

Chicken Tagine

On a visit to Uzès in France one year, we ate lunch at a Moroccan restaurant serving tagines. I became completely hooked and tagines have become a regular part of our diet. Preserved lemons are, in my view, so essential that I'd suggest cooking something else if you don't have them. (They are easy to make yourself, requiring little more than time.) This is my version of tagine using chicken.

Planning

serves:	4
prep time:	30 mins
cooking time:	1¼ hrs

Ingredients

1 medium sized chicken
olive oil
2 tbs plain flour
1 tbs ground coriander
1 tbs ground cumin
salt & pepper
2 medium onions, chopped
10 fl oz water
1 stick cinnamon
250g cooked chick peas (or
1 can, if you must,
drained)
400g sweet potato, peeled
and cut into 1cm dice
1 preserved lemon

Method

Preheat the oven to 150°C/300°F/gas 2.

While the oven is heating, butcher the chicken. Remove the skin and bone from the breasts and legs (just joint the wings). (Make chicken stock from the carcass.) Cut the chicken meat into large-bite-size pieces.

Fill a large polythene bag with the flour, coriander and cumin and add several grindings of salt and pepper. Put the chicken pieces into the bag and clamp the top keeping as much air in the bag as possible. Now shake the lot to coat the chicken with the seasoned flour. Tip everything out onto a plate reserving the excess flour which will be used later.

Shake excess flour from the chicken pieces before browning them in the olive oil. As they brown, remove them to a tagine (a lidded casserole will do as a substitute). Once all the chicken has browned, add the onion to the same oil and fry over medium heat to soften. Lower the heat and stir in the remaining seasoned flour. Cook this gently for a couple of minutes to develop the flavours. Stirring all the time, add the water, increase the heat a little and bring to the boil. Pour this over the chicken and add the cinnamon stick. Cover and bake in the oven for 40 minutes.

Remove the tagine from the oven and stir in the chick peas and sweet potato dice. Return it to the oven for a further 25 minutes.

Meanwhile, chop the preserved lemon (skin only - discard the flesh) into small chunks. After the 25 minutes, remove the tagine and stir in the preserved lemon. Return the tagine to the oven for a final 10 minutes to develop the flavour of the preserved lemon.

Serve this with some couscous.