

Chicken & Fig Tagine

I created this dish using the rules of tagines I learned from my friend Lawrence's mother. (They were a Jewish Moroccan family, and I will never forget how his mom looked almost exactly like the actress Laynie Kazan.) Though the cooking method is totally nontraditional, the results are superb, and done in a fraction of the time.

The summer I was Bar-Mitzvah'd, Lawrence's family invited me to go to Morocco with them. That was the summer of the Six Day War and my parents were afraid to let me go to an Arab country, even though I would be going with Jewish natives. It was one of my few disappointments. Little did they know that years later, when I lived in the Mediterranean region, I would live in several Arab nations including Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Egypt. I still wanted to go to Morocco, but I was either hitch-hiking or riding the buses around the Middle East. Even as early as 1973, I was too afraid to travel through Libya. Going south through the deserts where I might get stranded wasn't a good option, either. Someday I will make it to Morocco! And Algeria and Tunisia.

Simply multiply this recipe by the amount of diners. Fast, relatively easy and flavorful, this dish will please most palates.

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 1 Tbs | green bell pepper, julienned |
| 1/4 tsp | shallots, minced |
| 1/4 tsp | garlic, minced |
| 1 Tbs | extra-virgin olive oil |
| 4 ounces | chicken breasts, boned and skinned |
| 1 Tbs | flour |
| 1/2 cup | Chicken Reduction—see <i>Miscellaneous</i> |
| 2 Tbs | Chardonnay wine |
| 1 tsp | fresh lemon juice |
| 1/2 tsp | Pine Gunk—see <i>Miscellaneous</i> |
| 1/2 Tbs | Moroccan Blackening Spices—see <i>Miscellaneous</i> |
| 1 tsp | cinnamon |
| 2 pinches | nutmeg |
| 1 tsp | Preserved Lemons, rind only, diced—see <i>Miscellaneous</i> |
| 2 each | dried Black Mission figs, stemmed and chopped |

Procedure

- Either butterfly the chicken breast OR pound until approximately 3/8" thick. Dredge in flour and coat both sides.
- Sauté the pepper, shallots and garlic in the oil until the peppers are just starting to soften.
- Add chicken and cook until lightly colored on each side.
- Add the reduction, wine and lemon juice.
- Crumble in the Pine Nut Gunk. Stir to dissolve.
- Add all the other ingredients. Stir the sauce. Bring to a boil.
- Cook on a high simmer for approximately 2½ minutes more, turning the chicken after a minute. When done the sauce will be thick and almost gelatinous.

Servings: 1