

# MOROCCAN FLAVOURS



## THE MOROCCAN KITCHEN

### Utensils

Berrad – Moroccan teapot made from metal

Couscoucier – two-tiered metal pot, used for steaming couscous.

Gsaa – wooden or earthenware vessel used for making dough or preparing couscous.

Mehraz – mortar and pestle, usually made from brass, used for pounding spices and almonds for pastries.

Tajine – earthenware vessel with conical lid in which Moroccan stews are cooked.

Tobsil dyal ouarqa – a copper vessel used upside down over a heat source and on which dough is tapped to form the thin sheets of pastry.

Tbiqa – a woven basket with a peaked lid used for storing bread.

### Aromatic Herbs for cooking

Onion	Allium cepa	bsla
Garlic	Allium sativum	touma
Coriander	Coriandrum sativum	kousbour
Parsley	Carum petroselinum	maadnouss
Asian celery	Apium graveolens var. dulce	krafes

### Aromatic herbs for Infusion in tea

Mint	Mentha viridis	na'ana
Spearmint	Mentha spicata	
Peppermint	Mentha piperata	menta
Pennyroyal	Mentha pulegium	fliou
Lemon Verbena	Lippia citriodora	louisa
Marjoram	Origanum marjorana	merddedouch
Rose Geranium	Pelargonium roseum	laatarcha
Sage	Salvia officinalis	salmiya
Wormwood	Artemisia absinthium	chiba

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## Distilled flower waters

Orange blossom water distilled from Seville orange blossoms (citrus aurantium)	ma zhar
Rosewater distilled from Damask roses (rosa centifolia)	ma lward

## Spices

Cumin	Cuminum cyminum	kamoun
Coriander seed	Coriandrum sativum	kousbour
Cinammon	Cinnamomum zeylanicum	dar el cini
Cassia	Cinnamomum cassia	qarfa
Ginger	Zingiber officinale	skinjbir
Sweet paprika	Capsicum annum	flefla hlouwa
Hot Paprika	Capsicum minimum	flefla harra
Bird's eye Chillies	Capsicum sp.	flefla soudaniya
Black pepper	Piper nigrum	l'bzar
Saffron	Crocus sativus	za'afra
Turmeric	Curcuma longa	khorkom
Aniseed	Pimpinella asinum	nafaa (mainly in pastries)
Sesame seeds	Sesamum indicum	jenjelan

Ras el Hanout or 'top of the shop' is a blend of exotic spices which can contain ten to fifty spices. It generally includes ginger, turmeric, cardamom, long pepper, cubebe pepper, cassia bark, nutmeg, mace, ash berries, allspice and grains of paradise and sometimes aphrodisiac ingredients such as cannabis and Spanish fly. Other ingredients that may be added are monk's pepper, rose buds, lavender, star anise, fennel and aniseed. The Saharan versions of the mixture from Southern Morocco usually include cumin and chilli.

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## **KHADIJA BENSDIRA**

Khadija Bensdira was raised in Fes during the 1950s. She learned to cook at the tender age of 6, kneading bread under the watchful eye of her older siblings.

She excelled at school and, even though it was socially unacceptable for a young girl to work in the hospitality industry, her vocation became obvious.

Her mother stood by her in her quest to study and she enrolled in the Hospitality School in Marrakech, graduating with flying colours and subsequently gaining practical experience in France, the UK and Germany, returning to Morocco in 1975 to take up the position of cooking instructor in the Ecole Hoteliere de Fes.

In 1979, she was appointed Head Chef of the Royal Touarga cooking school in Rabat, (the first and only College of traditional culinary arts in Africa), a position she has held until the present day and where she supervises the 80 students, often from disadvantaged backgrounds, who are accepted into the school annually.

The school was founded by H.M. King Hassan II to preserve Morocco's culinary heritage. Graduates of the school usually are snapped up by restaurants, Morocco's diplomatic missions overseas and Expat residents wishing to serve authentic Moroccan food to their family and guests.

Today, Bensdira speaks seven languages and bears the first honorary title of World Ambassador of Moroccan Cuisine, accorded her in 2000 by the Academie Culinaire de France. In 2003, she became the first woman to win first prize for the best Couscous recipe at the Cous Cous Fest in San Vito lo Capo, Sicily held each September.

This is the second year she has honoured us with her participation in Moroccan Flavours.

## **OUARQA – MOROCCO'S FAMOUS PAPER-THIN PASTRY**

Ouarqa pastry is one of the triumphs of Moroccan cuisine. It is cooked on a hot copper pan heated over coals or boiling water and requires a great deal of skill and dexterity. A supple dough is made from strong flour and water and it is left to rest. It is then picked up with a motion very like the action used with a yoyo and dabbed very quickly all over the heated surface. It is then carefully peeled off and the whole operation is repeated creating tissue-paper thin sheets.

Ourqa is used to prepare Morocco's famous Bastilla, M'hancha and Braewats and cigars, both savoury and sweet.

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## MHANCHA WITH SPRING VEGETABLES

10 sheets ouarqa  
1 egg  
100g melted butter

For the vegetables :

200g carrots 200g turnips 200g potatoes  
200g peas 1 kg spinach 1 clove garlic, chopped  
3 stems flat leaf parsley 3 stems coriander 50g butter  
½ tsp paprika ½ tsp cumin 1 tsp salt

For the Minced meat ( kefta)

500g minced beef 3 eggs 200g onions  
3 cloves garlic 3 tbsp chopped parsley 3 tbsp chopped coriander  
½ tsp cumin 1/2 tsp paprika 1 tsp cinnamon  
½ tsp ground ginger 1 sprig marjoram 2 fresh mint leaves  
2 tbsp vegetable oil 1 tsp salt ½ tsp pepper

To garnish: Cherry tomatoes and lemon wedges

Method

Peel the vegetables and cut them into small dice. Shell the peas and cut the ends off spinach and wash thoroughly. Blanch all the vegetables, one at a time, in salted water. In a frying pan, saute the spinach in 50g butter with the paprika, parsley, coriander, cumin and garlic for 5 minutes. To prepare the minced meat, heat the oil in another frying pan and sweat the garlic and onions. Add the minced meat, the herbs and spices. When the meat is cooked through add the eggs and stir to combine. In a large bowl, combine the blanched vegetables with the minced meat mixture and the spinach and set aside to cool.

To form the m'hancha

- Place the filling in the centre of a pastry sheet
- Wrap the pastry around the filling to form a sausage shape
- Roll the pastry sausage around itself in the form of a spiral
- Stick the end of the sausage with some egg white
- Brush with melted butter before baking in a moderate oven till golden brown (about 15 mins).

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## MINCED MEAT BRAEWATS– CLASSIC RECIPE

Sheets of ouarqa  
1 egg

### FILLING

500g minced beef 3 tbsp vegetable oil  
200g onions 2 cloves garlic  
½ bunch parsley ½ bunch coriander  
1 sprig marjoram 2 fresh mint leaves  
½ tsp cumin 1/2 tsp paprika  
1 tsp cinnamon 1 tsp salt  
½ tsp pepper  
3 eggs  
Oil for frying

Make the filling by sweating the onions and garlic in a frying pan in the oil, then adding the meat stirring to break up. Add the herbs and spices and simmer until the meat is cooked through. Beat the eggs and stir into the mixture. Set aside to cool.  
To make the braewat, cut the ourqa into long strips. Place a tablespoon of the mixture onto the bottom of each strip and fold over to form a triangle. Fold alternately, right and left to keep the triangular shape and seal with a little beaten egg.  
Fry in hot oil, drain and serve hot.

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## CHICKEN BASTILLA

12 sheets ouarqa	1 chicken
200g butter	2 large onions, chopped
½ tsp ginger	½ cup chopped parsley
1/2 tsp freshly ground black pepper	1 cinammon stick
large pinch of saffron	1 tsp salt
1 tbsp granulated sugar	

250g blanched almonds, 100g clarified butter, ½ cup vegetable oil, 1/4 cup castor sugar, 3 eggs plus one yolk for brushing pastry icing sugar and cinnamon to garnish

Put the chicken in a heavy pan with the butter, onions, parsley, salt, spices and sugar. Cover and simmer over a low heat, stirring from time to time until the chicken is tender and falling off the bone. There should be enough pan juices to cook it. If the liquid dries up before it is fully cooked, add a little water.

While the chicken cooking, put the almonds in a small saucepan. Cover them with the vegetable oil and heat, stirring until the almonds are a pale golden brown. Drain them immediately to stop them from browning further and reserve the oil. Once they have cooled, pound them coarsely in a mortar or in a food processor together with the caster sugar. Once the chicken is fully cooked, remove from the pan and allow to cool. Bone and tear the meat into bite size pieces. Reduce the sauce remaining in the pan until any liquid has evaporated.

Beat the eggs and, over a low heat, gradually pour them into the pan, stirring continuously until combine with the mixture in the pan and form soft curds. Turn the mixture into a strainer and allow it to cool and drain of any remaining liquid.

Mix the reserved almond cooking oil with the melted clarified butter

To assemble, brush a round tray with a little of the oil and butter mixture and spread out 4 sheets of pastry, allowing them to overlap the edges. Brush with more oil and butter and place another sheet on top. Pile the egg mixture into the centre, flattening it out, and cover with two of the remaining pastry sheets, brushing them with a little oil. Arrange the chicken pieces over these and cover with a further two sheets as before. Finally, cover these with a layer of the almond and sugar mixture and bring up the overlapping bottom sheets into the centre and then cover with the remaining two pastry sheets, brushing them with oil and tucking the edges under to form a round pie shape. Brush the top of the pie with a little more of the almond frying oil and a beaten egg yolk and bake at 180°C until golden brown. Decorate with a pattern of icing sugar and cinnamon.

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## BRAEWATS WITH FRESH FRUIT

4 sheets pastilla  
1 apple  
1 banana  
1 pear  
100g strawberries  
1 kiwi  
1 lemon  
100g granulated sugar  
50g butter  
2 cl orange blossom water  
100g walnuts  
1 egg  
20 cl vegetable oil for frying

icing sugar and cinnamon to garnish

Cut each fruit into cubes and set aside in separate bowls.

Dissolve the sugar in the lemon juice and orange blossom water. Pour a little into each bowl and macerate for 5 minutes.

In a frying pan, melt the butter and add the pear, apple, strawberries, kiwi and banana, one after the other.

Drain and transfer to a bowl and add the crushed walnuts.

Cut the sheets into strips,

Beat the egg yolk.

Place a tablespoon of the fruit on the bottom of each strip and fold to enclose and form a triangle. Keep folding each strip keeping the triangular shape until all the pastry is  
Seal with a little of the beaten egg yolk and fry in hot oil for 3 to 4 mins, drain and garnish with icing sugar and cinnamon,.

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## M'HALLABIAH

1 l milk  
small glass rice flour or cornflour  
pinch salt  
½ glass orange flower water  
1 glass sugar  
few grains mastik, pounded with 1 tsp of the sugar  
1 stick cinnamon  
100g almonds, blanched and fried

Bring the milk to a simmer with the sugar, mastik, salt and cinammon stick.  
Dissolve the rice flour in the orange flower water and add to the mixture, stirring continuously until it thickens.  
Chop the almonds leaving a few for the garnish.  
Pour the mixture into small dishes and leave to cool.  
Top with the chopped almonds and garnish with some of the whole almonds.

Or, to make

## JOHARA

Fry sheets of warka 2 at a time, spread some of the mixture and some of the chopped almonds onto the upper sheet, cover with another 2 sheets, repeat and top with the rest of the mixture and more chopped almonds.

Or

Form the warqa over molds and fry in hot oil to form containers.

Skim milk  
Eggs  
Cinnamon and sugar

Scramble the eggs with the skim milk, flavour with the sugar and cinammon and pile into the pastry containers.

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## COUSCOUS

**Couscous is gaining increased popularity world wide. It is the second most searched foodstuff on the net after pasta.**

Couscous or kuskus, (Berber Seksu, called maftoul in Jordan, Lebanon and the Palestinian territories) is a food from Maghreb of Berber origin.

It consists of spherical granules which are made by rolling and shaping moistened semolina wheat and then coating them with finely ground wheat flour. The finished grains are about 1 mm in diameter (before cooking).

Traditional couscous requires considerable preparation time and is usually steamed. In many places, a more processed quick-cook couscous is available and is particularly valued for its short preparation time.

The dish is the primary staple food throughout the Maghreb; in much of Algeria, eastern Morocco, Tunisia, and Libya it is also known as ta`aam "food". It is also popular in the West African Sahel, in France, Madeira island, in western Sicily's Trapani province, and parts of the Middle East.

It is also very popular among Jews of North African descent.

Couscous is traditionally served under a meat or vegetable stew.

It can also be eaten alone, flavoured or plain, warm or cold, as a dessert or a side dish. In Malta, something called kusksu is similar but much larger in size. In the Sicilian area of Trapani, cuscusu is served with fish as in the coastal areas of Tunisia.

The couscous granules are made from semolina (coarsely ground durum wheat) or, in some regions, from coarsely ground barley or pearl millet. The semolina is sprinkled with water and rolled with the hands to form small pellets, sprinkled with dry flour to keep the pellets separate, and then sieved. The pellets which are too small to be finished grains of couscous fall through the sieve to be again sprinkled with dry semolina and rolled into pellets. This process continues until all the semolina has been formed into tiny grains of couscous. Sometimes salt is added to the semolina and water.

This process is very labour intensive. Traditionally, groups of women would come together and make a large batch of couscous grains over several days. These would then be dried in the sun and stored for use over several months. Couscous was traditionally made from the hard part of the hard wheat *Triticum durum*, the part of the grain that resisted the grinding of the relatively primitive millstone. In modern times, couscous production is largely mechanized, and the product sold in markets around the world.

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One of the first written references is from an anonymous 13th century Hispano-Muslim cookery book, "Kitāb al-tabākh fī al-Maghrib wa'l-Andalus" : The book of cooking in the Maghreb and Al Andalus, with a recipe for couscous that was 'known all over the world'. From the name, it appears that this dish was of Berber, not Arab origin. Couscous was known to the Nasrid royalty in Granada as well. In the 13th century, a Syrian historian from Aleppo includes four references for couscous. These early mentions show that couscous spread rapidly but that, in the main, couscous was common from Tripolitania to the west, while from Cyrenaica to the east the main cuisine was Egyptian, with couscous as an occasional dish. Today, in Egypt and the Middle East, couscous is known, but in Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, and Western Libya couscous is a staple.

One of the earliest references to couscous in Northern Europe is in Brittany, in a letter dated Jan. 12 1699. But it made a much earlier appearance in Provence, where the traveler Jean Jacques Bouchard writes of eating it in Toulon in 1630.

There is some evidence that the process of couscous cookery, especially the steaming of the grain over broth in a special pot, might have originated before the tenth century in the area of West Africa now comprising Niger, Mali, Mauritania, Ghana, and Burkina Faso. The great Moroccan traveller, Ibn Batuta, journeyed to Mali in 1352, and in what is now Mauritania he had a pearl millet couscous. He also noted rice couscous in the area of Mali in 1350. Also, for centuries, among the nomadic Berbers, black African women or *dadas* were employed as couscous cooks, another possible indication of the sub-Saharan origin of the dish.

A *couscoussière* a traditional steamer for couscous.

When properly cooked couscous should be light and fluffy; it should not be gummy or gritty. Couscous is steamed two to three times. The traditional North African method is to use a steamer called a *kiskas* in Arabic or *couscoussière* in French. The base is a tall metal pot shaped rather like an amphora in which the meat and vegetables are cooked in a stew. On top of the base a steamer sits where the couscous is cooked, absorbing the flavours from the stew. The lid to the steamer has holes around its edge so that steam can escape. It is also possible to use a pot with a steamer insert. If the holes are too big the steamer can be lined with damp cheesecloth. There is little archeological evidence of early use of couscous, mainly because the original *couscoussière* was probably made from organic material which would not survive.

In Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco, couscous is generally served with vegetables (carrots, turnips, etc.) cooked in a spicy or mild broth or stew, and some meat

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(generally, chicken, lamb or mutton); in Morocco, couscous can also be topped with a sweet mixture of raisins and caramelized onions; in some parts of Libya fish and squid are also used. The stew in Tunisia is red with a tomato and chili base, whereas in Morocco it is generally yellow.

In Morocco, couscous is sometimes served at the end of a meal or just by itself, as a delicacy called "Seffa". This couscous is usually steamed several times until it is very fluffy and pale in color. It is then sprinkled with almonds, cinnamon and sugar. Traditionally, this dessert will be served with milk perfumed with orange blossom water, or it can be served plain with buttermilk in a bowl as a cold light soup for supper. This preparation is known as Seikook.

There are recipes from Brazil that use boiled couscous moulded into a timbale with other ingredients.

## Similar products

The name couscous is also used for prepared dishes made from other grains, such as barley, pearl millet, sorghum, rice, or maize.

Berkoukes or m'hammsa are pasta bullets made by the same process, but are larger than the grains of couscous.

In French-speaking countries in sub-Saharan Africa, fufu is often called cous-cous.

Israeli couscous is a version of North African Berkoukes, introduced by immigrants from various parts of North Africa in the early 1950s, and Levantine Maghrebiyya (from the Maghreb) common in Palestine, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. Couscous was meant to provide a rice substitute for those immigrants from eastern Arab countries and from Persia, where rice was the staple grain.

Unlike North African couscous, Palestinian couscous (Maftoul) is not semolina at all, but rather a toasted mixture of bulgur and flour.

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Couscous can be made with different grains

In Morocco it is most commonly made with durum wheat semolina but can also be made with barley or maize. The semolina is usually rolled with flour but there is a special couscous made with many medicinal plants and herbs known as Couscous of El Achoub where the semolina is rolled with ras el hanout instead of flour.

500g medium couscous grains  
cold water  
1 tsp salt  
1 tbsp oil, smen or butter

Pour the couscous grains into a fine strainer and rinse them under running water, allowing all the excess water to drain off.

Spread the moistened grains out onto a flat tray and sprinkle with the salt. Leave to swell for about 5 minutes.

Roll the couscous between the palms of your hands to break up the mass that will have formed and separate and aerate the grains. Transfer the worked couscous to a steamer and steam over boiling water for 20 minutes.

Remove from the steamer, return to the tray and sprinkle with a cup of the cold water and salt. Break up any lumps that may have formed with a fork.

When cool enough to handle, roll again between the palms of your hands to ensure that the grains are well separated and return to the steamer for a further 15 minutes.

Repeat this process, moistening with another half cup of water and adding the smen, butter or oil to the grains before rolling them again and steaming for a final 15 minutes.

To serve, transfer the steamed grain to a serving platter and moisten with some of the liquid from cooking broth from the stew the couscous will be served with.

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## COUSCOUS OF THE ROYAL COURT WITH DRIED AND FRESH FRUITS

1 kg couscous  
1.2 kg lamb or beef  
1 kg onions  
250g sultanas  
300g dried apricots  
250g prunes  
250g almonds  
250g walnuts  
300g butter  
20 ml vegetable oil  
500g sugar

1 kg mixed fresh fruits according to seasonal availability.

Spices: salt, pepper, ginger, saffron, cinnamon (powdered and whole), orange flower water.

Mastik, sugar.

Work the couscous with water and steam three times. Add cold water the first time then salted water the second and melted butter the third.

Chop the onions, and sauté with the butter and the meat, cut into pieces.

Season with salt, pepper, saffron, ginger and cinnamon.

Once the sauce has reduced, add the sugar and cook to caramelize slightly

In a separate saucepan, cook the dried fruit in a little water and sugar with a cinnamon stick. Lastly, add a few drops of orange flower water and reduce.

Make a dense syrup with the remaining sugar and water, a little cinnamon and orange blossom water and glaze the fresh fruits in it. (Do not peel apples or pears to retain their colour and shape).

Arrange the prepared couscous in a ring shape after having combined it with the walnuts and the toasted and crushed almonds and butter.

Put the meat in the centre, cover it with the dried fruit and garnish with the glazed fresh fruit pieces.

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# MOROCCAN FLAVOURS



## GREEN COUSCOUS WITH SPRING VEGETABLES

1 kg prepared couscous

1 kg lamb or veal	250g Onions
250g Green cabbage	250g Young zucchini
250g Green peas	250g Fresh fava beans
2 tbsp Flat leaf parsley, chopped	1 Green chilli, optional
2 tbsp Butter or smen	2 tbsp Olive oil
2 tbsp Vegetable oil	2l water

Spices : Salt, pepper, ginger, saffron

Put the onions in the bottom of a deep pot with both kinds of oil and the smen. Sweat for a few minutes and then add the meat pieces and turn for a few moments. Add the parsley, optional chilli, salt and spices and a little water and cook for an hour until the meat starts to become tender. Add the cabbage, cut into wedges and cook for a further 30 minutes.

In the meantime, prepare the other vegetables. Shell the peas and fava beans, scrub the zucchini and cut into serving pieces.

When the meat and the cabbage are tender, add the remaining vegetables and cook until tender – 5-10 minutes.

Correct the seasoning.

Transfer the prepared couscous to a serving platter and moisten with some of the meat and vegetable cooking broth. Make a well in the middle of the couscous and place the meat in it. Cover with the cabbage and the other green vegetables and serve with more broth in a separate bowl for guests to help themselves if they wish to further moisten their couscous.

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# MOROCCAN FLAVOURS



## COUSCOUS WITH SEVEN VEGETABLES

1 kg prepared couscous

1.2 kg lamb or beef or a 1.5kg chickens	1kg onions
½ bunch flat leaf parsley	3 or 4 coriander plants
400g tomatoes	250g carrots
250g turnips	250g zucchini
250g pumpkin	1/2 small green cabbage
150g chickpeas, soaked overnight and peeled	
15ml vegetable oil	200g Smen

Spices : salt, pepper, ginger, saffron

Put the onions in the bottom of a deep pot with the oil and the smen.

Sweat for a few minutes and then add the meat pieces or chicken and turn for a few moments.

Add the parsley, coriander, tomatoes and spices and the water and cook for 30 minutes. Add the chickpeas and cabbage, cut into wedges and cook for a further hour. In the meantime, prepare the other vegetables and cut into serving pieces.

When the meat, chickpeas and cabbage are tender, add the remaining vegetables and cook until tender – about 20-30 minutes more.

Add the salt and correct the seasoning,

Transfer the prepared couscous to a serving platter and moisten with some of the meat and vegetable cooking broth. Make a well in the middle of the couscous and place the meat or chicken in it. Cover with the vegetables and chickpeas and serve with more broth in a separate bowl for guests to help themselves if they wish to further moisten their couscous

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# MOROCCAN FLAVOURS

## HARIRA

1 small red onion, finely chopped  
½ cup chickpeas, soaked and peeled  
1/3 cup small red lentils  
1 tbsp smen  
1 tbsp vegetable oil  
1 Asian celery plant – leaves chopped very finely  
250g gravy beef cut into small cubes – marrow bone optional  
½ tsp pepper  
½ tsp turmeric  
2 l water  
1 kg tomatoes, or 2 cans chopped Italian tomatoes  
1 tbsp tomato concentrate  
salt  
2 tbsp flour  
50g vermicelli (shaarieh)  
1 bunch coriander, very finely chopped

Put the chopped onion, chickpeas, lentils, smen, oil, chopped celery and beef into a deep pot and heat over a low flame until the onion is translucent. Add the spices and water and simmer until the chickpeas and meat are tender.

In the meantime, cook the tomatoes in a separate saucepan until all their liquid has evaporated and they have reduced to a thick puree. Add to the first pot together with the tomato concentrate and the salt.

Dissolve the cornflour in a little cold water and add to the simmering soup stirring until the soup thickens and any foam that has risen to the top has dissipated.

Add the vermicelli and coriander and cook for a further 3 minutes.

Serve hot with lemon wedges, dates and figs and, if available, chebbakieh pastries.

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# MOROCCAN FLAVOURS



## CHEBBAKIEH M'KHARQA

### Ingredients

1 kg flour      2g fresh yeast  
2 eggs          120 ml olive oil  
120 ml melted unsalted butter      120 ml orange flower water  
100g toasted sesame seeds      60 ml vinegar  
2 tbsp ground aniseed      2 tbsp caster sugar  
1 tsp cumin      ¼ tsp saffron strands  
¼ tsp mastic      ½ tsp salt  
100 ml water oil for frying

### To garnish

500g honey  
50g sesame seeds

### Method

Dissolve the yeast in a little lukewarm water. Sift the flour and the salt into a large bowl. Make a well in the flour and put the yeast, eggs, sesame seeds, aniseed, caster sugar, spices, orange flower water, vinegar, melted butter and olive oil. Mix together adding just enough water to form a smooth dough. Knead the dough until it is supple and elastic. Divide the dough into large balls the size of an orange. Wrap them in cling film and set aside to rest for 15 minutes. Roll out each ball on a floured work surface into a large rectangle and divide this into 12 smaller rectangles.

With a pastry wheel, make 4 parallel cuts within each rectangle leaving a border intact. Pass your fingers through the cuts, taking up each second strip of dough. Pass both ends of the rectangle through the centre to obtain a m'kharqa. Repeat until all the dough has been formed into m'kharqa pastries.

Deep fry them in hot oil until they are golden brown. As soon as you remove them from the oil, plunge them into a bowl filled with warmed honey. Turn them with a spatula and drain them of the excess honey in a strainer. Sprinkle them with sesame seeds.

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# MOROCCAN FLAVOURS



## TANJIA MARRAKCHIA

The tanjia takes its name from the earthenware amphora in which it is cooked. It originated as a dish traditionally cooked by men, artisans in the various trades that operated within the walled city of Marrakech.

On a Friday, the men would prepare this dish and take it to the farnatchi or furnace that heats the water for the Hammam or Moorish baths. The tanjia pots are placed in the hot ash known as Louza and are carefully tended, for a small fee, by the attendant (also called farnatchi) who will ensure that they are cooked to perfection.

Traditionally, the vessel was collected and eaten outdoors in the company of other men. This outing, known as nzaha or picnic, usually also included a game of cards after lunch.

This recipe comes from Khalid BenGozlane, one of our drivers whose tanjia is absolutely delicious

3 kg lamb shank with their bones  
100 ml olive oil or 2 tbsp smen  
1 head garlic  
1 whole preserved lemon, well rinsed  
1 tbsp cumin  
1/4 tsp saffron  
pinch yellow food colouring  
1 tsp ginger  
1/2 tsp pepper  
2 tsp ras el hanout  
3 fresh bay leaves  
300 ml water

Place all together in an earthenware pot, cover with brown paper or baking paper and tie with string, punch a few holes in the paper and take to the Moorish bath to be cooked in the ashes of the furnace or cook in a slow oven (150°C)  
For 3 to 4 hours.

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# MOROCCAN FLAVOURS



**DINNER AT AL FASSIA**  
Monday, 22nd October 2007

## SELECTION OF MOROCCAN SALADS

**GOLDEN SHOULDER OF LAMB**  
**TAJINE OF CHICKEN MQALLI**

**HONEY CREPES AND MINT TEA**

**Al Fassia**, which means a lady from Fes, long renowned as the centre of Morocco's most refined cuisine, has been in existence for 20 years and is unique in that it is a restaurant completely run and staffed by women.

The Chab family, originally from a village in the Middle Atlas Mountains, lived in Fes for 10 years, absorbing its culture and cuisine before moving to Marrakech 30 years ago.

Today the restaurant is run by Myra Chab, a dynamic young woman who is involved in many of the family projects... the set -up of riad Myra, a boutique hotel in Fes, and now the design and construction of a new home in Marrakech for **Al Fassia** adjacent to the Agdal gardens.

The idea to employ only women in the restaurant came from Myra's father, a well known hotelier who wished to create the ambiance of Moroccan home hospitality. His wife Lalla Fatima was the pioneering force behind the set up of the restaurant, ensuring all the dishes were cooked to perfection and the right personnel were recruited, of good families and well versed in the art of Moroccan cuisine and culture of receiving guests. This was no mean feat as it was not seemly for young women to work outside the home, especially not in hospitality.

Myra's older sister, Saida, initially took on the front of house work after graduating from her Hotel Management Studies in Paris and, 20 years down the track, the ambiance is relaxed and friendly, the dishes still perfect and the experience definitely worthwhile.

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# MOROCCAN FLAVOURS

## **GOLDEN FOREQUARTER OF LAMB**

2 lamb forequarters weighing in total 3.2 kg  
1 tbsp ground ginger  
1 tbsp ground black pepper  
½ tbsp sweet paprika  
salt  
½ tsp powdered saffron  
100g butter  
½ cup vegetable oil  
1 small bunch coriander  
2 kg diced onions  
½ tbsp smen  
2 cinnamon sticks  
2 heads garlic  
water

fried almonds

Mix the spices with 2 cups water in a saucepan and rub it all over the lamb.  
Add 2 litres water, the butter, oil coriander and onions and cook for at least 2 hours or until the meat is tender.  
Remove the meat from the saucepan and reduce the sauce.  
Transfer the meat to an oven dish and brown it at a high heat for 15 minutes.  
Transfer to a serving platter, pour the sauce over it and serve garnished with fried almonds.

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# MOROCCAN FLAVOURS



## CHICKEN TAJINE MQALLI

2 free range chickens

### For the marinade

½ preserved lemon, chopped  
½ tsp black pepper  
½ tsp white pepper  
½ tsp ground ginger  
½ tsp powdered saffron  
½ bunch coriander, chopped  
3 cloves garlic  
small pinch ground cinnamon  
juice of 1 lemon

1.5 litres water  
½ cup olive oil  
2 kg chopped onions

### To garnish

Preserved lemon peel and red olives

Pound together all the ingredients for the marinade in a mortar and transfer to a saucepan. Rub the mixture all over the chickens, both inside and out making sure that it is well distributed.

Add the water, olive oil and the onions and bring to the boil. Prick the chickens all over to ensure that the flavours penetrate.

Lower the heat and simmer until the chickens are well cooked and the flesh beginning to fall off the bones.

Remove the chicken from the saucepan and reduce the sauce, mashing the onions to form a thick sauce.

Arrange the chickens on a serving platter or tajine and pour the sauce over.

Garnish with the lemon peel and olives before serving.

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# MOROCCAN FLAVOURS



## DESSERT HONEYCOMB PANCAKES – BEGHRIR

250g unbleached white flour  
1 egg  
pinch salt  
1.5 sachets active dry yeast  
luke warm water

### To serve

Melted butter  
Honey  
Chopped fried almonds

Mix the pancake ingredients together in a food processor or blender with enough warm water to form a thin batter. Leave to rest for 10 minutes.

Heat a crepe pan or non stick frying pan and cook ladlefuls of the batter to form pancakes full of small holes.

To serve, melt the butter together with the honey, drizzle a little of the mixture over each pancake and top with some chopped fried almonds.

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# MOROCCAN FLAVOURS



**DINNER AT PALAIS SOLEIMAN**  
Tuesday, 23rd October 2007

**ASSORTED MOROCCAN SALADS**

**CHICKEN TAJINE WITH FIGS, WALNUTS AND ONIONS**  
**LAMB TAJINE WITH ZUCCHINI AND THYME**

**ORANGES WITH CINNAMON**

**MINT TEA AND MOROCCAN PASTRIES**

Palais Soleiman is a magnificent example of late 19th Century Moroccan architecture. It was built as the home of the renowned Cadi Layadi, one of the last Lords of the Atlas, a diplomat and man of refined tastes who lived there with his wives, harem and many children.

The finest master craftsmen in Morocco worked on the finishes of this palace and it allows the visitor a rare insight into the luxurious living arrangements of the ruling classes as well as an appreciation of the multiple artforms celebrating Islam in the architecture of the period.

The current management of Palais Soleiman have combined the vast traditional spaces of the palace with the most updated technology to provide a rare location for events and special occasions.

The kitchen is run by traditional tabbakhates – women who jealously guard their family culinary secrets and processes, passed down from mother to daughter and who put their experience and talent to work to create the dishes that for generations have made the reputation of Moroccan cuisine with its exotic perfumes and spices.

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# MOROCCAN FLAVOURS



## CHICKEN TAJINE WITH FIGS AND WALNUTS

2 free range chickens  
1 heaped tsp ginger  
1 piece fresh ginger, grated  
½ tsp ground black pepper  
1 tsp salt  
1 tbsp sugar  
½ tsp powdered saffron  
2 sticks cinnamon  
4 large onions, sliced  
¼ cup vegetable oil

200g dried figs  
pinch powdered saffron  
1 cinnamon stick  
1 tbsp sugar  
1 sachet active dry yeast  
1 tbsp vegetable oil  
1 cup chicken cooking sauce

### To garnish

Walnut halves

In a saucepan, mix together the ground and fresh ginger, the pepper, salt, sugar and saffron with a little water and rub all over the chickens, inside and out. Cover with water, bring to the boil then add onions, cinnamon and the vegetable oil. Simmer until the chickens are tender and the flesh falling off the bone. Transfer to a serving platter or tajine and reduce the sauce until it thickens. While the chicken is cooking, simmer the figs in a small saucepan with the other ingredients until they are tender and there is virtually no more liquid in the pan. Arrange, pour the sauce over the chicken pieces, arrange the figs around them and garnish each fig with a walnut half.

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# MOROCCAN FLAVOURS



## LAMB TAJINE WITH SMALL ZUCCHINI AND THYME

### For the lamb

- 2 kg lamb cut into large pieces
- 4 onions, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- ½ tsp powdered saffron
- 1 tsp salt
- ½ tsp ground black pepper
- 1 tsp ground ginger
- ½ preserved lemon, chopped
- 2 fresh tomatoes, peeled and chopped
- 1 small bunch coriander
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil

### For the zucchini

- 1 kg small zucchini
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp chopped coriander
- 1 tbsp chopped parsley
- few sprigs thyme
- ½ preserved lemon peel, sliced
- a little ground black pepper

In a saucepan, combine the garlic, spices and preserved lemon with a little water and rub all over the lamb pieces. Add 1 litre water and the rest of the ingredients and cook for 2 hours or until the lamb is tender. Remove the lamb from the pan and reduce the sauce.

Wash and trim the zucchini and blanch for 3 minutes in salted water, then transfer to a small saucepan with some of the sauce from the cooked lamb. Add the olive oil, chopped coriander and parsley and thyme, the preserved lemon strips and pepper and simmer for a further few minutes until the zucchini are fully cooked.

In the meantime, reheat the lamb in the remaining sauce, transfer to a serving tajine, arrange the cooked zucchini and their sauce on top and serve hot.

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