

MOGHRABIYEH // LEBANESE COUSCOUS WITH BRAISED CHICKEN & BEEF

For meat sauce:

- 1 cup onion, finely minced
- 14-to-18 oz lean cubed beef
- 1/8 teaspoon ground allspice, plus another 1 1/8 teaspoon
- 1/2 teaspoon salt, plus another 1 teaspoon
- 8 cups water
- 2 1/2 teaspoons ground caraway
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 tablespoon chicken bouillon paste or powder
- 8 oz (3/4) cup cooked garbanzo beans

For caramelized onions:

- 24 oz pearl onions, frozen or fresh
- 4 teaspoons white granulated sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground allspice

For chicken pieces:

- 1 whole chicken, cut up
- Salt, white pepper and ground allspice; to taste
- Water, as needed
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 pebble mastic gum
- 1-inch cinnamon bark
- 1 cardamom pod
- 2 black peppercorns
- 1 whole clove
- Half a celery stick
- Half a carrot
- A quarter of an onion

For moghrabiyeh grains:

4 cups dry moghrabiyeh grains; Lebanese couscous made with semolina
1 tablespoon ground caraway
3/4 teaspoon ground allspice
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon black pepper
8 oz (3/4) cup cooked Garbanzo beans

For sauce roux:

4 teaspoons flour
4 teaspoons butter
1/4 teaspoon ground caraway
1/4 teaspoon ground allspice
Pinch of cinnamon

Prepare meat sauce. Sauté minced onions in oil/butter until golden; set aside.

In an open pressure cooker, sauté beef with 1/8 teaspoon allspice and 1/2 teaspoon salt on medium heat until browned all over. Return minced onions to pot. Add 8 cups water and bring to a boil; removing surface scum as needed. Seal pressure cooker and cook 20-to-40 minutes until meat is fork tender.

Meanwhile, prepare caramelized onions.

Step one: if using frozen pearl onions, defrost completely and drain. If using fresh onions, blanch in salted boiling water for a few seconds, shock in iced water and peel skin off.

Step two: sauté pearl onions in a saucepan until slightly golden. Gradually add sugar and start to caramelize until onions are almost tender and turn a rich golden brown. Mix in salt and allspice. Stop here for frozen onions

Step three: if you are using fresh onions, add about half a cup of water, bring to a boil and simmer covered until almost tender.

Set aside some caramelized pearl onions to use as garnish and divide the remaining into two parts.

Continue making meat sauce. Strain beef broth (you should have about 6 cups) and set aside some beef cubes to use as garnish. Add the following to the pot: one part of divided pearl onions, 1 teaspoon salt, 2 1/2 teaspoons ground caraway, 1 1/8 teaspoon allspice, 1/4 teaspoon black pepper, 1 teaspoon cinnamon and 1 tablespoon chicken bouillon.

Bring contents to a boil then simmer uncovered for 15 minutes. Add Garbanzo beans and cook for another 5 minutes. Turn off heat. This is your meat sauce; it will be thickened later with a roux made with flour and butter.

Ladle 4 cups broth from the meat sauce (no solids) into a bowl and set aside; you will need this to cook moghrabiyeh grains.

Prepare chicken. In another casserole, season chicken pieces with salt, white pepper and a dash of allspice. Sauté pieces until browned on all sides; top off with water. Add bay leaf, mastic gum, cinnamon bark, cardamom pod, peppercorns, whole clove, celery, onion and carrot. Bring to a boil and braise on low heat, covered, about 40-to-60 minutes until chicken is cooked.

Prepare moghrabiyeh grains. Make sure 4 cups of reserved beef broth is still hot; if not, bring to a boil and remove from heat.

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil; add 1 teaspoon oil. Add dry moghrabiyeh grains and cook for 8 minutes; drain, shock in iced cold water then rinse under running water and drain well.

Return grains back to pot, add some oil or butter and sauté for about 8 minutes on medium heat; stirring occasionally. Add 1 tablespoon ground caraway, teaspoon allspice, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon cinnamon and $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon black pepper.

Change heat setting to low. Add 1 cup (of 4 cups) hot beef broth and stir-cook 3 minutes. Add another 1 cup broth, stir-cook 2 minutes, and then slowly add in 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups broth as you stir every now and then. Simmer covered for 15 minutes. Check grains, they need to be firm, plump, soft yet chewy; if not done, add remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ cup broth as you stir. Either way, simmer for another 5 minutes.

Check again to make sure all liquid is absorbed and adjust seasoning if needed. Turn off heat; cover with a kitchen towel and let stand 15 minutes. Fluff with a large fork. Gently mix in remaining caramelized onions and Garbanzo beans.

Prepare roux for meat sauce. In a saucepan, melt 4 teaspoons butter with 4 teaspoons flour, $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground caraway, $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon allspice and a pinch of cinnamon. Stir-cook on medium heat until golden; about 7 min. Add in your meat sauce all at once and cook as you whisk until it comes to a gentle boil and is slightly thickened.

Assemble dish. Arrange moghrabiyeh on a large platter; slightly domed. Place chicken pieces around, towards the bottom and add a few beef cubes in the middle. Scatter remaining caramelized onions all over. Serve with meat sauce on the side in a separate bowl.