

PLANT-POWERED STEW WITH COUSCOUS & BRAISED CHICKPEAS

Shared by Dr Alan Desmond



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Baking the aubergine whole allows the inside to soften beautifully while the skin blisters in the heat of the oven. Enjoy.

There are 12 different plants in this dish, but the real star is the aubergine.

Recipe by Bob Andrew, photo by Dan Jones.

Ingredients

- 1 large aubergine (eggplant)
- 1 red onion, sliced
- 1 red pepper, deseeded and sliced
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- ½ cup green olives, roughly chopped
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- 1½ tbsp harissa
- 1 x 400g can chopped tomatoes or passata
- ¾ cup home made vegetable stock
- 100g (1 cup) baby spinach
- 1 lemon
- Freshly ground black pepper

Braised chickpeas:

- 1 x 400g can chickpeas
- Pinch of saffron (optional)
- ½ cinnamon stick
- ⅓ cup wholegrain couscous
- About ½ cup boiling water
- Handful of parsley, chopped
- Few fresh mint leaves, chopped

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 220°C. Put the aubergine on a baking tray and place in the oven for 30 minutes, turning once or twice, until it is soft and collapsing and the skin is blistered. Pinch it with a pair of tongs to check. Set aside to cool slightly.
2. Warm a few tablespoons water in a large saucepan, then add the onion and red pepper. Fry over a medium heat for 15 minutes, until soft and starting to colour. Add a dash more water if the mixture looks like catching.
3. Meanwhile, tip the chickpeas and their liquid into a large saucepan. Add the saffron (if using) and cinnamon and bring to a simmer. Cook gently for 20 minutes, until the chickpeas are very soft and starting to break down.
4. When the onion mixture is ready, stir in the garlic, olives, cumin, paprika and harissa. Fry for 1 minute before adding the tomatoes and stock. Bring to a simmer and cook for 10 minutes or so.
5. When the chickpeas are ready, stir in the couscous and add the boiling water, just enough to cover everything. Cover the pan and set aside for 5-10 minutes, until the couscous has plumped up and become tender.
6. When the aubergines are cool enough to handle, peel away and discard the burnt skin; don't be too fussy, the odd fleck adds a bit of smokiness. Roughly chop the flesh and stir it into the stew along with the spinach. Taste and adjust the seasoning with pepper and a squeeze or two of lemon juice.
7. Use a fork to fluff up the couscous and chickpeas. Stir in the parsley and mint just before serving with the stew.

PREP TIME: 15 MINS • COOK TIME: 25 MINS • TOTAL TIME: 40 MINS • SERVES: 8

Dr Alan Desmond is a consultant gastroenterologist and lead clinician at the Devon Gut Clinic in Torquay, England. Dr Desmond is a leading voice on the role of nutrition in common diseases of the gut. His book, The Plant-Based Diet Revolution, was published in 2021, including 80 vegan recipes by Bob Andrew.

