

Cardamom Chicken with Rice

SERVES 4

Djeaj ma Riz Boukhari (djeaj ma riz bou-khar-rhee)

Try to prepare this dish early in the morning or even the day before you are going to serve it. The flavors are enhanced as the meat marinates in the broth. The aroma that fills the air when this is cooking will make your mouth water. This dish is favored by people from the Gulf countries because it is similar to a dish they call kebsah.

Prepare ahead: You can prepare this dish up to 2 days in advance. Refrigerate until needed. Serve as directed.

FOR THE CHICKEN

- 1 whole chicken, about 4½ pounds, cut into 10 pieces
- 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1½ cups diced yellow onion (¼ inch)
- ½ cup peeled and shredded carrot (use the large holes of a grater)
- 2¾ teaspoons salt
- ¼ teaspoon coarsely ground black pepper
- ¾ teaspoons ground allspice
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon ground cardamom
- ⅛ teaspoon ground cloves
- ⅓ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 5 cups boiling water
- ⅓ cup tomato paste
- ¾ cup peeled and diced tomato (½ inch)

(You can substitute about 3 pounds split chicken breast if you prefer all white meat. Cut each breast in half width-wise. The recipe and the procedure remain the same.)

FOR THE RICE

- 1 teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 cup converted (also called parboiled) rice
- 2½ cups hot reserved broth
- ½ cup toasted slivered almonds
- ½ cup toasted golden raisins
- 2 tablespoons melted butter

To prepare the chicken

Cut the chicken into 10 pieces (see “Segmenting Chicken,” page xv), leaving the skin on. Rinse in a bowl with 6 cups cold water and the vinegar to refresh the flavor of the chicken. Drain and set aside.

Preheat the olive oil in a large pot. Add the onions, carrots, salt, and spices, and sauté over medium-high heat for a couple of minutes. Add the pieces of chicken, and cook until the meat is no longer pink. Add the boiling water, tomato paste, and tomatoes. Stir well dissolving the tomato paste in the water. Increase the heat to high and bring the mixture to a rolling boil, uncovered, then reduce the heat to medium and simmer covered, stirring occasionally, for 25 minutes. Remove from the heat. Transfer the pieces of chicken to a flat tray and set aside to cool, uncovered. Reserve all of the broth.

After 15 minutes, remove and discard the skin and bones from the pieces of chicken. Do not remove the





center bone from the thigh or drumstick. Place the pieces of chicken in a container just large enough to hold them and cover with some of the reserved broth.

To prepare the rice

Preheat the olive oil in a medium pot over medium heat. Stir in the rice and coat the grains. Add 2½ cups hot reserved broth and increase the heat to high. Bring to a rolling boil; then reduce the heat to low and simmer, covered, for 15 minutes or until the broth has been absorbed. Then remove from the heat and set aside covered for 20 minutes. Fluff the rice, separating the grains with the tines of a fork, before serving.

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Spread the almonds and raisins over a foil-lined baking sheet, keeping

them separate, and toast in the center of the oven, shaking the pan occasionally, for 5 to 7 minutes or until the almonds are golden and the raisins seem inflated. Remove from the oven and drizzle some of the melted butter over each, mixing well to incorporate the butter. Transfer to a paper towel-lined dish. Set aside to cool before using.

To serve

Warm the meat and rice. Arrange the rice on a platter with the pieces of meat around the perimeter of the rice. Scatter the room-temperature toasted nuts and raisins in the center. Garnish with sprigs of parsley and diced tomato around the edge of the platter. Serve with Jalapeño-Cilantro Salsa (page 144) as a condiment over the meat and rice, along with Pita Crouton Salad with Sumak Dressing (page 60).

