

Chicken Tagine

Authentic Moroccan Chicken Tagine with aromatic spices, preserved lemons, and olives. Traditional recipe perfect for family dinners. Easy to make!

30 min

PREP

1h 30min

COOK

2h

TOTAL

4

SERVINGS

Medium

DIFFICULTY

Chicken Tagine

Ingredients

- 2 lb chicken thigh
- 2 clove garlic
- 2 onion
- 2 lemon
- 1 cup olive oil
- 1 cup chicken broth
- 1 tsp rock salt
- 1 tsp black pepper
- 1 tsp red chilli
- 1 tsp cumin
- 1 tsp ginger powder
- 1 tsp cilantro (coriander)
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 cup green olive

Instructions

- 1 Prepare the spice marinade**

Mince 2 cloves of garlic and combine in a large bowl with 1 tsp ground ginger, 1 tsp turmeric, 1 tsp ground cumin, 1 tsp ground cinnamon, 1 tsp paprika, and 1 tsp saffron. Add 3 tablespoons olive oil and juice from 1 lemon, then mix into a thick paste.
- 2** Cut 2 lbs chicken into serving pieces and add to the spice paste. Toss to coat all pieces thoroughly, cover bowl with plastic wrap, and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes or up to 2 hours.
- 3 Start the tagine base**

Heat 2 tablespoons olive oil in a heavy-bottomed Dutch oven or tagine over medium heat (175°C/350°F). Add 2 sliced onions and cook, stirring occasionally, until soft and golden brown, about 8-10 minutes.
- 4** Remove chicken from marinade, reserving all the marinade liquid. Add chicken pieces to the pot and brown on all sides, about 6-8 minutes total until golden. Transfer chicken to a plate.

5 Build the sauce

Add the reserved marinade to the pot and cook, stirring constantly, for 1-2 minutes until very fragrant. Pour in 1 cup chicken broth gradually while stirring to deglaze the pot, which means scraping up any browned bits from the bottom.

6 Return chicken to the pot and add 1 cup preserved lemons (quartered) and 1 cup green olives. Season with 1 tsp salt and 1/2 tsp black pepper, then bring to a gentle simmer.

7 Slow cook the tagine

Cover the pot and reduce heat to low. Simmer for 1 hour and 15 minutes, checking every 20 minutes and adding more broth if needed to prevent sticking. The chicken should be fork-tender and the sauce thickened.

8 Rest and serve

Remove from heat and let the tagine rest, covered, for 10 minutes. Taste and adjust seasoning with salt and pepper. Garnish with fresh chopped cilantro and serve immediately with couscous or rice.

Tips

Marinate the chicken for at least 2 hours or overnight for the deepest flavor penetration. The longer marination allows the spices to fully infuse the meat.

Always use bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs for the most authentic texture and flavor. The bones add richness to the sauce while the skin provides necessary fat.

Toast whole spices like cinnamon sticks and whole cloves in a dry pan before grinding for more intense flavor. This extra step makes a noticeable difference in the final dish.

Don't add too much liquid - tagine should be a thick stew, not a soup. The vegetables and chicken will release their own juices as they cook.

Use a meat thermometer to ensure chicken reaches 165°F (74°C) internal temperature. This is especially important when cooking bone-in pieces.

If using a clay tagine, season it properly before first use and always use a heat diffuser on gas burners to prevent cracking from direct heat.

Let the finished dish rest for 10 minutes before serving to allow the sauce to thicken slightly and the flavors to settle.

Taste and adjust seasoning at the end of cooking - you may need more salt, lemon juice, or spices depending on your ingredients and preferences.