

TONI'S JOLLOF RICE WITH POT-ROAST CHICKEN

"When I arrived as chef at Gayhurst, the multicultural kitchen were battling to cook British food for a diverse school community. When I suggested the kitchen cook a menu from home, Toni, a school kitchen assistant, made her jollof rice and it went down a storm. It's been on the menu ever since. To make the rice without chicken, simmer on the hob in the sauce (lid on) for 25 minutes." Nicole

FEEDS 6

**1 whole chicken (around 1.5kg/
3lb 5oz)**
**2 tablespoons olive oil, plus extra for
roasting**
**1 onion, peeled and roughly
chopped**
**2 red peppers, stalk and pith
removed, roughly chopped**
**1 red chilli, seeds removed and
roughly chopped (optional)**
**1 garlic clove, peeled and roughly
chopped**
2 tablespoons tomato purée
125ml/4fl oz tomato passata
1½ teaspoons sea salt
400g/14oz basmati rice
Herbs of your choice, to serve

Preheat the oven to 220°C fan/200°C/400°F/gas mark 6.
Rub the chicken with a little olive oil and roast for 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, make your jollof sauce. In a large (flameproof) casserole (big enough to fit the whole chicken in and for which you have a lid), heat the 2 tablespoons of olive oil and cook the onion until soft and golden, around 10 minutes.

Add the cooked onions to a large jug along with the peppers, chilli (if using), garlic, tomato purée, passata, salt, and 500ml/18fl oz water and, using a stick blender, blitz to a smooth sauce, then set aside.

Wash the rice in cold water until the water runs almost clear. Drain well and add to the large casserole, along with most of the jollof sauce and stir to combine.

After the chicken has been roasting for 30 minutes, take it out of the oven and reduce the temperature to 160°C fan/180°C/350°F/gas mark 4. Carefully transfer the chicken (it will be very hot!) to the casserole dish and nestle it gently into the rice. Pour the remaining jollof sauce over the top of the chicken, then put the lid on the pot and transfer to the oven.

Cook for 45 minutes, then remove the lid and cook for a further 15 minutes, until the chicken skin is nicely bronzed. Check the chicken is cooked by inserting a sharp knife between the thigh and the breast; the juices should run clear.

Once the chicken is cooked, remove the pot from the oven, take out the chicken and put on a board to rest for 10 minutes before carving. Replace the lid on the rice so it can sit and steam.

Fluff up the rice with a fork, carve the chicken and serve on top of the rice, sprinkled with herbs of your choice.

