Moroccan Buffet

Soup

Red Lentil Soup

Appetizers/Hors d’oeuvres

Cheese Stuffed Figs
Pita Crisps with hummus and Black olives
Goat Cheese with Pistachio and Honey

Salads

Fresh Fruit Salad in a Watermelon Bowl
Chipotle Corn Salad
Artichoke Salad
Spinach Salad with Oranges and Pomegranate

Entrees

Lamb Tagine Garnished with Ginger Carrots

Moroccan Chicken with Almonds, Golden Raisins and Honey

Couscous

Bread

Anise Bread with Sesame Seeds

Desserts

Spiced Pears
Banana Rum Baba’s
Moroccan Spiced Red Lentil Soup

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Serves 16

1 tablespoon olive oil
2 medium yellow onions, chopped
4 garlic cloves, minced or pureed
4 stalks of celery, washed and sliced crosswise 1/2-inch thick
2 teaspoons salt
1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 teaspoon ground turmeric
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 generous pinch saffron
1 bay leaf
1 tablespoon tomato paste
1 large or 2 medium Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled and diced
1 pound red lentils
2 quarts water
1 cup cooked wheat berries
6 Italian Roma tomatoes, cored and diced
1/2 bunch cilantro, washed, leaves sliced thin crosswise

Heat olive oil in Dutch oven over medium heat. Add onions and cook, stirring, 10 minutes until softened and beginning to color. Add garlic and cook one minute to release its aroma. Add celery and cook 2 minutes until softened. Add 1 teaspoon of salt, the pepper and the turmeric, cumin, ginger, cinnamon, saffron, and bay leaf and cook 2 to 3 minutes to develop the flavor of the spices. Add tomato paste, potatoes, lentils and water and cook 45 minutes; the lentils and potatoes should be quite tender. Stir in remaining 1 teaspoon salt, wheat berries and tomatoes and heat through. Taste and adjust seasoning. Serve garnished with cilantro.

CROUTONS TO FLOAT ON A BOWL OF SOUP

1 loaf long skinny bread, sliced on the diagonal 3/4-inch thick
2 to 3 tablespoons olive oil or softened butter

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Lightly brush oil or butter on both sides of bread slices. Arrange bread in a single layer on a cookie sheet and bake 10 minutes. Remove from oven and cool croutons on a wire rack.
HUMMUS

IT SEEMS LIKE EVERYONE LOVES HUMMUS THESE DAYS AND EVERYONE MAKES IT DIFFERENTLY. THIS RECIPE IS EASY AND AUTHENTIC. IT’S DELICIOUS AS A DIP SERVED WITH TOASTED PITA WEDGES AND AS A SPREAD ON SANDWICHES. TRY IT IN ROASTED EGGPLANT OR GRILLED ZUCCHINI SANDWICHES!

1 garlic clove
2 cups freshly-cooked or canned garbanzo beans, drained
1/2 cup fresh lemon juice
1/2 cup tahini paste (page 14)
1 1/2 teaspoons salt
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1/2 cup olive oil
2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil
Paprika, for garnish
Italian parsley sprigs, for garnish
Toasted Pita Wedges (page 27)

WALNUT AND POMEGRANATE DIP

THE RICH NUTTY TEXTURE AND PERFECT BALANCE OF SWEET AND SOUR FLAVORS HAS MADE THIS HEALTHY DIP, ALSO KNOWN AS MUHAMMARA, VERY POPULAR, ESPECIALLY AMONG VEGETARIANS. IT’S WONDERFUL WITH BELGIAN ENDIVE SPEARS AND TOASTED PITA WEDGES (PAGE 27), AND WORKS WELL AS A SPREAD FOR SANDWICHES OR CRACKERS.

1 cup shelled walnuts, not toasted
2 small red bell peppers, seeded and coarsely chopped
1 small red onion, coarsely chopped
3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
1/2 cup finely ground unseasoned dry breadcrumbs
1/4 cup pomegranate molasses (page 13)
2 tablespoons sugar
1 tablespoon ground cumin
2 1/2 teaspoons salt
1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
1/2 cup olive oil
1/4 cup pomegranate seeds, for garnish, optional
Mint or Italian parsley sprigs, for garnish
3 heads Belgian endive, trimmed, leaves separated
Toasted Pita Wedges (page 27)

Finely chop the walnuts in a food processor. Be careful not to grind them into a paste. They should be the texture of coarse breadcrumbs. Add the bell peppers, onion, and lemon juice. Pulse until the peppers are finely chopped. Add the breadcrumb, pomegranate molasses, sugar, cumin, salt, and cayenne pepper. Using the pulse button, pulse once to blend. Gradually add the oil, blending just until the mixture resembles a very coarse puree.

Transfer the dip to a serving bowl. Garnish with the mint or parsley sprigs and serve with the Belgian endive leaves and toasted pita wedges.

COOK’S NOTES: The dip will keep for up to 3 days, covered and refrigerated. Sprinkle pomegranate seeds over the dip if they are available.

Makes about 3 cups
**YOGURT CHEESE SPREAD**

THICK AND CREAMY YOGURT CHEESE, ALSO KNOWN AS LEBNI, IS AVAILABLE IN THE REFRIGERATED SECTION OF ETHNIC MARKETS. IT IS SOMEWHAT THICKER THAN CRÈME FRAÎCHE OR SOUR CREAM, AND THESE MAKE SUITABLE SUBSTITUTES. SEASONED WITH DRIED MINT, GARLIC, AND ALEPPO PEPPER, IT MAKES A VERY WONDERFUL CONDIMENT TO HAVE ON HAND AND MAY BE USED IN MANY WAYS THAT SOUR CREAM IS USED. I LOVE IT AS A DIP FOR FRESH VEGETABLES AND AS A SALAD DRESSING. I ALSO LIKE TO DOLLOP IT ATOP THE MANTI SOUP (PAGE 113). WHENEVER I'M NOT SURE ABOUT WHAT TO EAT FOR LUNCH, I SPREAD IT OVER FLAT PITA BREAD OR LAVASH, THEN TOP IT WITH SLICED CUCUMBERS, TOMATOES, AND MINT SPRIGS, AND ROLL IT UP LIKE A BURRITO.

**INGREDIENTS**
- 8 ounces yogurt cheese (also labeled as lebni)
- 1 tablespoon dried mint
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 3 1/2 teaspoons Aleppo pepper (page 12)
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- Italian parsley sprigs, for garnish
- Mint sprigs, for garnish
- Warm pita bread wedges
- Aleppo pepper for garnish

Stir the yogurt cheese, dried mint, garlic powder, 3 1/2 teaspoons of Aleppo pepper, and salt in a medium bowl to blend. Transfer the mixture to a serving bowl. Drizzle it with the oil. Sprinkle with more Aleppo pepper. Garnish with parsley sprigs and mint sprigs. Serve with warm pita bread wedges.

**COOKS NOTES**: This seasoned yogurt cheese spread will keep for 1 week. Just cover and refrigerate until ready to use.

Makes about 1 cup

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**TOASTED PITA WEDGES**

THESE MIDDLE EASTERN "CHIPS" GO HAND-IN-HAND WITH THE HUMMUS (PAGE 24), FIRE-ROASTED EGGPLANT DIP (PAGE 26), AND THE WALNUT AND POMEGRANATE DIP (PAGE 24).

4 6-inch pita bread rounds, each cut into 8 wedges

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Arrange the pita wedges in a single layer on a large baking sheet. Bake until crisp and golden brown, about 7 minutes.

**COOKS NOTES**: The pita chips can be made up to 2 days ahead. Cool and store them in a sealed plastic bag. Store chips at room temperature.

Makes about 2 1/2 dozen
Black Olives With Harissa

Gourmet | August 1994

The spicy North African condiment called harissa is often mixed with olives or served with salads, couscous, or tagines — meat or poultry stews.

Yield: Makes about 3 cups

ingredients

1 pound oil-cured black olives (preferably Moroccan)*

For harissa:
1 teaspoon cuminseed
1/2 teaspoon coriander seeds
1/2 teaspoon caraway seeds
2 hot red dried chilies*, stemmed but not seeded (about 2 inches in length)
2 garlic cloves
1/2 teaspoon coarse salt, or to taste
1 medium red bell pepper, roasted (procedure follows) and chopped coarse
1 tablespoon olive oil

*available at Middle Eastern or Mediterranean markets

preparation

In a colander rinse olives under cold water 1 minute and in a large bowl cover with cold water. Soak olives 4 hours to remove excess salt and drain well.

Make harissa: In a mortar with a pestle, an electric spice grinder, or a cleaned coffee grinder grind seeds fine. If using mortar and pestle, add chilies, garlic, and salt and pound to taste. If using a spice or coffee grinder, transfer seeds to a small food processor and add chilies, garlic, and salt. Grind mixture to a paste. Add pepper and oil and pound or purée to a coarse paste.

In a large bowl stir together harissa and olives and marinate, covered and chilled, at least 6 hours or overnight. Olives may be prepared 1 week ahead and kept chilled, covered.

Serve olives at room temperature.

To roast peppers:

Using a long-handled fork, char peppers over an open flame or on a rack set over an electric burner, turning, until skins are blackened, 4 to 6 minutes. (Or to broil peppers on rack of a broiler pan under a preheated broiler about 2 inches from heat, turning every 5 minutes, 15 to 20 minutes, or until skins are blistered and charred.) Transfer peppers to a bowl and let stand, covered, until cool enough to handle. Keeping peppers whole, peel them, starting at blossom end. Cut off pepper tops and discard.

Chèvre with Pistachios and Honey
from Sunset

Time: 20 minutes. What a crowd-pleaser! This combination of warm, tangy cheese, aromatic honey, and salty nuts is ridiculously delicious and addictive. Even better, the dish takes just a few minutes to make.

Wine Pairing: Foxen Chenin Blanc 2007 (Santa Maria Valley).

11 to 12 oz. fresh chèvre (goat cheese), at room temperature
2 tablespoons half-and-half
3 tablespoons orange blossom honey
1/3 cup coarsely chopped salted roasted pistachios
Sesame crackers or flatbread

1. Preheat oven to 350°. In a bowl, whisk goat cheese and half-and-half until smooth. Spoon into a small, shallow gratin dish, spreading level. Bake until cheese is hot in center and beginning to firm up at edges, about 15 minutes.

2. Drizzle cheese with honey and sprinkle with pistachios. Serve with crackers.

Note: Nutritional analysis is per serving.

Yield: Serves 6

CALORIES 233 (66% from fat); FAT 17g (sat 8.5g); CHOLESTEROL 50mg; CARBOHYDRATE 13g; SODIUM 263mg; PROTEIN 9.3g; FIBER 0.0g

Sunset, FEBRUARY 2009

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Stuffed Figs

**Brie-Stuffed Figs with Fresh Rosemary**
Trim off stem tips of Blue Ribbon Orchard Choice or Sun-Maid Mission or Calimyrna Figs. Slice open one side of each fig. Stuff with a small piece of Brie or Camembert cheese and chopped fresh rosemary leaves. Sprinkle with freshly ground black pepper. Place cheese-side up in baking pan. Bake at 350° for 7 minutes or until hot.

**Chutney-Ham Stuffed Figs**
Trim and cut open figs. Stuff with a small cube of deli-smoked ham and a dab of chopped chutney. Garnish with herb sprig.

**Sherried-Cheese Stuffed Figs**
Trim and cut open figs. Beat 1/2 cup garlic-herb cheese spread with 2 teaspoons sherry or white wine. Spoon into figs. Garnish with fresh thyme leaves.

**Hawaiian-Style Stuffed Figs**
Trim and cut open figs. Stuff with a small cube of fresh or canned pineapple. Wrap fig with thinly sliced prosciutto, making a band around center of fig. Sprinkle with toasted sesame seeds.

**Bacon-Wrapped Fruited Figs**
Bake bacon at 400° for 10 minutes or until bacon is cooked but still flexible. Cut strips in half. Trim and cut open figs. Stuff with a small chunk of fresh peach, nectarine or mango. Wrap with half-slice bacon (may not entirely go around fig) and fasten with pick. Bake at 400° for 7 minutes or until hot.

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Chipotle-Corn Salad

TOTAL TIME: 20 MIN
SERVES: 6 TO 8

This spicy fresh-corn salad, with grilled sweet Vidalia onions and tart lime juice, has been a summertime picnic staple for Grace Parisi ever since she discovered canned chipotles in adobo sauce years ago at her neighborhood Latin grocery store. Now these chipotles are available in the Latin section of big supermarkets all around the country as well.

INGREDIENTS

- 5 ears of corn or 1 pound of kernel corn, frozen
- 1/2 medium Vidalia or Walla Walla onion, thickly sliced crosswise
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons sour cream
- 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
- 2 chipotle chiles in adobo sauce, seeded and finely chopped
- 1 scallion, thinly sliced
- Salt and freshly ground pepper

DIRECTIONS

1. Light a grill or preheat a grill pan. Brush the corn and onion slices with the olive oil and grill over moderately high heat until charred in spots but still slightly crisp, about 7 minutes. Let cool slightly, then cut the kernels from the cobs and coarsely chop the onion.

2. In a medium bowl, mix the sour cream with the lime juice, chopped chipotle chiles and sliced scallion and stir in the charred corn and onions. Season the corn salad with salt and pepper and serve immediately.

3. MAKE AHEAD The chipotle-corn salad can be refrigerated overnight. Let the salad stand for 20 minutes at room temperature before serving.
(Heart of the Jungle) Marinated Artichoke Salad serves 4-6

1 - 12oz jar marinated artichokes, quartered 8 cups
2 Tbs. olive oil 8 oz
1 Tbs. red wine vinegar 4 oz
1 cup fresh mozzarella, cut into 1/2 inch chunks 8 cups
1 cup chopped ripe tomatoes 8 cups
1/2 cup parmesan cheese 4 cups
2 minced roasted red bell peppers 16 ea
2 Tbs. minced Italian Parsley 8 oz
Sea Salt and Fresh Ground Pepper to taste
8 oz. mache or butter lettuce torn into bite sized pieces

Mix all ingredients except lettuce in lg. bowl. Put lettuce on serving platter and spoon salad over top.
Spinach Salad with Tangerines and Pomegranate

YIELD: 10 SIDE SALAD SERVINGS 15 x 4

1 lb 4 oz/567 g young, tender spinach leaves, stems removed
10 fl oz/300 mL Tangerine-Pineapple Vinaigrette (page 29)
1 red onion, sliced into paper-thin rings (4)
(see Chef’s Note)
5 tangerines, segments only (Mandarins)
1 pomegranate, seeds only (or dried cherry)

40 oz

Clean and thoroughly dry the spinach. Portion as necessary for single servings or a larger batch.

Salad Assembly: Just before serving, whisk the vinaigrette vigorously and reseason. For each portion, toss 2 oz/57 g spinach with 1 fl oz/30 mL vinaigrette. Arrange on chilled plates. Top with onion rings, tangerine segments, and pomegranate seeds. Serve immediately.

Place the sliced onion rings in a container of ice water for up to 24 hours to crisp them. This will also mellow the harsh bite of the raw onions, which some people find offensive.
Tangerine-Pineapple Vinaigrette

YIELD: 8 FL OZ/240 ML

10 fl oz/300 mL tangerine juice
5½ fl oz/160 mL pineapple juice
1 fl oz/30 mL lemon juice
2 tsp/10 mL white wine vinegar
2 tsp/10 g prepared Creole mustard

10 fl oz/300 mL vegetable oil
5½ fl oz/160 mL olive oil
2 tsp/10 g salt, or to taste
½ tsp/1 g ground black pepper, or to taste

Combine the juices, vinegar, and mustard.

Whisk in the oils gradually.

Season with salt and pepper.

Substitute 16 fl oz/480 mL orange (or blood orange) juice for the tangerine and pineapple juice. Reduce lemon juice to ½ fl oz/15 mL.

Substitute 12 fl oz/360 mL lemon juice and 4 fl oz/120 mL water for the tangerine and pineapple juice. Eliminate the garlic and mustard.
Lamb Tagine

Prep Time: 45
Minutes
Cook Time: 2 Hours
Yields: 8 servings

"This is a traditional Moroccan lamb tagine simmered in numerous spices. Don't let the long ingredients list put you off. If you are missing one or two the dish will still turn out fine."

INGREDIENTS:

3 tablespoons olive oil, divided 10 oz
2 pounds lamb meat, cut into 1 2 oz
1/2 inch cubes
2 teaspoons paprika 3 T
1/4 teaspoon ground turmeric 2 1/2
1/2 teaspoon ground cumin 5
1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper 2 1/4
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon 3 1/2
1/4 teaspoon ground cloves 2 1/2
1/2 teaspoon ground 5 1/4
cardamom
1 teaspoon kosher salt 3 T
1/2 teaspoon ground ginger 5
1 pinch saffron
3/4 teaspoon garlic powder 7 1/2
3/4 teaspoon ground coriander 1 1/2

2 medium onions, cut into 1-inch cubes 10
5 carrots, peeled, cut into 50
fours, then sliced lengthwise
into thin strips
3 cloves garlic, minced 30
1 tablespoon freshly grated 5 1/2
ginger
1 lemon, zested 10
1 (14.5 ounce) can homemade (1/4) 1 gallon + 7 2 oz
chicken broth or low-sodium
canned broth
1 tablespoon sun-dried tomato 5 oz
paste
1 tablespoon honey 5 oz
1 tablespoon cornstarch 5 oz
(optional)
1 tablespoon water (optional) 5 oz

DIRECTIONS:

1. Place diced lamb in a bowl, toss with 2 tablespoons of the olive oil, and set aside. In a large resealable bag, toss together the paprika, turmeric, cumin, cayenne, cinnamon, cloves, cardamom, salt, ginger, saffron, garlic powder, and coriander; mix well. Add the lamb to the bag, and toss around to coat well. Refrigerate at least 8 hours, preferably overnight.

2. Heat 1 tablespoon of olive oil in a large, heavy bottomed pot over medium-high heat. Add 1/3 of the lamb, and brown well. Remove to a plate, and repeat with remaining lamb. Add onions and carrots to the pot and cook for 5 minutes. Stir in the fresh garlic and ginger; continue cooking for an additional 5 minutes. Return the lamb to the pot and stir in the lemon zest, chicken broth, tomato paste, and honey. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to low, cover, and simmer for 1 1/2 to 2 hours, stirring occasionally, until the meat is tender.

3. If the consistency of the tagine is too thin, you may thicken it with a mixture of cornstarch and water during the last 5 minutes.
Moroccan Chicken Tagine with Honey Raisins and Almonds

Yield: 25 portions or two pieces approximately 8 ounces

6 each  Frying chickens cut into 8 pieces
3 oz    olive oil
3 oz    clarified butter
4 each  medium onions, diced
4 cups  All purpose flour, as needed
        Salt and pepper to taste
2 tbls  Turmeric
6       cinnamon sticks, whole
2 cups  Golden raisins
12 ounces  honey
3 cups  Almonds
3 cups  White wine

1. Wash, dry, season with salt and pepper and dust chicken with flour.
2. Heat the oil in braiser and brown chicken on all sides.
3. Remove chicken and place in a hotel pan.
4. Sweat onions in butter. Add Turmeric, cinnamon, raisins, honey and almonds.
5. Deglaze pan with white wine. Pour mixture over chicken.
6. Cover and simmer at 325° for 45 to 60 minutes or until tender.
Couscous À Sept Legumes
Couscous with Lamb
and Seven Vegetables

Here is a dish from Morocco. It can also be made with grilled lamb shanks.
This version is a cross between a Tangier couscous and one from Fez.

1 cup (7 oz/200 ml) dried chick-peas (garbanzo beans)
2 lb (900 g) boneless lamb shank or neck, cut into 2-in

2 teaspoons salt
2 teaspoons freshly ground pepper
2 teaspoons ground ginger
½ teaspoon salt from threads, crushed
6 tablespoons (3 oz/90 g) unsalted butter
water or lamb stock to cover
1 lb (500 g) carrots, peeled and cut into 2-in (5-cm) chunks
1 lb (500 g) turnips, peeled and quartered
1 piece pumpkin squash, about 1 lb (500 g), peeled and cut
into 2-in (5-cm) chunks
1 lb (500 g) zucchini (courgettes), cut into 2-in
(5-cm) lengths
3 tomatoes, peeled, seeded and chopped
½ cup (4 oz/125 g) raisins
couscous made with water or part stock and seasoned with
ginger and a little olive oil or butter (recipe on page 204)
1–2 tablespoons kanoun (see glossary)

Place the chick-peas in a bowl and add water to cover
generously. Refrigerate overnight. Drain well.
Transfer the beans to a saucepan and add water to cover by
about 2 in (5 cm). Bring to a boil, reduce the heat to low, cover
and simmer until tender, 1 hour or longer. Drain and let cool.
In a large, heavy pot, combine the lamb, onions, salt,
peppers, ginger, garlic, and butter. Turn the ingredients in
the butter. Then add water or stock to cover by 1–2 in (2.5–5 cm).
Bring to a boil, reduce the heat to low, cover and simmer for
1 hour. Add the cooked chick-peas and all the vegetables
ekosce the zucchini, re-cover and cook for 20–30 minutes
longer. Finally, add the zucchini and raisins and cook until all
the vegetables and meat are tender, about 20 minutes longer.

Fill the couscous on a warmed platter. Using a slotted
spoon, lift the meat and vegetables from the pan juices and
arrange them around the couscous. Alternatively, make a well
in the center of the couscous and spoon the vegetables and
raisons into it. Adjust the seasoning of the pan juices and spoon
some of the juices over the meat and vegetables. In a small
bowl whisk together the kanoun and 1 cup (8 fl oz/250 ml) of
the pan juices. Serve on the side.

Serves 6
Spiced Pears With Oranges And Caramel Sauce

by Lisa Abend

The ras-el-hanout spice blend adds complexity to this dessert.

Makes 4 servings

ingredients X 8

4 7-to 8-ounce Anjou pears, peeled  24 pears
3/4 cup sugar  6 cups
1/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons water  2 cups
1/4 cup (1/2 stick) unsalted butter  2 1/2 sticks
1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon  2 T
1/4 teaspoon ground ras-el-hanout  2 T
4 1/4- to 1/2-inch thick orange slices  6 oranges
1/4 cup sliced almonds, toasted  2 cup

preparation

Using melon baller and starting from bottom, core each pear. Cut thin slice off bottom of each pear to make level.

Stir sugar and 1/4 cup water in heavy large saucepan over medium heat until sugar dissolves. Increase heat and boil until syrup is deep amber color, brushing down sides of pan with wet pastry brush and swirling pan occasionally, about 5 minutes. Remove pan from heat; whisk in butter, then 2 tablespoons water.

Stand pears in caramel sauce in saucepan. Sprinkle cinnamon over. Cover and cook over low heat 10 minutes. Uncover; sprinkle with ras-el-hanout. Cover and continue to cook until pears are tender, occasionally spooning caramel sauce over pears and shaking pan so pears don’t stick, about 15 minutes. Arrange orange slices around pears; spoon caramel sauce over. Cover and simmer until orange slices soften, about 5 minutes.

Place orange slices on plates. Stand pears atop orange slices. Spoon caramel sauce over and sprinkle with almonds. Serve warm or at room temperature.

*A Moroccan spice blend available at some specialty foods stores and Middle Eastern markets, and by mail from The Spice House (312-274-0378; thespicehouse.com).
Ras el Hanout Spice blend

encyclopedia of spices

Ras el Hanout

Literally "top of the shop," ras el hanout is a Moroccan spice blend that can contain more than 30 ingredients. For the Moroccan souks (spice merchants) it is a point of honour to have the most sought after version of this blend. There are stories of these spice merchants creating custom blends of ras el hanout for special clients with ingredients that might include hashish and even Spanish fly. Our own version nixes the Spanish fly and hash but does include many traditional ingredients like cubeb pepper, long pepper, lavender and rose buds. A good ras el hanout is one of the finest examples of how well a diverse variety of spices can meld to create an ingredient that is greater than its individual components. Ras el hanout is somewhat curry-like with a spicy kick, a floral fragrance and subtle nuances within an overall robust flavor. It is extremely versatile, adding a golden colour and an aromatic and enticing flavor to chicken and vegetable tagines. Add a half teaspoon to a cup of rice or cous cous while cooking to transcend the ordinary. Our favourite is to use ras el hanout as a spice rub on lamb chops grilled on the barbeque.

Recipe for Ras el Hanout

This streamlined version includes many of the main spices of the traditional mixture.

Ingredients:
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon ground ginger
1 teaspoon turmeric
1 teaspoon salt
3/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
3/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1/2 teaspoon ground white pepper
1/2 teaspoon ground coriander seeds
1/2 teaspoon cayenne
1/2 teaspoon ground allspice
1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1/4 teaspoon ground cloves

Preparation:
In a small bowl whisk together all ingredients until combined well. Spice blend keeps in an airtight container at cool room temperature 1 month.

http://www.theepicentre
Steamed Banana Baba with Rum Syrup
Served with Crème Diplomat

Serves 8 - I strongly recommend that you serve this dessert, a simplified version of the classic baba, which is traditionally made with yeast, with whipped cream or Crème Diplomat (recipe follows). You can make it the morning of the day you plan to eat it, and reheat it later in a microwave to prevent it from drying out.

13-1/2 tablespoons unsalted butter, at room temperature

1/2 cup self-rising flour (Presto) 3 cups
1 teaspoon baking soda (2 1/4 tsp. sifted)
2/3 cup packed light brown sugar 4 cup
2 large eggs 12
3 large ripe bananas, mashed (about 1 1/3 cups)
1/2 cup granulated sugar 3 cups
1/4 cup dark rum 1 1/2 cups
1/4 cup water 1/2 cup
1 1/2 cups chopped roasted pecans, preferably caramalized

PREHEAT THE OVEN to 350°F. Generously butter six 3-ounce baba molds or muffin tins with 2 tablespoons of the butter.

MAKE THE BATTER In a small bowl, mix the flour and baking soda. In another bowl, using an electric mixer, beat 4 1/2 tablespoons of butter until creamy. Add the brown sugar and beat until fluffy. Add the eggs, one at a time, and beat until just incorporated. Add the banana and beat to mix in. Using a large spatula, fold the flour mixture into the banana mixture until incorporated. Spoon the batter into the ramekins and set in a baking pan. Carefully pour enough hot water into the pan to reach halfway up the sides of the ramekins.

BAKE THE CAKES Bake for 40 to 50 minutes, or until the cakes are firm but spring back when pressed lightly with your finger. Remove the pan from the oven and transfer the ramekins to a rack with tongs. Let cool slightly. Run a knife around the side of the cakes, then invert onto a rack to cool.

MAKE THE SAUCE In a medium saucepan, combine the remaining 7 tablespoons butter with the sugar, rum, and water. Bring to a boil, stirring to dissolve the sugar. Remove the sauce from the heat.

TO SERVE Spoon 2 to 3 tablespoons some of the rum sauce onto each of 6 plates. Top each with a warm cake, and garnish the cakes with a few pecans.

Self Rising Flour
AP flour 3 cups
+ 4 1/2 teaspoons of baking powder
+ 1 1/2 teaspoons of salt
PASTRY CREAM AND CREME DIPLOMAT

makes 3 cups This is a very useful recipe for a basic pastry cream. Crème Diplomat is a pastry cream with liquor and whipped cream added. The one here uses kirsch, but it can be made for other uses with Grand Marnier; rum, Cointreau, amaretto, or another liquor.

2 cups milk
1 vanilla bean, split in half
4 egg yolks
1/4 cup sugar
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
2 tablespoons cornstarch

IN A POT, combine the milk and vanilla bean, and bring it to a boil. Meanwhile in a bowl, mix the yolks, sugar, flour; and cornstarch. Slowly pour the hot milk over the mixture and combine. Return to the pot and set over high heat. Stir constantly with a whisk and cook for 4 minutes after it comes to a boil. Use tongs or a slotted spoon to remove and discard the vanilla bean. Place the pastry cream in a bowl and refrigerate until completely cold.

For Crème Diplomat, make the pastry cream as described above. Stir 2 to 3 tablespoons of kirsch into the cooled pastry cream and whip in 1 cup heavy cream.
Title: Moroccan Anise Bread
Categories: Moroccan, Breads
Yield: 2 Loaves

1 tb Active dry yeast
1 1/3 c Warm water
1 ts Sugar or honey
1 tb Vegetable oil
2 1/2 ts Anise seeds
2 ts Table salt or
4 ts Kosher[ing] salt
4 c Unbleached all-purpose flour
1 ea Egg white beaten with
1 ts Water
3 tb Sesame seeds

1. Dissolve the yeast in 1/4 cup of the water. Add the sugar or honey and let stand until foamy, 5 to 10 minutes.

2. Add the remaining water, oil, anise, salt, and 2 cups of the flour. Gradually stir in the remaining flour until the mixture holds together.

3. On a lightly floured surface, knead the dough until smooth and elastic, about 10 minutes. Place in a greased bowl, turning to coat. Cover loosely with a towel or plastic wrap and let rise at room temperature until double in bulk, about 1-1/2 hours, or more.

4. Punch down the dough and divide in half. Shape each piece into a ball, cover, and let rest for about 10 minutes.

5. Sprinkle a large baking sheet with cornmeal or fine semolina or grease the baking sheet. Flatten each dough ball into a 6-inch round. Some cooks flute the outer edge, others leave it plain. Place the rounds on the prepared baking sheet, cover, and let rise until double in size.

6. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees.

7. Prick the dough around the sides with the tines of a fork or a toothpick. Brush the tops of the loaves with the egg white and lightly sprinkle with the sesame seeds.

8. Bake until golden brown and hollow-sounding when tapped, about 30 minutes. Transfer to a wire rack to cool.
Pita Bread

Warm Water
gr. Sugar

2.25 cups
.25 oz.
Dissolve sugar into water

Active yeast

.5 oz.
Spinkle yeast on top of water and let stand for 5 min.

Olive oil
A. P. Flour
Corn Meal
Salt

.25 cup
8 cups
1 cup
2 Tsp.

Add rest of ingrediance and mix for about 6 min. in med speed

place in bowl and let rise for about 30 min. to double in size

punch and divide into 8 equil pieces
roll out to 1/8 inch thick
let sit uncovered for 20 min.
bake on sheet pan with corn meal aboput 3-5 min. on each side