Chicken Filling

This is a general-purpose chicken filling that can be used for many recipes including Pastelão, risolis, pastéis. It is also delicious in a simple pressed sandwich or as a topping for pizza. I got this recipe from my mother and I know that she uses it frequently.

Ingredients:

- 1 chicken
- 2 clove of garlic
- 1/2 Tablespoon of salt
- 1/4 tablespoon of freshly grounded black pepper
- 2 Tablespoon of flavourless cooking oil (such as canola or sunflower)
- 2 cup of water
- 1 medium onion
- 1 teaspoon of honey
- 1 16 oz can of Italian tomatoes
- 1 Tablespoon of corn starch
- 3 perfect hard-boiled eggs (see Julia Child’s Master Recipe)
- Italian parsley

Procedure:

1. **Season the Chicken**
   - Cut up the chicken (alternatively use chicken breasts only).
   - Sprinkle chicken with salt.
   - Place the chicken in a closed container and put it in the refrigerator for at least 1 hour (up to 12 hours).

2. **Brown the Chicken**
   - Heat up the cooking oil on a heavy-bottom sautee pan in moderately high heat.
   - Lightly brown the chicken on all sides.
   - Peel and split garlic cloves in half and add to the pot.
   - Add 1 cup of water, bring to a boil, reduce the heat and simmer until the chicken is tender (remove the breast earlier so that they don’t dry).
   - After removing the breasts, keep cooking until all the water have evaporated. Only the fat and brown bits should be in the pan.
   - Remove the remainder pieces of chicken to a platter to cool off.

3. **Make the Tomato Sauce**
   - Drain all the fat to a small container and reserve.
• Add 1 cup of water to the solids in the pan, scrape and let it simmer until you have a rich broth in the pan scraping all the broth from the pan with a rubber spatula.
• Pour broth into a small container and reserve.
• Dice the onion in very small dice.
• Add 2 Tablespoon of the reserved fat to the pan and heat up in moderately high heat.
• Add the diced onion and sauté for 5 minutes until the onion start wilting.
• Add 1 teaspoon of honey to the onion and continue salting until golden brown.
• Add the can of tomatoes and the reserved chicken broth.
• Let simmer until most of the water has evaporated and the fat is separating from the tomato sauce.

4. Debone and dice the chicken

• In the meantime, remove the meat from the cooled chicken. Discard bones, skin, and veins.
• Dice the chicken meat in very small dice.

5. Finish the filling

• When the tomato sauce has reduced, add the diced chicken and cook for a few more minutes stirring.
• If the filling will be used inside a pastry, such as in pastelão, mix the one tablespoon of cornstarch in 1/4 cup of cold water and stir until dissolved. Add the cornstarch slurry to the hot filling and stir until it is thickened.
• Pour into a glass or metal bowl, let it cool completely (can be refrigerated for up to three days before use, it can also be frozen and thawed before using).
• The filling can be used as is for many applications. It may be also be flavoured with different fresh herbs for several variations. Suggestions include basil, sage, rosemary, oregano, chives. I suggest using only one herb each time and only in a moderate amount.

6. Add the eggs (right before assembly)

• Boil 3 eggs using Julia Child’s Master Recipe for Perfect Hard-Boiled Eggs from "he Way to Cook".
• Dice the cooled boiled eggs into very small dice and add to the cooled filling (it is easier to dice if you separate the whites from the yolks first.
• Chop up some Italian parsley very finely and add to the filling.
• Freshly grind the black pepper into the filling. Stir well