

ALT Mae- Diary entry #1

“The ache for home lives in all of us.”

-Maya Angelou, *All God's Children Need Traveling Shoes* (1986)

New experiences and friendships make life abroad exciting, but the familiar comforts of home remain close to our hearts. The quote above reminds us that homesickness is a natural feeling. Whenever I miss home, a plate of adobo brings back memories of meals shared with family and friends in the Philippines.

Living in Japan has taught me many things. From navigating cultural differences and language barriers to trying new food, even mastering how to use chopsticks! When I think about it, it is often the precious memories of home that keep me grounded, fueling my desire to keep moving forward and never give up.

I have been living in Japan for almost two years. I remember being ecstatic during my first few months as I discovered and became familiar with train transportation, practiced useful Japanese expressions, and translated almost every condiment in the supermarket. (Why are oil and vinegar similar? What is sake? What about mirin?)

Eventually, as I became more well-adjusted, that was when homesickness kicked in. There were nights when it was difficult to sleep because it was too quiet. Growing up in a big family with seven siblings and several pets, the silence was unfamiliar. It was strange.

Let me introduce one of the dishes that helps me overcome homesickness, my comfort food, ADOBO!

“Chicken Adobo”

Ingredients:

- 500 g chicken
- 1/4 cup soy sauce (60 ml)
- 1/4 cup vinegar (60 ml)
- 1/2 cup water (120 ml)
- 3–4 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1–2 bay leaves
- 1/2 teaspoon whole black peppercorns
- 1/2 tablespoon cooking oil (optional)
- 1/2 teaspoon sugar (optional)



Instructions

1. In a pot, combine chicken, soy sauce, vinegar, garlic, bay leaves, black peppercorn, and sugar. Marinate for at least 30 minutes.
2. Bring to a boil. Wait for 3 minutes before stirring. Stir for a minute then add water.
3. Simmer on low heat for 20-30 minutes or until chicken is tender. Stir occasionally.
4. Add oil, stir for a minute and turn off the heat.
5. Serve with hot rice!

Your turn!

1. What's your comfort food?
2. How do you deal with homesickness?
3. Would you take on the challenge of making adobo? Let me know when you see me!