

Vegetable Tagine

I remain a committed carnivore but this was a decent vegetable-only dish. It is based on something found on Jamie Oliver's website but it needed some modification, in my opinion. First of all, the original used expensive saffron which I can never see the point of in something naturally strongly flavoured - saffron is very mildly flavoured and with 2kg of spicy vegetables you'll never taste it. Secondly, some of the spices in the original needed doubling (which I've done) to get a decent Moroccan flavour.

Clearly the choice of veggies is yours and you will undoubtedly have some of your purchases left over for another use. Butternut squash, for example, is large so roast the remaining half with your Sunday joint. If you are like me, you could double up on the chickpeas.

Planning

serves:	4
prep time:	10 mins
cooking time:	1 hr

Ingredients

4 cloves garlic
4cm piece ginger
olive oil
2 tsp ground cumin
1 tsp ground cinnamon
1 tsp ras el hanout
1 tbs tomato paste
2½kg mixed vegetables (e.g. aubergine, courgette, cherry tomatoes, red onion, butternut squash, sweet peppers)
400g tin chickpeas
100g dried (soft) apricots, chopped
1 preserved lemon (rind only), chopped
Salt & pepper

Method

Peel and finely slice the garlic and ginger, then place in a large casserole over medium heat with the oil, cumin, cinnamon and ras el hanout. Add the tomato paste and fry for a few minutes, stirring regularly.

Add some water, say 250 ml to get things going. Trim and chop your veggies into sizeable chunks, adding them to the pan as you go. (Don't peel butternut squash; it isn't necessary.) Add the apricots along with the preserved lemon rind, then tip in the chickpeas, juice and all.

Season with some salt and pepper (you can always add more later) and give everything a good stir being careful not to throw your veg all over the top of the cooker (my pan was pretty full). Simmer gently for about 40 minutes.

Rose harissa rippled through some natural Greek yoghurt made a very pleasant accompaniment and you can, of course, serve it all with couscous.