

CHICKEN TAGINE WITH APRICOTS AND SPICED PINE NUTS

Prep time: 45 minutes

Cook time: 60 minutes

Difficulty: medium

Yield: serves 6

Ingredients

- 1 whole chicken (about 3 1/2 lbs)
- 2 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil, divided
- 3 large shallots, finely chopped (1 cup)
- 1 Tbsp unsalted butter
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 Tbsp grated peeled ginger
- 1/4 tsp turmeric
- 1/3 tsp sweet paprika
- pinch of saffron threads (optional)
- 1 cup water
- 2 Tbsp blood-orange preserves or bitter-orange marmalade
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 1 sprig thyme
- 2 sprigs cilantro
- 6 dried apricots, chopped
- 1 Tbsp finely chopped cilantro or flat-leaf parsley
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- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 1/4 cup pine nuts
- 1/4 tsp turmeric
- 1/4 tsp sweet paprika
- pinch of cayenne pepper (optional)
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- Lemon wedges for garnish
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Directions

Cut and reserve wings and backbone from the chicken. Cut breast in half through bone, then cut off legs and cut to separate into thighs and drumsticks (for a total of 6 pieces, not including wings and backbone). Pat chicken pieces dry and sprinkle with 1 tsp salt.

Heat 1 Tbsp oil in 12-inch skillet over medium heat until it shimmers, then brown chicken breasts, skin sides down, without turning, about 5 minutes. Transfer to a plate. Brown thighs and legs, turning once, 8 to 10 minutes, transferring to plate. Brown wings and backbone in same manner.

Cook shallots in butter with remaining Tbsp of oil in a 5- to 6-quart heavy pot over medium heat, stirring frequently until soft, 8 to 10 minutes. Add garlic, ginger, turmeric and paprika and cook, stirring, about 3 minutes. Add chicken with any juices from plate, saffron and 1/2 tsp salt to shallot mixture and turn chicken to coat. Add water and bring to a boil, covered, then cook at a bare simmer, covered, 30 minutes.

Brown pine nuts while chicken cooks. Heat oil in a small heavy skillet until it shimmers, then stir in pine nuts, turmeric, paprika and cayenne and cook, stirring frequently, until nuts are lightly browned, 1 to 2 minutes. Watch carefully, they burn easily. Transfer to a small bowl.

Turn chicken and add orange preserves, cinnamon stick, thyme, cilantro and apricots. Simmer, covered, for 10 minutes. Uncover and simmer until chicken is very tender, 10 or 15 minutes more. Transfer chicken to a platter and keep warm, covered. If sauce is not thick, boil, stirring occasionally until reduced to about 1 cup. Discard herb sprigs, cinnamon stick, wings and backbone. Stir in chopped cilantro and spoon sauce over chicken. Sprinkle with nuts.

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