

## ASTA Cooking Competition 3.4.21

*Ben Smith, Harris Spice ben.smith@harrisspice.com*

### **Moroccan Braised Lamb Shank, Jeweled Couscous, Sauté Eggplant**

*Serves 4*

#### **For the lamb shanks, you will need:**

4 small lamb shanks (around 0.75lb each), you can also use lamb shoulder.

1 cup red wine

3 cups chicken stock or broth

2 cans peeled and chopped tomatoes or tomato sauce

2 teaspoons super-secret spice blend (recipe follows)

4 tablespoons flour

1 tablespoon salt

2 medium onions, peeled and cut in 4

3 large carrots, peeled and cut into 3

1 tablespoon vegetable oil

2-3 bay leaves

½ teaspoon of dried thyme

#### **Super-secret spice blend:**

37.88% Ground coriander seed

23.36% Mild chili powder

18.69% Black pepper 35 Mesh

7.29% Saigon cinnamon

6.17% Ground nutmeg

3.93% Ground mace

3.18% Ground fennel seed

#### **Method- lamb shanks:**

- Trim the lamb shanks of any excess skin or fat if required
- Rub the lamb shanks all over with the super-secret spice mixture until they are coated all over, then place in the fridge for at least 30 minutes, up to overnight
- Mix the salt and the flour together in a bowl
- Remove the lamb shanks from the fridge and dredge them in the seasoned flour, shaking off as much excess as possible
- Heat a large skillet (or your cooking pot) over medium high heat, add the oil, and then fry the lamb shanks all over until a golden-brown crust is formed
- Deglaze the pan with the red wine, scraping up any brown bits on the bottom of the pan, and pour out into the cooking pot. Add the chicken stock, tomatoes, carrots, onions, thyme, and bay leaves
- Add the lamb shanks back to the pot and bring the mixture to the boil

- For stove top cooking, reduce the heat to a simmer, cover with a lid and cook for 2 hours. For oven cooking, place the (foil covered) pot in the oven at 250F for 2 hours. For pressure cooking, cook on high pressure for 45 minutes, then leave under pressure for at least 10 minutes. Check the lamb is tender before removing from the heat.
- Discard the thyme, bay leaf, onion, and carrot from the braising liquid and discard
- To finish the sauce, push the remaining liquid through a sieve to make the sauce smooth, then reduce over a medium-high heat until the liquid has reduced to a sauce like consistency. The lamb shanks can be reheated in this sauce when ready to serve. Check the seasoning of the sauce and add salt and more of the spice blend if required.

### **For the couscous, you will need:**

1 cup dried couscous  
 1 cup chicken stock or broth  
 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil  
 3 assorted color bell peppers  
 1 teaspoon vegetable oil  
 2 tomatoes  
 ½ an English cucumber  
 1 handful of fresh cilantro leaves  
 ½ teaspoon garlic powder  
 ½ teaspoon chili powder  
 Salt and pepper to taste

### **Method- couscous:**

- Rub the whole peppers in the vegetable oil to lightly coat all over, then roast in the oven set to 400°F for 25-30minutes, turning occasionally. The peppers should be browned all over. Remove from the oven and place in a bowl and cover with cling wrap- this will help you peel the peppers later. Or, alternatively burn your tomatoes and peppers like I do in the video if you are feeling brave!
- Allow the peppers to cool until you can handle them, then peel the skin off with the help of a small knife. You can do this over the sink, and use the running water to help clean off the skin. Remove the stems, open up the peppers and remove the seeds, and finally dice the peppers to about ½” and reserve for later
- Peel the tomatoes by plunging into boiling water for 15-20 seconds and then plunging into iced water. Check the tomatoes as they come out of the boiling water to see if the skin will peel easily- if not, return to the boiling water for another 5 seconds. Ripe summer tomatoes will take less time than harder out of season tomatoes! After peeling, cut the tomatoes in four lengthways and remove the seeds leaving just the flesh. Dice the flesh a little smaller than the peppers and reserve for later.
- Cut the cucumber in half lengthways, remove the seeds, and dice to roughly ½” and reserve for later
- Roughly chop the cilantro and reserve for later
- Bring the cup of chicken stock to a boil in a saucepan, then remove from the heat and add the couscous, olive oil, the garlic, chili, and a pinch of salt and pepper. Stir to combine, and cover the

saucepan and leave for 3-4 minutes. After 3-4 minutes, stir the couscous again. Break up any lumps using a fork. Cover and leave for another 3-4 minutes, and stir once more. Check the seasoning and add more if desired.

- Add the diced peppers to the couscous and reserve until ready to serve. The couscous can be reheated in the microwave or over a very low heat, at which point we will add the cilantro, tomato, and cucumber

**For the eggplant, you will need:**

1 medium eggplant, diced into roughly 1" cubes

1 tablespoon vegetable oil

Salt and pepper to taste

A generous pinch of mace, dried garlic, and chili

**Method- Eggplant:**

- Preheat a skillet over high heat. When the pan is hot, add half of the vegetable oil and the eggplant and mix well so the eggplant is coated with the oil.
- As the eggplant takes on some color (after about 5 minutes), add the remaining oil and again mix well
- Continue to cook the eggplant until the cubes are cooked through. At this point, remove from the heat and season with salt and pepper to taste. Then add the mace, chili, and garlic- mace is very strong so be sparing with that, but more generous with the chili and garlic.

**Plating:**

- Place a generous mound of couscous in the center of the plate
- Place the lamb shank on the couscous, bone pointing up
- Spoon some eggplant around the couscous
- Spoon some sauce around and on top of the shank

