

Parsi Chicken with Apricots

One as yet to be tried - seems a bit like a sweet and sour chicken tagine.

This delicately sweet-and-sour dish of chicken cooked with dried apricots is apparently from the Parsi community, of Persian descent within India. It is supposedly generally served with a mountain of very fine, crisp potato straws, for which I must go looking, but rice is an acceptable simpler alternative.

Planning

serves:	4
prep time:	20 mins
cooking time:	40 mins

Ingredients

1 whole chicken, cut into 8 serving pieces
12 dried apricots
3 tablespoons olive or rapeseed oil
2 cinnamon sticks
½ teaspoon whole cumin seeds
2 medium onions, cut into fine half-rings
3 teaspoons peeled and finely grated fresh ginger
1 tablespoon tomato purée
1½ tablespoons granulated sugar
2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
1 teaspoon garam masala
½-¾ teaspoon cayenne pepper
Salt & pepper

Method

Pat the chicken pieces on all sides with ½ teaspoon salt and generous amounts of black pepper. Set the chicken aside.

Put the apricots in a small pan with 250 ml/8 fl oz water and bring to the boil. Lower the heat and gently simmer for 15 minutes or until the apricots have softened but remain firm enough to be cooked again later. Leave them in their liquid.

Put the oil in a large pan and set over a medium-high heat. When hot, put in the cinnamon sticks and cumin and let it sizzle for 10 seconds. In the spicy oil, brown the chicken pieces on all sides (do it in two batches if necessary to avoid over-crowding the pan). Reserve the chicken in a bowl.

Add the onions to the sauté pan. Stir and fry until the onions are brown at the edges. Add the ginger and stir for a few seconds. Add the tomato purée and stir again. Now return the chicken and all its accumulated juices to the pan, along with 350 ml/12 fl oz water and 1 teaspoon salt. Cover and bring to the simmer. Lower the heat and cook gently for 15 minutes, turning the chicken once during this time.

Remove the cover and add the sugar, vinegar, apricots with their cooking liquid, garam masala and cayenne pepper. Stir and cook over a higher heat until the sauce is slightly syrupy.