared in a “cazuela” or a thick heavy clay caldron and stirred almost constantly to keep it from burning.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-demystifying-2) This thickness of the sauce has prompted some, such as Mexican-food authority Patricia Quintana, to claim that it is too substantial to be called a sauce. However, like a sauce, it is always served over something and never eaten alone. For mole poblano, the most traditional meat to serve it with is turkey, but it and many others are served with chicken and some are good with pork.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-demystifying-2)[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-holymole-3)[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-mexonline-4)

The labor-intensive part of mole is the toasting and grinding, with few people having time to do this anymore.[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-milyun-8) A number of mole powders and pastes can be pre-prepared and sold, such as mole poblano, mole negro and mole colorado.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-demystifying-2) Many markets in Mexico sell mole pastes and powders in pre-packaged or by the kilo.[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-lonelyplanet-14) These mole mixes are heavy with a strong odor,[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)" \l "cite_note-holymole-3) so much so that security agents at the [Mexico City airport](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mexico_City_Airport) once admitted that mole can register a positive when they check for explosives.[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-astasio-1)

Prepared mole sauce will keep for about three days in the refrigerator and freezes well. The paste will keep six months in the refrigerator and about a year in the freezer. However, leftover sauce is often used for the making of [tamales](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tamale), [enchiladas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enchiladas) (often called enmoladas) or over eggs at brunch.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-demystifying-2)[[11]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-october-10)

The term mole is most often associated with thick dark brownish red sauces, but the term is really more general than that. Mole can be anything from dark and thick to soup-like and bright green, with red, yellow and black moles each claiming fans in different regions.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-demystifying-2)

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mole_(sauce)&action=edit&section=3)**] Varieties**

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mole_(sauce)&action=edit&section=4)**] Poblano**

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Mole_Poblano.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/skins-1.18/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Mole_Poblano.jpg)

Chicken with mole poblano

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| --- |
| [[show](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce))]**Mole Poblano Nutrition Facts** |
|  |
| **Nutritional value per 100 g (3.5 oz)** | |
| [**Energy**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Food_energy) | 2,389 kJ (571 kcal) |
| [**Carbohydrates**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carbohydrate) | 41.70 g |
| [**Fat**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fat) | 41.58 g |
| [**Protein**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protein_(nutrient)) | 7.48 g |
| [**Water**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Water) | 4.12 g |
| [Vitamin A](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vitamin_A) | 15 IU |
| [Thiamine (vit. B1)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thiamine) | 0.136 mg (12%) |
| [Riboflavin (vit. B2)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Riboflavin) | 0.573 mg (48%) |
| [Niacin (vit. B3)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Niacin) | 2.544 mg (17%) |
| [Pantothenic acid](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pantothenic_acid) (B5) | 0.232 mg (5%) |
| [Vitamin B6](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vitamin_B6) | 0.752 mg (58%) |
| [Folate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Folate) (vit. B9) | 74 μg (19%) |
| [Calcium](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calcium#Nutrition) | 302 mg (30%) |
| [Iron](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iron#Biological_role) | 5.71 mg (44%) |
| [Magnesium](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magnesium_in_biology) | 127 mg (36%) |
| [Manganese](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manganese#Biological_role) | 1.137 mg (54%) |
| [Phosphorus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phosphorus#Biological_role) | 254 mg (36%) |
| [Potassium](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Potassium#Potassium_in_the_diet_and_by_supplement) | 602 mg (13%) |
| [Sodium](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salt) | 1164 mg (78%) |
| [Zinc](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zinc) | 2.50 mg (26%) |
| Percentages are relative to [US recommendations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dietary_Reference_Intake) for adults. Source: [USDA Nutrient Database](http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/foodcomp/search/) | |

Mole poblano is the best known of all mole varieties and has been ranked as number one of "typical" Mexican dishes.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-tipico-0) It has also been called the "[national dish](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_dish)" of Mexico.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-demystifying-2) The state of Puebla is identified with mole poblano.[[17]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-cruiz-16)

Mole poblano contains about twenty ingredients, including chili peppers and chocolate, which works to counteract the heat of the chili peppers,[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)" \l "cite_note-tipico-0) but it is not a chocolate sauce per se as it is just one of the many ingredients and does not dominate. It helps give the sauce its dark color, but this is also done by the mulatto chili peppers as well.[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-holymole-3) This sauce is most often served over turkey at weddings, birthdays and baptisms, or at Christmas with [rosemary](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rosemary) over [shrimp](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shrimp) cakes.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-tipico-0) Another time when the sauce is prominent is [Cinco de Mayo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cinco_de_Mayo). While this holiday is not celebrated much in the rest of Mexico, it is a major celebration in Puebla.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-demystifying-2)

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mole_(sauce)&action=edit&section=5)**] Oaxaca**

The state of Oaxaca is large and very mountainous with [various indigenous ethnicities](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indigenous_people_of_Oaxaca) and microclimates making for a number of regional variations in the food. The state is called "the land of the seven moles", with these being named mole negro, colorado, amarillo, verde, chichilo, coloradito, and mancha manteles (or tablecloth stainer) all differently colored and flavored, based on the use of distinctive chilis and herbs.[[18]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-britt-17) The last, manchamenteles, is really a chicken and fruit stew, and although Oaxaca claims its as the seventh mole, some, such as Susan Trilling in her book *My search for the seventh mole: A Story with recipes from Oaxaca, Mexico*, question whether it is a true mole.[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-mexonline-4) In addition, those from Puebla claim this dish as their own.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-demystifying-2)

The best known of Oaxaca's moles is mole negro, which is darker than mole poblano and just as thick and rich. It also includes chocolate, as well as chili peppers, onions, garlic and more, but what makes it distinct is the addition of a plant called hoja santa. It is the most complex and difficult to make of the sauces. In second place is mole coloradito, which is often simplified and sold as an enchilada sauce.[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-lonelyplanet-14)

Mole verde, in contrast to the above is always made fresh with herbs native to the region.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-demystifying-2)

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mole_(sauce)&action=edit&section=6)**] San Pedro Atocpan**

Until the mid-20th century, San Pedro Atocpan, located in the mountains south of Mexico City proper (but still part of the Federal District) was similar to the other agricultural communities surrounding it, growing corn, [fava beans](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fava_bean) and [nopal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nopal) cactus. Electricity and other modern conveniences arrived late here, allowing the community to retain more of its traditions later.[[11]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-october-10) In 1940, Father Damian Sartes San Roman came to the parish of San Pedro Atocpan and saw the potential in marketing the product as a way to raise living standards in the area.[[10]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-feriamole-9) At that time only four neighborhoods prepared mole for town festivals: Panchimalco, Ocotitla, Nuztla and Tula, but those who prepared it were generally prominent women in their communities. In the 1940s, one family made the long trek to Mexico City proper to sell some of their mole at the [La Merced market](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/La_Merced_Market,_Mexico_City). It was successful, but they brought with them only two kilos, since it was made by hand grinding the ingredients on a [metate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metate).[[19]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-32aniv-18) The arrival of electricity in the late 1940s, make the use of a powered mill possible, and better roads made the trek to the city easier.[[11]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-october-10)[[19]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-32aniv-18) Some of these mills were bought or financed by Father Sartes, but the mole was still cooked in a clay pot over a wood fire. In the 1970s, he was part of a small group which became a cooperative, which constructed the Las Cazuelas restaurant. This is where the first Mole Exhibition was held in 1978.[[10]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-feriamole-9)

The care and tradition that went into the moles from here make them popular and made the town famous in the Mexico City area. Today, San Pedro Atocpan produces 60% of the moles consumed in Mexico and 89% of the moles consumed in Mexico City,[[11]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)" \l "cite_note-october-10) with a total estimated production of between 28 and 30,000 tons each year.[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-kbautista-5) Ninety two percent of the town's population makes a living preparing mole powders and pastes, all in family businesses. Prices for mole run between 80 and 160 peso per kilo, depending on the maker and the type bought. A number of moles are made in the town but one is signature to the area, called "mole almendrado" or mole with almonds.[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-92percent-7) Each producer in Actopan has their own version of the various types of mole, often keeping recipes strictly secret.[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-92percent-7) The production in the town has become very competitive, especially in quality. Twenty two brands are permitted to print "Made in San Pedro Atocpan" on their labels.[[10]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-feriamole-9)

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mole_(sauce)&action=edit&section=7)**] Other**

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:OllasChalmaEdoMex.JPG)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/skins-1.18/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:OllasChalmaEdoMex.JPG)

Mole and other dishes simmering in cazuelas in Chalma, Malinalco, Mexico State

Various types of mole sauces can be found throughout the center of Mexico towards the south.[[20]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-jamison-19) There is the mole amarillito of the southeast, the mole coloradito of the Valley of Mexico (as opposed to the mole of the same name in Oaxaca), the mole prieto of Tlaxcala, mole ranchero from Morelos, and more.[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-milyun-8) Taxco has a pink version of mole, called mole rosa. The spiciness of this version is very mild.[[21]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-molerosa-20) The word [*guacamole*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guacamole) (avocado sauce) is derived from "guaca" (from “aguacate” or avocado) and the word mole.[[22]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-weekly-21)

Pipian is a type of mole which mostly consists of ground squash seeds. It does not contain chocolate, but generally contains tomatillos, hoja santa, chili peppers, garlic and onion to give it a green hue. There is also a red version which combines the squash seeds with peanuts, red jalapeños or chipotle and sesame seeds.[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-astasio-1)[[18]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-britt-17) Like other moles, it is cooked with broth and then served with poultry and pork, and sometimes with fish or vegetables.[[11]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-october-10)

Mole verde can refer to a number of different sauces that all finished with a green color. Most of these must be made fresh and not from a mix as they require a number of fresh herbs and other ingredients.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-demystifying-2) Another version comes from Veracruz, were pork is covered in a sauce made from ground peanuts, tomatillos and cilantro, with the last two giving the sauce its green color.[[23]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-kennedy-22)

While not moles in the classic sense, there are some dishes that use the term in their name. Mole de olla is a stew made with beef and vegetables, which does contain guajillo and ancho chiles as well as number of other ingredients found in moles.[[11]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-october-10)[[24]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-terra-23) Huatzmole, is a mole sauce variation which is soupy, often served over goat meat.[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-astasio-1)

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mole_(sauce)&action=edit&section=8)**] Popularity**

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:MoleStandsSPA.JPG)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/skins-1.18/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:MoleStandsSPA.JPG)

Restaurant stands at the Mole National Fair in San Pedro Atocpan

Mole is one of the most representative dishes of Mexico, especially for major celebrations.[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-kbautista-5)[[25]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-salsahot-24) Ninety-nine percent of Mexicans have tried at least one type of mole.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-tipico-0) The dish enjoys its greatest popularity in central and southern Mexico, but simpler versions of mole poblano did make their way north. However, northern versions are far less complex and generally used to make enchiladas.[[20]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-jamison-19)

The consumption of mole is strongly associated with celebrations. In Mexico, to say "to go to a mole" (ir a un mole) means to go to a wedding.[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-astasio-1) Mole has a strong flavor, especially the dark ones and is considered to be an acquired taste for most.[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-astasio-1)[[18]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-britt-17) This has spawned another saying, "en su mero mole", which means something like "one's cup of tea".[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-astasio-1)

To promote their regional versions of the sauce, a number of places host festivals dedicated to it. The Feria Nacional del Mole (National Festival of Mole) was begun in 1977 in San Pedro Atocpan, and is held each year in October. It began outside the town, in the small community of Yenhuitlalpan, in May. The four restaurants there decided to take advantage of the festival of the Señor de las Misericordias (Lord of the Mercies) to promote their moles. Despite their success, a number in the village did not like that they were using a religious festival for commercial ends, so a separate mole festival was created for October.[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-kbautista-5) Today, thirty seven restaurants and mole producers participate in the event. The most popular variety is the mole almendrado. Originally the October version of the fair was held in the town proper, but after it became too big, it was moved to prepared fairgrounds outside along the highway.[[10]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-feriamole-9)

The city of Puebla also holds an annual mole festival, whose proceeds are shared among the Santa Rosa, Santa Inés and Santa Catarina convents.[[18]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-britt-17) In 2005, at this festival, the world's record for largest pot of mole was broken. The pot was 1.4 meters in diameter at the base, 1.9 meters high, with a diameter of 2.5 meters at the top. Four hundred people participated in its preparation, using 800 kilos of mole paste, 2,500 kilos of chicken, 500 kilos of tortillas and 1,600 kilos of broth. The resulting food fed 11,000 people.[[17]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-cruiz-16)

The women of Santa María Magdalena in [Querétaro](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quer%C3%A9taro) have been locally known for their mole for about 100 years. In 1993, they decided to hold a contest as to who could prepare the best. This was the beginning of the Feria del Mole y Tortilla (Mole and Tortilla Festival), which has been held every year since then. It still features a mole cook off and attracts hundreds of visitors from the state.[[16]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-moletortilla-15) One other community that holds an annual Feria de Mole in April is the community of Coatepec de Morelos in the municipality of [Zitácuaro](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zit%C3%A1cuaro), [Michoacán](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michoac%C3%A1n).[[26]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-sanpancho-25)

Despite its popularity within Mexico, mole is relatively unknown outside the country, even in the United States where Mexican food is readily available.[[11]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-october-10)[[25]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-salsahot-24) Chicago does have an annual mole festival for Mexican immigrants at the Universidad Popular community center. The event is a cooking contest which had over forty entries, with the winner taking away $500 USD.[[27]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-llevasabor-26) Several brands of mole paste are also available in the United States and can be found online as well.[[11]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-october-10)

While mole has traditionally been eaten by all levels of Mexican society, especially at celebrations, the upper classes have begun to stop preparing and consuming the dish. According to one survey of upper class housewives between 30 and 50 years of age, 95% had never cooked it from scratch. They had only eaten it at home at their children's requests after hearing about it. This is in contrast to their mothers and grandmothers for whom mole symbolized being Mexican. The dish is being less seen in the traditional celebrations as well. The problem is that those in this stratum of society have come to prefer foreign foods.[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-peligro-6) The owners of La California, a mole producer in Guanajuato, state that it is harder to market regional mole in Mexico than in the exterior. They say that many in Mexico do not consider it a gourmet product, or something that can be consumed with wine.[[28]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-mujeres-27) In Mexico, the preferences of the upper classes often eventually are copied in the lower classes as well. For some, such as Lula Betran of the Círculo Mexicano de Arte Culinario, sees this as a warning sign for the dish.[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce)#cite_note-peligro-6)

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mole_(sauce)&action=edit&section=9)**] See also**