

Tagine with Lamb & Chickpeas

Serves 3-4.

Ingredients

3/4 cup dried chickpeas soaked in cold water overnight	1 1/2 pounds lamb shoulder, trimmed of fat and cut into 2-inch cubes
1/4 cup olive oil	1 onion, coarsely chopped
1 teaspoon sugar	2 garlic cloves, minced
1 teaspoon ground cumin	1 tomato, peeled, seeded and chopped
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon	10 pitted kalamata olives chopped
1/2 teaspoon ground ginger	1 preserved lemon thinly sliced
1/4 teaspoon ground turmeric	2-4 tablespoons chopped cilantro
1/4 teaspoon powdered saffron or a couple of saffron threads	

Instructions

1. Rinse the chickpeas that have soaked overnight in cold running water. Put them in a large saucepan, cover with water and bring to a rolling boil. Boil for 10 minutes. Drain the chickpeas, rinse the pan. Return the chickpeas to the clean pan, cover with fresh cold water, and bring to a boil over high heat. Once boiling, lower the heat to a simmer. Cover and cook until tender - about 1 1/2 hours. Remove the pan from heat and add a little salt. Do not drain the chickpeas yet.
2. Mix half the olive oil with the sugar, cumin, cinnamon, ginger, turmeric, saffron, and 1 teaspoon salt and some ground pepper in a large bowl. Add the lamb, toss to coat, and let sit for 20 minutes.
3. In a Dutch oven or large saucepot heat the remaining oil and brown the lamb (in batches if necessary). Brown on all sides. Remove the lamb on to a plate or bowl and set aside. To the same pot add the onions and stir until well browned. Stir in the garlic and tomatoes with 1 cup of water, working up the brown bits from the bottom of the pan. Add the lamb back into the pot and add enough water to cover. Bring to a boil over high heat. Skim off any foam that rises to the surface and lower the heat to simmer for about an hour or until meat is tender.
4. Drain the chickpeas setting aside 1 cup of the liquid. Add the chickpeas and the cup of liquid to the pot. Simmer for approximately 30 minutes.
5. Stir in the olives and preserved lemons and simmer for approximately 30 minutes more. Add in half of the chopped cilantro and cook for about 5 minutes more.
6. Serve over couscous with a sprinkling of fresh cilantro, and a side of harissa.

Recipe adapted from Mediterranean: food of the sun, Jacqueline Clark and Joanna Farrow, 2001