Moroccan-Style Chicken with Apricot Couscous

Lemon and green olives sharpen the pan juices. The apricots go in the couscous.



SERVES 2 / LIDDED FRYING PAN

Prep 15 min · Marinate 30 min · Cook 25 min

Ingredients

2 large chicken thigh fillets (about 350 g)

15 ml olive oil and 1 garlic clove, crushed

½ tsp each ground cumin, sweet paprika and ground ginger, plus a pinch of cayenne

1 small red onion and 1 tomato, diced

150 ml chicken stock and a pinch of saffron (optional)

½ lemon, 40 g pitted green olives and 2 tsp chopped parsley

120 g instant couscous and about 150 ml boiling water (check packet)

30 g dried apricots, chopped, 15 g sultanas, 2 tsp chopped mint and a pinch of sumac

At the stove

1. Rub and rest
Rub the chicken with garlic, ground spices and a little oil. Chill for 30 minutes.

2. Brown and simmer
Brown the thighs. Soften the onion in the same pan, then simmer the chicken with tomato, stock and lemon zest.

3. Fluff and serve
Soak the couscous with the fruit. Fluff with mint and sumac. Finish the chicken with olives, parsley and lemon juice.

KOOK'S SECRET

Taste the sauce with an olive on your spoon before adding salt. The olive might be all the seasoning that mouthful needs.

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The full method

01 **Rub the thighs**
Mix the garlic, cumin, paprika, ginger and cayenne with 2 tsp of the oil. Rub over the chicken. Cover and chill for 30 minutes. If using saffron, steep it in the hot stock.

02 **Use the same pan**
Heat the remaining oil in a frying pan over medium heat. Unfold the thighs and brown for 3 minutes each side. Lift onto a plate. Soften the onion in the pan for 3 minutes, then add the tomato and finely grated lemon zest.

03 **Finish the chicken**
Pour in the stock and scrape up the browned bits. Return the thighs and their juices. Cover and simmer gently for 8–12 minutes, until a thermometer reads at least 75°C in the thickest part of each thigh.

04 **Make the couscous**
Meanwhile, put the couscous, apricots and sultanas in a heatproof bowl. Add the boiling water according to the packet. Cover for 5 minutes or until absorbed. Fluff with a fork and fold in the mint and sumac.

05 **Taste the juices**
Lift the thighs onto warm plates. Add the olives to the pan and boil the juices for a minute or two until lightly syrupy. Add the parsley and a squeeze of lemon. Spoon over the chicken and serve with the couscous.

FROM MARK'S KITCHEN

Chop the apricots about the size of the sultanas. They soften together as the couscous steams, and you'll get a little fruit on every fork.