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Bonus web-only recipe for Chicken Legs With Preserved Lemons and Green Olives mentioned in the January/February issue Taste/Food column "Spice of Life: Moroccan cuisine packs a spice rack of flavors in every dish." by Sarene Wallace.

CHICKEN LEGS WITH PRESERVED LEMONS AND GREEN OLIVES

This recipe is excerpted from "Mourad: New Moroccan" by Mourad Lahlou (Artisan Books) Copyright© 2011.

Lahlou writes, "If you're looking for an ultraclassic Moroccan chicken dish—and a great starter recipe for test-driving your new tagine—this is it. In Morocco, where until fairly recently the idea of "chicken parts" didn't exist, it would be made with a whole chicken—or several chickens—sometimes cut into pieces, but more often than not cooked whole. I've eaten this a thousand times, and I remember how we'd all avoid the breast pieces, which were always dry and overcooked, and fight over the legs and thighs. Now I make the dish with dark meat only.

"In Morocco, the bird would be placed in a tagine or a big pot with water, spices, and oil and cooked for a few hours. Then the chicken would be removed and the olives

and preserved lemons added. The sauce would be cooked way down, and the chicken would be put back in at the end to warm it through. I approach it in a more European way, browning the meat in duck fat to build flavor, sautéing the onions with the spices, simmering the legs in stock, and then adding a final enrichment of butter. If you don't have a stainless steel tagine, a heavy Dutch oven (fitted with a cone of aluminum foil) will also work well."*

Ingredients:

6 chicken legs with thighs (8 ounces/226 grams each), trimmed of excess fat

Kosher salt

1 to 3 tablespoons (14 to 42 grams) duck or chicken fat

5 cups (530 grams) thinly sliced yellow onions

2 tablespoons (11 grams) ground coriander

2 teaspoons (5.3 grams) ground white pepper

2 teaspoons (4.1 grams) ground ginger

1 teaspoon (0.9 gram) saffron threads

½ teaspoon (1.4 grams) ground turmeric

1½ cups (352 grams) Chicken Stock

6 quarters (75 grams) preserved lemon rind

½ cup (70 grams) pitted cracked green olives

4 tablespoons (2 ounces/57 grams) unsalted butter

1 tablespoon (4 grams) chopped flat-leaf parsley

2 teaspoons (3 grams) chopped cilantro

Generously salt the chicken legs on all sides. Let sit at room temperature for 1 hour.

Heat 1 tablespoon (14 grams) of the fat in the bottom of a stainless steel tagine over medium-high heat. Add 3 of the chicken legs and cook, turning once, for 3 to 4 minutes on each side, until they are well browned. Remove the legs from the pan and cook the remaining 3 legs. Remove them from the pan.

Discard all but 2 tablespoons (28 grams) of the fat remaining in the pan; if the fat looks burnt, discard it and heat the remaining 2 tablespoons (28 grams) fat in the tagine. Add the onions and sauté over medium-high heat, stirring often and adjusting the heat as necessary, for 15 minutes, or until they are a rich golden brown.

Remove all but the bottom oven rack so the tagine will fit. Preheat the oven to 350°F.

Add the spices and a pinch of salt to the onions and stir constantly for about 1½ minutes to lightly toast the spices. Return the chicken legs to the tagine, pour in the chicken stock, and bring to a boil.

Cover the tagine, transfer to the oven, and cook for 40 minutes, or until the chicken is tender and is beginning to pull away from the ends of the drumsticks. Remove the legs from the pan.

Return the tagine to a burner and simmer for about 3 minutes to reduce the sauce. Lift some sauce on a spoon; it should coat the spoon. If it needs to reduce further, continue to simmer as needed. Add the lemons and olives. When they are hot, whisk in the butter and herbs. Add salt to taste.

Arrange the chicken legs on a platter and spoon the sauce, lemons, and olives over them.

Serves 6.

*To make an aluminum cone: To approximate the effect of the cone-shaped lid, make a cone using a few layers of heavy-duty aluminum foil. Shape it so that it will fit inside the pot with its lid on, set it over the ingredients, and then cover the pot with the lid.

CHICKEN STOCK

“Using chicken feet will add a lot of viscosity to the stock, which is especially important if you’re using the stock to make the jus and sauce. But if you’re using the stock for other purposes, or you can’t get the chicken feet, add 2 pounds (907 grams) of chicken bones in their place,” writes Mourad Lahlou in “Mourad: New Moroccan” by (Artisan Books) Copyright © 2011.

Ingredients:

Canola oil

8 pounds (7.48 kilograms) chicken backs, necks, and bones

8 quarts (7.48 kilograms) cold water

2 pounds (907 grams) chicken feet

2 pounds (907 grams) carrots (about 8 large), peeled

2 celery stalks

1 large onion

4 garlic cloves

8 (8 grams) thyme sprigs

2 (0.3 grams) bay leaves

2 teaspoons (6 grams) Tellicherry peppercorns

For chicken stock that will be used to make chicken jus or chicken sauce:

Put a large roasting pan in the oven and preheat the oven to 475°F.

Remove the pan from the oven and coat with a film of oil. Add all of the bones (but not the feet; browning the feet would remove too much gelatin from them). Drizzle more oil over the bones and roast for about 20 minutes, until browned. Turn the bones over and roast for about 20 minutes longer to brown the second side. Transfer the bones to a 16- to 20-quart stockpot.

Position the roasting pan over two burners and turn the heat to medium-high. Add 4 cups (930 grams) of the water to the pan and deglaze, scraping the browned bits from the bottom of the pan. Strain the deglazing liquid through a fine-mesh strainer into the stockpot. Add the chicken feet to the pot and cover with the remaining 7 quarts (6.5 kilograms) water. It is all right if some of the chicken feet are not completely submerged.

For all-purpose chicken stock (this will also be used for chicken bouillon):
Put the bones and feet in a 16- to 20-quart stockpot and cover with water.

For either stock: How you cook the stock can make the difference between a clean, clear stock and a cloudy stock, so take your time, and never stir the liquid. Cover the bones and liquid with a parchment lid, and brush it with water to keep the edges from curling up. Bring to a simmer over medium heat (high heat would bring the temperature up too quickly). Putting the pot on one side of the burner will move the impurities to one side, making them easier to skim.

Meanwhile, line a strainer with a double layer of dampened cheesecloth and set over a bowl near the stove. You may have used a skimmer in the past to remove the impurities that rise to the surface, but I use a ladle or spoon and inevitably take a bit of the stock with them to be certain I get them all. I ladle the liquid into the strainer, and then return the strained liquid in the bowl to the stockpot.

Rinse the ladle or spoon and the cheesecloth between uses to avoid returning impurities to the pot. Simmer the stock, skimming often, for 2 hours. From time to time, use a pair of tongs to gently move the bones, checking that none are sticking to the bottom of the pot.

Add the remaining ingredients to the pot. Add just enough water to keep the vegetables covered and simmer for 2 hours. Taste the stock- it should have a rich chicken flavor, but remember that no salt has been added. If it seems weak, simmer for an additional 30 minutes to an hour.

Line a chinois or large fine-mesh strainer with a double layer of dampened cheesecloth and set it over a large storage container or bowl. Using a large ladle, ladle the stock from the pot into the strainer, disturbing the bones as little as possible, to avoid clouding the stock. Tilt the pot as necessary to get the liquid at the bottom. Then discard the bones and vegetables.

To store the stock, let cool to room temperature, then refrigerate for up to 3 days, or freeze for up to 3 months.

Makes 5 to 6 quarts (4.69 to 5.62 kilograms).

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