Moroccan-style lamb and carrots with chickpea purée

Il Vino d'Enrico Bernardo, a wine-centric Paris restaurant, features a delicious dish of lamb chops, carrots, and chickpeas with North African spices and black truffles. Skipping the truffles makes it more everyday, but it's still wonderful.

Active time: 20 min Start to finish: 35 min

Servings: Makes 4 servings

Ingredients for lamb chops and carrots:

- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1 teaspoon ground allspice
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne
- 6 medium carrots, halved crosswise and quartered lengthwise
- 8 to 12 rib lamb chops (1/4 to 1/2 inch thick; 1 1/2 pounds total)

Preparation

Roast lamb chops and carrots:

Put a 4-sided sheet pan in lower third of oven and preheat oven to 450°F.

Whisk together oil, spices, and 1 teaspoon salt. Toss carrots with half of spiced oil and coat chops with remaining oil. Arrange chops and carrots side by side in hot sheet pan. Roast, turning and stirring halfway through, until carrots are just tender and chops are medium-rare, 4 to 6 minutes total for lamb; 10 to 15 for carrots.

Meanwhile, make chickpea purée:

With food processor running, drop garlic through feed tube to finely chop. Add chickpeas, water, cumin, and 1/4 teaspoon salt and purée. With motor running, slowly add oil and blend until smooth.

Serve lamb and carrots on a bed of chickpea purée. Drizzle with pan juices.
MELON A LA MOROCAINE

Use any melon in season or watermelon but be certain that it is very ripe.

Cut the melon into 1/2-inch slices and remove the rind.
Cut again into 3 inch pieces and arrange them attractively on a platter.
Garnish the platter with sprigs of fresh mint or parsley.
Spear the melon pieces with colored toothpicks.
Pass the platter to your guests. No dishes are used with this course.
KEBAB KOUTBANE

Appetizer Kebabs in a Moorish Marinade

Yield: 8 6-inch kebabs

This typically Moroccan dish is an excellent hors d’oeuvre to serve at any time. It is amazing how the small cubes of suet improve the flavor of the kebab after some of the fat has burned off. The use of suet is particularly effective when cooking kebabs over a charcoal fire and may be successfully substituted in recipes calling for bacon.

Cut 1 lb. FILLET OF BEEF OR STEAK into 3/4-inch cubes (approximately 32 cubes).

Cut 1/2 lb. BEEF SUET into 1/2-inch cubes.

In an 8 x 10-inch shallow baking dish, prepare the Moorish Marinade:

Combine: 1/4 cup ONION, finely chopped and
2 Tbs. PARSLEY, finely chopped.

Blend: 1/2 cup OLIVE or SALAD OIL
1 tsp. SALT
1/4 tsp. PEPPER
1/4 tsp. GARLIC POWDER
1 tsp. GROUND CORIANDER (optional)
1/2 tsp. GROUND CUMIN (optional).

Blend the beef and suet cubes with the marinade and allow the mixture to marinate for several hours.

Thread four pieces of beef alternately with three pieces of suet (start and end with beef) on a 6-inch metal or bamboo skewer.

Grill or Broil using a hot fire, basting occasionally with the marinade.

Arrange 1 KEBAB KOUTBANE on a small plate.

Garnish with TOMATO SLICES and PARSLEY SPRIGS at the side of the plate.
Arabic Bread, Pita (Khubz 'Arabee)

Ingredients

1 tablespoon dried yeast - one package  4 cups flour - whole wheat
1/2 teaspoon sugar  1 teaspoon salt
1 1/2 cups warm water  1/2 tablespoon Olive oil

Instructions for Arabic Bread, Pita (Khubz 'Arabee)

Dissolve yeast and sugar in water and set aside for about 5 minutes.

Add oil, salt and part of flour. Mix. Continue adding flour until dough is thick enough to knead. Knead dough until smooth and elastic, adding small amounts of flour as necessary.

Place dough in a warm, oiled bowl, turning dough over to coat surface. Cover bowl with a dry cloth and set in a warm place, allowing dough to rise until double in volume (about 2-3 hours).

Punch dough down and knead for about 2 minutes. Form into smooth balls the size of small oranges, rolling them gently between the hands. Place balls on a dry cloth (lightly floured) in warm place; cover with another cloth and let rise for about 30 minutes.

Preheat oven to 500F. On lightly floured board, roll balls one at a time into circles about inch thick. Spray cookie sheet lightly with oil. Bake the pitas 5 to 8 minutes on a preheated baking sheet with the oven rack at the center notch.

The bread will puff up like a balloon during baking and will collapse when cooled. Loaves may be eaten immediately or frozen for long-term storage. Warm frozen pitas briefly in the oven before serving.

From: Classic Vegetarian Cooking from the Middle East & North Africa

by Habeeb Salloum

Makes about 8 medium (6 inch) pita, each contains an estimated:

Cals: 216, FatCals: 18, TotFat: 2g
SatFat: 0g, PolyFat: 1g, MonoFat: 1g
Chol: 0mg, Na: 300mg, K: 273mg
TotCarbs: 44g, Fiber: 8g, Sugars: 1g
NetCarbs: 36g, Protein: 9g
COUSCOUS MARRAKESH

Yield: 8 portions

A couscousiere is a large double boiler with holes in the bottom of the upper pot allowing its contents to steam. A couscousiere may be improvised by lining a metal colander with cheese cloth and placing the colander in a 6- or 8-quart pot so that the handles rest on the rim. A piece of heavy-duty foil can serve as a lid.

Moisten: 1 lb. COUSCOUS in a 3 quart bowl with
1 cup COLD WATER to which
1 Tbs. SALT has been added.
Stir up with a fork and allow to stand 10 minutes to swell.

Spread the Couscous out in a colander lined with cheese cloth (or in the top of a couscousiere).
Place the colander over a pan which fits it and is half filled with water.
Cover with aluminum foil and allow to steam for 10 minutes.

In a 6-quart kettle (or bottom of couscousiere):
Saute: 1 cup ONIONS coarsely chopped with
1 tsp. CORIANDER (powdered)
1 Tbs. SALT
1 tsp. CRUSHED RED PEPPER
1/2 tsp. SAFFRON
1 tsp. POWDERED CUMIN SEED in
1/4 cup PEANUT OIL until soft but not brown.

Add: 2 1/2 lbs. BONELESS LAMB cut in 2 inch chunks and
2 quarts WATER.

Add 1 3-lb. CHICKEN cut into 8 pieces to the stew and continue cooking for 30 minutes longer.
Stir the Couscous from time to time to make sure the grains are separated.

Add to Stew: 1 lb. CARROTS, scraped and cut in 1-inch chunks
2 GREEN PEPPERS, cut in 1/2-inch strips
1 lb. FRESH TOMATOES, cut in 1-inch wedges
1 lb. YELLOW SQUASH, peeled and cut in 2-inch slices
12 oz. FROZEN STRING BEANS (regular cut) or PEAS
1 # 2 1/2 can CHICK PEAS, drained
1/2 lb. BLACK RAISINS.

Correct the seasoning with salt and pepper.
Cook for about 15 minutes or until vegetables are soft but still slightly crisp.

Pour the Couscous into a large (15- to 18 inch) round serving platter.

Make a large hole in the center, pushing the Couscous to the edge of platter.

Arrange meat and vegetables attractively in center, pouring the sauce over all.

Garnish with PARSLEY SPRIGS.
How You Can Present a Moroccan Dinner

If feasible, use a low table with cushions on the floor. (Be sure to advise your guests to dress comfortably.) Cover the low table with a bright brocaded cloth and provide your guests with thick towels to cover their knees. You might want to place floral bouquets around the room, but do not have a centerpiece on the table.

Before serving the dinner, walk around the table with an attractive pitcher (silver if possible) filled with warm water which has been scented with cologne or a few drops of perfume. Carry a Turkish towel over your left arm and a small basin in your left hand. Pour a little water over the fingers of each guest, catching the water in the small basin.

Serve tiny kebabs first (with or without a fork) on small plates. As soon as the kebabs have been eaten, remove the plates. The salad may be served as a separate course or may accompany the Couscous. If you serve it separately place the salad (with a fork) in front of each guest. In Morocco, the Couscous is served in a large platter and each guest eats directly from it with a large spoon or he may roll the Couscous up in little balls and pop them into his mouth, but don’t expect your guests to do this. You may prefer to place extra plates in front of your guests and ask them to serve themselves.

Slices of melon, watermelon, or cantaloupe speared with toothpicks (no plates) are served in a platter right after the Couscous. You might also serve the mint tea at this time, or wait until later to serve it with the honey pastries.

Again the hostess pours water over the fingers of her guests. This is a mark of graciousness and hospitality. At the end of the meal, after tea has been served, bring in a tiny incense burner and light it on the table.