Kasbah Kitchen





If the pot is cooking, the friendship will stay warm.

Moroccan proverb

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The Spice Tray

Ras El Hanout

Literally translated from the Arabic as 'head of the shop', ras el hanout is a blend of the best spices offered by a particular shopkeeper, and while commercially produced products are available they fall far short of the up to fifty spices an enthusiastic creator will include. However, most Moroccan chefs prefer to use individual spices in their preparations, which makes it much easier for the home cooks trying to reproduce their favourite dishes. The chefs at Kasbah du Toubkal base most of their dishes on six spices, plus salt, garlic and the occasional sprinkling of saffron, all of which are easily obtainable almost anywhere these days.

Ginger (*skingbir*): Derived from ginger root, fragrant ground ginger is used extensively in tagines, stews and soups.

Pepper (*libzar*): Black pepper has a pungent flavour and is used widely in Moroccan cooking, with the white variety used in sweeter Moroccan sauces using onions and saffron.

Coarse Salt (mellah): Fine salt is served at table, the course version usually being reserved for cooking. Small amounts are still produced in salt pans near the village of Ouirgane in the High Atlas.

Cumin (kamoun): Served at every Moroccan table along with salt and pepper, aromatic cumin adds a faintly bitter note. One of the most important seasonings in Moroccan cuisine.

Paprika (tahmira): Paprika's bright red colour makes a pleasing garnish, and is excellent with eggs, meat, fish, potatoes and sauces.

Cinnamon (*karfa*) is most common in Moroccan pastries and sweeter dishes, such as those that combine meat with fruit,

Saffron (zaafrane): The world's most expensive spice by weight, saffron adds a slight bitter flavour and a distinctive yellow colour to a dish.









Salade Marocaine

Serves 4

4 medium-size tomatoes,
½ medium size green and/
or yellow pepper
1 Little Gem lettuce,
1 small cucumber
½ tsp cumin powder
Olive oil,
White wine vinegar
A few black olives
Salt

Peel, seed and finely chop the tomatoes. Finely chop the peppers and lettuce (retain a few leaves to garnish). Add cumin powder and salt to taste, dribble with olive oil and mix well. Sprinkle with a small amount of white wine vinegar.

To serve

Serve chilled on a round plate with slices of cucumber and lettuce leaf around edge, adding a few black olives as garnish. Best served with chunks of strong bread if Moroccan bread isn't available.



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Salade Hors d'Oeuvre

Serves 4-6

3 large tomatoes 1 large cooked beetroot ı small cucumber 1 medium red onion 3 medium carrots 1 small turnip ı large potato ı little gem lettuce or small lettuce head of similar size ½ each green, red and yellow pepper ½ teaspoon each ground cumin, black pepper, salt 250gm white rice Small tin of tuna Olive oil Sugar White vinegar



Peel all vegetables. Peel tomato and remove seeds.

Grate the carrot and turnip together and mix; grate the beetroot and place in separate bowls. Add one teaspoon of sugar to each bowl and a sprinkle of white vinegar. Set aside.

Finely chop the tomato, onion and peppers and mix together with salt to taste and a drizzle of olive oil. (Set aside a small amount of chopped peppers to add to potato)

Cut the potato into small cubes and boil until firm but fluffy, adding the reserved finely chopped peppers just before potato is finished. When cooked, drain and add ½ teaspoon each of cumin, black pepper, salt and a drizzle of olive oil, mix well.

Drain the can of tuna and mix with the cooked rice. (Omit the tuna if this is to be served as a vegetarian dish.)

To serve

Place separate layers across a long plate without overlap; garnish with lettuce leaves, slices of cucumber and a few black peppers. Offer olive oil, lemon, or mayonnaise as a dressing. Eat with chunks of freshly cut bread.

Spiced Lentils

Serves 4-6

1 tsp turmeric 1 tsp ground dry ginger ½ tsp paprika ³/₄ tsp salt, or to taste 4 tblsp olive oil 1 small onion, peeled and diced 4 cloves garlic, finely chopped 2 large tomatoes, finely chopped 1/4 kilo whole brown lentils, rinsed 1/4 cup minced fresh parsley ½ cup minced fresh coriander ½ litre water



Mix spices together until well blended.

Heat a medium-sized pan over medium-high heat. When hot, add olive oil and onion and sauté, stirring frequently until onion is translucent all the way through Add the garlic and sauté for about 15 seconds. Add the spice mix and stir well, until everything has been coated in oil. Immediately stir in the tomato and salt and turn down the heat to medium low. Let simmer for 3 to 5 minutes, until oil starts to pool on the

Add the water and the lentils. Bring to the boil, reduce heat to low, cover, and simmer for 30 to 40 minutes. Check occasionally, adding lemon zest after about 20 mins. When fully cooked, the lentils should still hold their shape, and most of the water should be absorbed. If they look dry, add a bit more water; if too wet, remove the lid for the last few minutes of cooking. Leave to sit for about 15 minutes to absorb any excess water and finish softening up without over-cooking.

Stir in the fresh lemon juice and the minced coriander and parsley. Taste to adjust the seasonings before serving.

To serve

Can be served in a bowl as a starter, ladled over hot rice or couscous, or as a vegetable accompanying a main dish.



Leg of Lamb

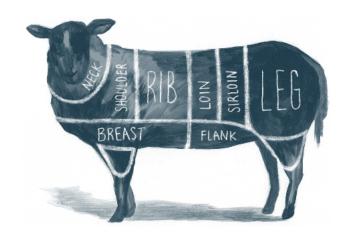
Serves 4

r medium sized leg of lamb
4 cloves garlic, peeled and chopped
2 tblsp olive oil
½ tsp salt (or to taste)
r tsp whole black pepper
r tsp ginger
r onion, halved

Make small incisions in the leg of lamb with the tip of a sharp knife and insert thick slices of peeled garlic. Heat the olive oil before adding the lamb, turning it to brown. Add salt, black pepper, onion and ginger, covering the meat, and leave for a few minutes. Add enough boiling water to cover the meat and set to boil again. Seal the pan with foil to keep in the steam and put the lid on. Simmer for about forty minutes or until the meat is tender.

Serve with assorted vegetables (See below)





Chicken Couscous

Serves 4

1 large chicken, joined into medium sized pieces ½ kilo couscous grain ½ kilo each courgette, small aubergine, carrot, turnip, chickpeas
1 large tomato, chopped 1 large onion, chopped 1 large handful raisins olive oil
Level teaspoon of paprika, saffron, salt 1/2 tsp cinnamon 2 tsp sugar



Wash and peel vegetables, cutting potato and turnip into chunks lengthwise, and small aubergines in half, also lengthwise.

Brown the chicken in a heavy bottom pan (a pressure cooker is excellent for this) with a small amount of olive oil, then add the paprika, saffron, salt and sliced lemon. Add water to almost cover, bring to the boil then simmer until the chicken is cooked.

Put onions, tomato and raisins into a small pan with a small amount of oil to sweat. Add ½ teaspoon of cinnamon and 2 teaspoons of sugar and cook over a low heat to soften. Once soft and blended, set aside.

Sweat the courgette and aubergine for a few moments; add water to almost cover, bring to the boil then reduce heat and simmer until tender but not too soft. Place carrot, potato and turnip in a separate pan,` add water to almost cover, bring to boil then drop heat to simmer gently until soft.

To serve

Place couscous on a serving dish or plate with the chicken laid on top. Arrange the vegetables to form a shallow pyramid; blend a little bouillon from the chicken with the raison mix and pour over the dish. Serve with chunks of warm bread.

Easy Couscous

If you don't have a steamer, a simple way to prepare couscous. Take a large ceramic or glass bowl (not plastic), add the required amount of couscous granules, approx. 200gms for four people. Mix in salt to taste and shake the bowl until the couscous is level. Slowly pour boiling water down the side of the bowl, turning it until there is a thin 'lens' of



water above the level of the couscous. Leave this for about 3-4 minutes until all the water is absorbed. With a fork, carefully scrape the couscous from the sides into the middle, breaking up any large lumps, making sure to also scrape from the bottom of the bowl . Repeat this 2-3 times, leaving a couple of minutes between each, raking the tines of the fork through the grains until the couscous is completely dry and most of the grains have separated. It should have a slightly nutty texture and flavor.





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Lamb with Figs and Walnuts

Serves 4

1 kilo lamb cut into pieces

1/4 kilo dried figs

Small handful of walnuts
for garnish

1 teaspoon each (ground)
paprika, black pepper,
cumin, ginger, saffron, salt,
chopped garlic
1 onion, chopped

Small handful of chopped
parsley

Two tablespoons cooking
oil

Prepare figs in advance by placing in a pan with enough boiling water to allow for expanding, adding the cinnamon and sugar. Boil for two minutes, turn off heat and leave to cool.

Add the lamb, spices, parsley and onions to a heavy-bottom pan (a pressure cooker works well), and brown for a few minutes. Add enough water to almost cover the meat, bring to the boil then simmer until tender

To serve

Place the lamb on plates or shallow bowls and pour over some of the bouillon. Add a walnut (uncooked) on top of a few of the figs. Serve with chunks of bread to soak up the rich bouillon.







Grillade (Mixed Grill)

Serves 4

I large lamb chop per person
I large chicken leg per person
I kilo minced lamb
1-2 sausages per person depending on size
Spices per individual dish

Lamb Chop

I large lamb chop each
Onion, chopped parsley
I tsp each Pepper, ginger, garlic, cumin
½ tsp salt, olive oil
Mix everything together and leave for I-1½ hrs

Kefta

Repeat ingredients and method as above Role into small balls by hand and pat into small patties

Chicken

one large leg per person
½ tsp thyme, ginger, cumin, black pepper,
chopped garlic, salt
1 tble spoon yellow mustard
2-3 tble spoon oil depending on size of chicken
Mix well by hand, spread well over chicken and
leave to marinate for 2-3 hours

Sausage

Preferably merguez or spicy sausage if avalable

Grill over charcoal



Fish Tajine

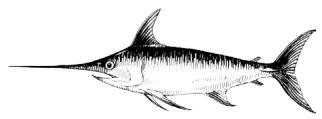
Serves 4

I small red and green bell
pepper sliced lengthwise
I medium tomato, sliced
crosswise
I lemon, sliced crosswise
I onion, chopped fine
Small handful of fresh
parsley, chopped fine
½ tsp salt, black pepper,
ginger, paprika, saffron,
mixed
I tblsp olive oil

Place the olive oil in a deep pan, layer the carrot and potatoe slices, placing the fish on top. Add bell pepper over fish, reserving a couple of slices of each for decoration, two tomato slices and one round of lemon. Sprinkle over the parsley and spice mix. Place on a low heat until the fish is cooked. Sufficient liquid will come from the fish itself.

Serve in shallow dish, decorated with slices of slightly cooked red and yellow pepper and fresh lemon.





Spiced Vegetables

Serves 4+

green beans cauliflower courgette carrots (peeled and core removed) mixed peppers chick peas olive oil finely chopped onion ½ finely chopped tomato 2 chopped garlic cloves salt, black pepper and cumin (depending on quantity of vegetables). 1 large mug of chickpeas soaked overnight and cooked until soft. (or one can of prepared, well rinsed.)

Cook vegetables separately.

Slice carrots and courgette crosswise, green beans in one inch lengths. Break caulflower into florets. Sweat for a couple of minutes with onion and spice mix. Add a small amount of water and cook until slightly soft. Add the chopped tomato, onion, garlic and olive oil to a pan and cook until almost soft. Add the chickpeas and mix well. Heat and then set aside for a few minutes before serving.

To create a delicious vegetarian dish, cut red and yellow peppers, onion and courgette into small slices and place in alternate colours on metal skeweres. Grill over charcoal and serve with spiced vegetables.













Lemon Cake (Meskouta)

Makes 10 portions

4 large room-temperature
eggs
300 gm sugar
100 gm vegetable oil
200 gm all-purpose flour
4 teaspoons baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
½ cup milk
2 tablespoons fresh lemon
juice
2 tablespoons lemon zest
1 teaspoon vanilla

Place a rack in the middle of the overn, heat to 350 F (180 C). Beat the eggs and sugar together in a large bowl until

thick. Gradually beat in the oil until smooth. Blend in the flour, baking powder and salt and when well mixed add the milk, beating until the mix is smooth. Add the lemon juice, zest and vanilla, mixing well. Pour the batter into a greased and



floured cake tin and bake for about 40 minutes, or until the cake tests done. Set to cool on a rack for about ten minutes. Ease the cake from the sides of the pan with a knife then turn out onto the rack to finish cooling.

Cinnamon Orange

Navel
2 to 4 tbsp orange juice,
freshly squeezed
1 tbsp orange blossom water (if available)
1 tsp sugar (optional
1/4 tsp ground cinnamon

Peel the oranges and remove the pith.

Slice the peeled oranges to around

4 inch thick. Add the other ingredients
and gently toss the oranges around.

Cover with cling film and place in the
fridge to chill for at least an hour.

Arrange on dishes and sprinkle with
cinnamon. Serve cold.



-25-Kasbah Kitchen With many thanks to the chefs and catering staff of Kasbah du Toubkal





















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write • photograph • design