

MOROCCAN DIFFA

(FEAST)

RECIPES



September 20, 2009



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Middle Eastern ALMONDS

3 Tbls unsalted butter
1 tsp of table salt
1 tsp celery salt
½ tsp chili powder
2 cups raw almonds

Combine first four ingredients, mix well. Add almonds and coat well.

Place on an aluminum pan lined with parchment paper or silicon bake mat.
(Avoid using a black pan)

Bake at 375° for 15 minutes in a preheated oven, middle shelf.

Watch carefully as they burn easily.

When cooked remove from oven and lift parchment or silicon bake mat with almonds and place on a counter to completely cool. Store in an airtight container.

This is an old recipe and may be too salty for some; so if it is, reduce salt accordingly.

Moroccan BEET SALAD

2 lbs beets

Salt

¼ Spanish onion, peeled and finely chopped

2 tsp. Italian parsley

6 Tbls olive oil

2 Tbls lemon juice

Fresh ground pepper

Salt

Hot red pepper

Cutoff ends of beets. Wash well and cook in boiling salted water until tender. Drain, and remove skins under cold running water. Cut beets into small dice or short stubby "fingers."

Combine diced beets in salad bowl with finely chopped onion and parsley, olive oil, lemon juice. Add salt and pepper, and hot chili peppers to taste. Toss and chill

Serves 4 to 6

Moroccan Glazed CARROT SALAD

Serve cold/room temperature as a salad, or hot as a vegetable. If serving as a vegetable, double recipe.

1 ½ lbs. Carrots, peeled

Salted water

1 clove garlic

1 Tbls olive oil

½ tsp vinegar

Juice of 1 lemon

½ tsp finely chopped garlic

½ tsp finely chopped Italian parsley

½ tsp salt

1/8 tsp EACH freshly ground black pepper and sweet red pepper

Garnish – Strips of preserved lemon peel (optional)

Cut out cores of carrots if necessary, and cut into thinnish slices lengthwise.

Cook carrot slices in boiling salted water with 1 clove of garlic until tender, then drain.

Combine drained carrot slices in a serving dish with all remaining ingredients, adding ½ tsp salt

Mix well and cool.

Garnish with strips of preserved lemon peel.

Serves 4-6

Moroccan Style Chicken PHYLLO ROLLS

These rolls are based loosely on *b'stilla* – a phyllo-crusted *pie* of shredded chicken that's been simmered with Moroccan spices and then mixed with egg and nuts. The egg lends the filling an almost custard-like richness.

Active Time: 1 ¼ hours

Start to Finish (includes cooking time: 2 ¼ hours

1 small onion finely chopped

1 Tbls olive oil

Scant tsp salt

¾ tsp ground cumin

½ tsp ground ginger

½ tsp turmeric

½ tsp black pepper

¼ tsp ground coriander

1 ¼ lb chicken thighs with skin and bones

¾ cup low-sodium chicken broth

½ cup water

1 3-inch cinnamon stick

¼ cup sliced almonds, toasted, cooled and coarsely chopped

2 large eggs lightly beaten

1 stick of unsalted butter melted, or butter-flavored PAM or similar product

8 17x12 phyllo sheets, thawed if frozen (thaw overnight in refrigerator)

1 tsp ground cinnamon

2 tsp brown mustard seeds

Accompaniment: Spiced Tomato Sauce, recipe follows

MAKE FILLING

Cook onion in oil along with salt, cumin, ginger, turmeric, pepper and coriander in a heavy 3-qt saucepot over moderate heat stirring until softened, about 5 minutes.

Add chicken, broth, water and cinnamon stick, simmer covered, turning chicken over once, until meat is very tender, about 45 minutes total. Transfer chicken with tongs to a bowl, reserve cooking liquid.

When cool enough to handle, shred chicken, discarding skin and bones, and transfer to a large bowl. Transfer cooking liquid to a 2-cup glass measure (do not clean saucepan) and let stand 1 minute, then skim off fat and discard cinnamon stick. Return liquid to saucepan and simmer over moderately high heat, uncovered, until reduced to about $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (liquid will look like a glaze in bottom of pan), about 8 minutes, then stir into shredded chicken along with almonds.

Reserve 2 Tbls beaten egg in a cup for egg wash. Lightly season remaining egg with salt and pepper, then cook in $\frac{1}{2}$ Tbls of butter (1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp) in an 8-10 inch nonstick skillet over moderately high heat, stirring, until just set but still slightly soft. Stir scrambled egg into filling.

MAKE ROLLS

Put oven racks in upper and lower thirds of oven and preheat oven to 450°F

Put 1 phyllo sheet on a work surface, keeping remaining phyllo covered with overlapping sheets of plastic wrap and a damp kitchen towel. Brush generously with some melted butter or spray with butter-flavored PAM or similar product. Evenly sift ¼ tsp cinnamon over buttered phyllo using a fine-mesh sieve, then top with another phyllo sheet and generously brush with butter or spray with butter-flavored PAM.

Halve buttered phyllo stack crosswise, then arrange 1 half with the long side nearest you. Spread ¼ cup of chicken filling in a narrow strip along the edge nearest you, then roll up filling tightly in phyllo, leaving ends open. Transfer roll, seam side down to a cutting board, set inside a baking pan (to help contain mustard seeds when sprinkling)

Make another roll with remaining half stack. Make 6 more rolls in the same manner, transferring to cutting board.

Lightly brush top of rolls with egg wash and immediately sprinkle with mustard seeds, pressing lightly on seeds to adhere. Cut each roll cross wise into 4 pieces and arrange pieces 1 inch apart on 2 baking sheets. Bake switching position of sheets

halfway through baking until phyllo is golden brown about, 12 minutes total.

Transfer rolls to a rack to cool slightly. Makes 32 hors d'oeuvres

Cook's Notes:

Can be assembled but not coated or cut 1 day ahead;
Chilled, covered

Rolls can be assembled and cut but not coated or baked 2 weeks ahead and frozen wrapped well in plastic wrap. Coat frozen rolls, then bake without thawing in preheated 350°F oven for about 20 minutes

***IDEA FROM A READER –Epicurious.com 1/25/09:
Use pre-bought phyllo cups (frozen food section of supermarket made by same company making phyllo sheets, about 15 cups to a package). Fill and freeze. Put them straight from freezer into a 350°F oven about seven minutes, then top each with a dollop of the spiced tomato sauce which had also been previously frozen. Excellent for making all ahead! Another reader used bone-in chicken breasts while another sprinkled the cooked appetizers with a very fine dusting of powdered sugar like b'stilla.***

Spiced Tomato Sauce for Dipping

Active time: 20 minutes - Start to Finish: 1 hr

1/3 cup finely chopped onion

1 garlic clove finely chopped

1 1/2 tsp finely chopped peeled fresh ginger

3/4 tsp ground cumin

1/2 tsp hot paprika

1/4 tsp ground cinnamon

Pinch of Cayenne pepper

Pinch of ground cloves

1 Tbls olive oil

1 1/2 Tbls cider vinegar

1 14 1/2 or 15 oz can whole tomatoes in juice, coarsely chopped, reserving juice

2Tbls brown sugar

Cook onion, garlic and spices in oil in 1 to 2 qt heavy saucepan over moderately low heat, stirring until onion is softened, about 4 minutes. Stir in vinegar and simmer over moderately low heat 1 minute. Add tomatoes with juices and brown sugar, then increase heat to moderate and simmer, stirring occasionally until slightly thickened, about 30 minutes. Cool slightly, about 5 minutes.

Puree sauce in a blender until smooth. Serve at room temperature.

Makes about 1 1/2 cups

Cook's Note:

Sauce can be made 3 days ahead and cooled completely, then chilled and covered

Skewered Grilled CHICKEN in Moroccan Marinade

¾ cups honey

6 Tbls sesame seeds

1 1/2 tsp of cinnamon

1 tsp ground cumin

3 Tbls olive oil

2 Tbls fresh lemon juice

2 ½ lbs chicken pieces (thighs) or 4 lbs on the bone.

Warm the honey over medium heat until liquefied, remove from heat. Toast sesame seeds in small dry skillet until they start to pop. Save 2- Tbls for garnish and grind or crush the rest. Stir ground sesame seeds into remaining ingredients and mix. Using a non-aluminum pan, pour honey mixture over chicken and coat. Cover and refrigerate overnight.

Let chicken warm to room temperature. Heat grill or broiler. Remove chicken from the marinade, reserving marinade. Thread chicken on skewers, sprinkle with Salt and pepper. Grill or broil, basting with remaining sauce, turn and cook till done. Sprinkle with remaining sesame seeds.

Serves 4

COUSCOUS

1 cup chicken stock

2 cups plain couscous

½ teaspoon ground allspice, eyeball it

¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon, eyeball it

Little salt

¼ cup honey, eyeball a healthy drizzling

¼ cup pine nuts (a couple of handfuls)

2 scallions (green onions), finely chopped

Generous handful flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped

1 tablespoons chopped thyme leaves (about 3 sprigs)

In the bottom of a medium sauce pot, heat and toast pine nuts over moderate heat and remove.

In the pot you used for roasting the pine nuts, bring 1 cup chicken stock to a boil, add couscous, allspice, cinnamon and a little salt. Cover pot and remove from heat. Let stand 5 minutes. Drizzle honey over the couscous and add the pine nuts, scallions, parsley and thyme. Toss and fluff with a fork to combine.

Serves 6

Moroccan DATE, ORANGE AND CARROT SALAD

- 1 Bibb lettuce
- 2 carrots finely grated
- 2 oranges
- 4 oz fresh dates, stone removed and cut into 8ths lengthwise
- ¼ cup toasted whole almonds coarsely chopped
- 2 Tbls lemon juice
- 1 tsp sugar
- ¼ tsp salt
- 1 Tbls orange-flower water

Separate the lettuce leaves and arrange them in the bottom of a salad bowl. Place the grated carrot in a mound on top.

Peel and segment the oranges and arrange them around the carrot. Pile the dates on top and then sprinkle with the almonds.

Mix together the lemon juice, sugar, salt and orange-flower water and sprinkle on salad.

Serve chilled

Orange-flower water can be purchased in the liquor dept of well-stocked supermarkets or liquor stores.

HONEY MOUSSE

6 large egg yolks
½ to ¾ cups dark honey
1 cup of heavy cream

Beat the egg yolks and honey in a small mixing bowl until very thick and very pale, about 10 minutes. Beat the cream to soft peaks and fold into the honey mixture. Pour in 8 or 10 small glasses, cover, and freeze 2 to 3 hours or up to 3 days. Let warm at room temperature 15 to 20 minutes before serving to soften the texture. Decorate with slivered almonds, mint leaves or maraschino cherries.

MINT TEA

2 tsp green tea leaves
3 Tbls sugar
1 ½ cups mint leaf sprigs

Rinse the tea pot with boiling water, then put in the tea leaves. Add a little boiling water and swirl it around before carefully pouring the water out leaving the tea leaves in the pot.

Fill the pot with 3 ¼ cups of boiling water; stir in the sugar. Crush mint leaves with your hands, then add to the pot. Push the mint leaves down with a spoon. Leave to infuse 2 to 3 minutes.

Traditionally served in small glasses.
Serves 4- 6

Moroccan Spiced OLIVES

- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 1 tsp fennel seeds
- 1 tsp coriander seeds
- ¼ tsp ground cardamom
- 1 pinch crushed red pepper flakes
- 1 pinch ground nutmeg
- 1 Tbls olive oil
- 1 ½ cups green olives at room temperature (or use some black – pitted and drained)
- 1 Tbls lemon juice
- 1 Tbls orange juice
- 3 cloves garlic minced

Heat first 8 ingredients in a small skillet over medium heat until fragrant, about 2 minutes. Remove from heat and add olives & toss to coat. Stir in remaining ingredients.

Refrigerate in an airtight container for at least 4 hours or up to 3 weeks. The longer they marinate, the better they taste. Drain & serve at room temperature

Moroccan POTATO SALAD

2 lbs potatoes, scrubbed
Salt
Peanut oil

Dressing:

6 Tbls olive oil
2 Tbls vinegar
2 Tbls finely grated onion
2 Tbls finely chopped Italian parsley
¼ tsp sweet red pepper (paprika)
1/8 tsp hot red pepper
Fresh ground black pepper

Cook potatoes in their skins in boiling salted water until just tender. Drain and peel while still hot. Brush with peanut oil and allow to cool. When cold cut into finger shapes or dice.

To make the dressing, combine all the ingredients in a small bowl with salt and pepper to taste.

Toss the potatoes with the dressing, then chill.

Serves 4 to 6