

Tunisian Chicken Stew with Green Harissa

makes 8 to 10 servings

1 cup dried chickpeas, soaked in cold water overnight (or 3 cups canned chickpeas)

1 onion, peeled and stuck with 2 cloves, plus 2 small onions, diced, about 2 cups

1 bay leaf

Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

1/2 teaspoon coriander seed

1/2 teaspoon cumin seed

1/2 teaspoon caraway seed

1/4 teaspoon cayenne

8 to 10 chicken thighs

3 tablespoons Tunisian extra virgin olive oil

1 inch long stick of cinnamon

6 garlic cloves, minced

1/2 pound carrots, peeled, in 2-inch batons

1/2 pound small turnips, peeled and cut in wedges

Spicy green sauce with harissa for serving

Cooked and buttered couscous



1. Drain the soaked chickpeas, then cover with 8 cups water in a large pot. Add the onion stuck with cloves and the bay leaf, bring to a boil, then gently simmer for 40 to 60 minutes, until tender. Season with salt, leaving the chickpeas in their broth. Chickpeas may be cooked in advance. (If using canned chickpeas, rinse and add salt to taste.)

2. While chickpeas cook, make the spice mixture and cook the chicken. Begin in a dry skillet over medium heat, toast the coriander, cumin and caraway seeds until fragrant. Grind to a coarse powder with a mortar or in a spice mill. Stir in the cayenne.

3. Rinse the chicken and pat dry. Season generously on all sides with salt and pepper. Sprinkle with the spice

mixture and rub it into the meat.

4. Heat the olive oil over medium-high heat in the skillet. Add chicken and brown gently until golden, about 4 minutes a side. Remove chicken to a plate. In the same skillet, add diced onions and a little salt. Let onions soften and color for 3 to 4 minutes, stirring occasionally, and scraping up any brown bits. Add cinnamon stick and garlic and cook for a minute more.

5. When chickpeas are cooked, set aside until chicken and spices are cooked then add them to the chickpea mixture. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to a gentle simmer. Cook, covered, for about a half hour. Remove chicken pieces. Strip meat from the bones, discarding skin and bones, then replace chicken back to the pot.

6. Add carrots and turnips and cook, covered, for 15 minutes more. Let rest 5 minutes and skim excess fat. Serve with broth, spicy green sauce and buttered couscous.

To make the spicy green sauce with harissa:

Combine 6 garlic cloves, crushed, with 1 cup minced cilantro leaves and stems, a shot of harissa OR red pepper flakes (to taste), and the juice and zest of a lime. Finish with a shot of Tunisian extra virgin olive oil and sea salt. Place in a small bowl and pass at the table. If it seems too wild, tame it with a spoonful or two of plain yogurt stirred in at the last minute. Add radish garnish

Cook couscous following package directions. Fluff with a fork. Serve in a bowl making a bed of couscous, with scoops of chicken with sauce. Yum.