

Machbous ala Djaj (Spiced Chicken with Rice)



INGREDIENTS

1. 2 large onions, chopped
2. 2 tablespoons ghee or butter
3. 1 tablespoon *baharat* (see recipe below)
4. 1 teaspoon turmeric
5. 1 chicken, about 3 pounds
6. 1 ^{1/2} cups chopped, peeled tomatoes
7. 3 cloves
8. 1/2 teaspoon powdered *loomi* or 1 strip lemon rind
9. 2 pieces cinnamon bark
10. 6 cardamom pods
11. 2 teaspoons salt
12. 2 ^{1/2} cups water
13. 2 cups basmati or other long-grain rice
14. 2 tablespoons chopped coriander leaves (cilantro)
15. 2 tablespoons chopped parsley

Baharat:

1. 1/2 cup black peppercorns
2. 1/4 cup coriander seeds
3. 1/4 cup cassia bark
4. 1/4 cup cloves
5. 1/3 cup cumin seeds
6. 2 teaspoons cardamom seeds
7. 4 whole nutmegs
8. 1/2 cup ground paprika

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Method:

1. Grind spices all together, grating the nutmeg and adding paprika last. If you want to use ground spices, use the above amounts. Four nutmegs yield about 1/4 cup ground nutmeg.
2. In a deep, heavy pan, fry onion in ghee or butter until transparent and beginning to brown. Stir in 1 tablespoon of *baharat* and turmeric and cook 2 minutes longer.
3. Add chicken pieces, and turn in onion mixture over medium heat and brown lightly. Add tomatoes, cloves, cumin, cinnamon, cardamom pods, and salt, stirring well to combine.
4. Add water; cover and simmer over gentle heat for 45 minutes.
5. Wash rice and drain. Stir rice gently into pot contents; add herbs and bring back to a slow simmer. Cover with lid and simmer on low heat for 35 to 40 minutes, until chicken is tender, stirring once or twice during cooking. Remove from heat and set aside for 10 minutes.