The Little Yellow Cookbook

Key Moroccan ingredients and recipes

All recipes can also be found online at www.maroque.co.uk
Welcome!

Welcome to my little book on Moroccan food.

The zing of lemon and coriander when lifting the lid on a tagine of chicken with preserved lemon; the delicate aromas of an orange blossom scented dessert; char grilled lamb dusted with cumin, straight from the coals; fantastically fresh fish, pan fried with mouth tingling chermoula; the overwhelming heady scent of mint in mint tea. Just a few of the fabulous images of Moroccan food.

Moroccan food had an amazing diversity and complexity of flavours, reflecting the many cultural influences on its cuisine.

As an enthusiastic cook (as well as diner), I am always looking for interesting recipes to try, and new ingredients to play with. This is a personal collection of the recipes that I have found work for me. I very much hope you enjoy them.

I have also pulled together some of the information I have gathered on the key ingredients used in Moroccan cooking, including a little bit on each of their backgrounds and uses, and listed a few of the recipes that use the ingredients.

In the second section I have gathered together some of my favourite recipes by main food group. I hope you enjoy cooking them.

Julie
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Preserved Lemons

These are widely used in Moroccan cooking, and essential if your dishes are to taste authentic, but cannot unfortunately be replaced with ordinary lemons or limes.

Moroccan preserved lemons are pickled in brine and have a salty-silky taste, and a texture which is difficult to describe. The peel loses its bitterness and adds a very distinctive flavour to a wide variety of dishes: in many dishes the skin only is used.

Preserved lemons are strangely addictive; stopping using them is more difficult than you think, once you have tried them in a variety of dishes.

In Morocco the thin skinned (doqq) lemon is widely used, along with the tart bergamot (boussera), but any lemon will be fine. Preserving your own lemons is not difficult, but it is time consuming. The recipe below comes from Robert Carrier's *A Taste of Morocco*, unfortunately now out of print.

Creating your own preserved lemons

*16 small ripe lemons, thin skinned if possible*

*Coarse salt*

*Lemon juice*

1. Scrub lemons with a stiff brush, then place in a large glass container. Cover with cold water and allow the lemons to soak for 3-5 days, changing the water daily.

2. Drain lemons. Then using the point of a sharp knife, insert knife 6mm (1/4”) from the bud end of each lemon and make four incisions lengthways to within 6mm (1/4”) of the other end. Then cut through incisions in each lemon so that the lemons are cut completely through both sides, but still held together at both ends.

3. Insert 1/4 tsp coarse salt into centre of each lemon, squeezing them open, then arrange lemons in sterilized kilner jars. Sprinkle lemons in each jar with 1tbsp of coarse salt. Add strained juice of 1 lemon to each jar and enough boiling water to cover the lemons.
4. Leave lemons to steep in this mixture for at least 3 weeks before using them. You'll find the salty, oily pickling juice is honey thick and highly flavoured this can be used in salad dressings and added to tagines. The lemons will keep in this mixture for up to a year.

5. To use the preserved lemons, remove lemon from jar, and rinse well under cold running water. Cut away pulp from each quarter and discard. Use skin as required in the recipe. Never touch preserved lemons in the jar with an oily or greasy spoon, as the fat will spoil the pickling mixture. Don't worry if a white film forms on the preserved lemons in the jar; just rinse off before using.

If you are like me, the above sounds far too much like hard work. We do sell the thin skinned lemons already done in a jar, and if you want to look like you make them yourself, we also have preserved lemons in a kilner jar.

Some recipes using preserved lemons

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- **Moroccan roast chicken with preserved lemons and saffron** p28
- **Tagine of lamb with peas, preserved lemon and olives** p20
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Saffron is an integral part of Moroccan cooking and crops up in half the tagine recipes you look at. It imparts such a unique quality to any dish, and it also happens to be one of my favourite spices.

It is described as the most precious and expensive spice in the world. Saffron threads are the dried stigmas of the saffron flower, *crocus sativus linneaus*. Each flower contains only 3 stigmas. These threads must be picked from each flower by hand and approximately 170,000 of these flowers are needed to produce 1kg of saffron filaments, taking around 370 to 470 hours (60-odd days) to produce.

Iran is the world's largest supplier of saffron, producing over 80% of the world supply, most of this is exported to Spain, where it is rebranded and sold on!

The harvest period is traditionally from late September to late December. Drying is the most important part of saffron production as this activates the processes which release the aroma, colour and flavour.

The spice is graded according to the proportion of red stigmas compared to the yellow or white parts of the flower known as the style. The colour and flavour is in the stigmas, more yellow and white parts result in a lower grade saffron. The highest grade saffron contains only the pure red stigmas, these are cut and separated from the style prior to the drying process, and this enables it to retain its pure red colour and highest flavour.

This type of saffron is called sargol in Iran, the equivalent Spanish name is coupe (meaning cut). Pushal (or La Mancha) saffron is not cut like sargol and therefore contains more yellow parts from the style.

Having tried the various grades of saffron, the sargol is far superior and when you look at the various saffrons around you notice the yellow and white parts in them. We have decided to supply only the highest grade sargol saffron as our own Maroque saffron.
Some saffron recipes

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Ras el Hanout literally translates as ‘head’ or ‘top’ of the shop. It fascinates everyone: foreigners and Moroccans alike. It is a very old mixture of many spices, sometimes ten, sometimes nineteen, often over thirty.

The intoxicating aroma is said to have been originally assembled by a nomadic warrior combining all the scents of the countries he had passed through.

In Morocco the mixture is likely to contain reputed aphrodisiacs, which may add to its local appeal. Each spice vendor will have his own secret blend, varying in price according to the rarity of the ingredients.

Ras el Hanout has traditionally been used in game dishes; at Eid el Kebir (Festival of the goat) when mrouzia - a sweet lamb dish containing raisins, almonds and large quantities of honey, is made; and of course in majoun, the infamous hashish balls.

Nowadays it is used in a variety of dishes, marinades and rubs and it goes extremely well with lamb. We have several recipes in our food section.

Should you fancy making your own, this recipe from Paula Wolfert’s *Couscous and Other Good Food From Morocco* is a good mixture.

**Creating your own Ras el Hanout**

4 whole nutmegs, 10 rosebuds, 12 cinnamon sticks, 12 blades of mace, 1 tsp aniseed, 8 pieces turmeric, 2 small pieces of orrisroot, 2 dried cayenne peppers, ½ tsp lavender, 1tbs white peppercorns, 2 pieces galingale, 2 tbsp whole gingerroot, 6 cloves, 24 allspice berries, 20 green cardamom pods, 4 black cardamoms.

Grind all the above ingredients together until you obtain a fine mix.
Some Ras el Hanout recipes

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Couscous

The most famous part of North African cuisine, used as the main ingredient in many dishes in much the same way as rice. Couscous is often considered Moroccan, but it is equally used in Algeria, Tunisia and Libya.

The term comes from Berber languages, where it is called seksou. It consists of small grains, the main ingredient of which is semolina.

Couscous is made in the home, often with many women gathered together, producing large stocks of couscous.

It is made from 2 parts of semolina, 1 part of flour, salt and water. Some handfuls of semolina are put on a plate or on the ground, after which it is moistened with saltwater. What results is moulded in the hand, as flour is added. Gradually small "grains" of couscous are separated.

After performing this process until the right size of the "grains" is achieved, a bit of oil is added. Then the couscous is ready to be used in dishes.

Couscous should be steamed two to three times. When properly cooked the texture is light and fluffy.

The couscous available to buy in the UK has been pre-steamed and dried, and only needs a little boiling water or stock to it to make it ready to eat.

The traditional North African method is to use a steamer called a couscousière. The base is a tall metal pot shaped rather like an oil jar in which the meat and vegetables are cooked in a stew. On top of the base a steamer sits where the couscous is cooked, absorbing the flavours from the stew.

Couscous recipes

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Orange Blossom Water and Rose Water

As early as the third century essences were made from rose petals using fairly crude methods. It wasn’t until the 10th century that Avicenna, an Arab physician discovered how to extract the essential oil from the flowers, and invented rosewater proper.

Its popularity with food quickly spread throughout Europe and made its way into sweet and savoury dishes, many of which are still popular today.

Orange-blossom water is distilled from the fragrant blossoms of Seville oranges.

Two species of orange – sweet and bitter – are native to China. The bitter orange was introduced to Spain by the Moors in the eighth century and planted in the beautiful courtyards of the Alhambra in Granada, and throughout the south of Spain. It became known as the Seville orange.

The orange is favoured for its fresh citrus scent more than its bitter fruit and its floral water is a popular flavouring in Moroccan, Persian and Arabic cooking.

Uses

The trick with both orange blossom and rose waters is to use very little, to give the merest hint of fragrance.

The result is an intriguing flavour. However, too much and it smells like a garden and is too overtly floral to enjoy with food.

The essences are interchangeable: just remember that orange blossom water is the stronger of the two. One of the easiest ways to use them is to make a sugar syrup – as light or as sweet as you prefer – and to flavour it with orange blossom water or rosewater. The syrup can be drizzled over fruit and pastries, or added to drinks.
Orange Blossom Water

This enhances fruit, particularly apricots, figs, strawberries, rhubarb, pears, dates and bananas. Add a few drops to fruit salads, summer pudding, fruit pastries, stewed or poached fruit, fruit creams and fruit crêpes.

A few drops added to savoury dishes such as lamb with apricots and almonds, chicken with white wine and grapes, duck with cherries, and Persian or Arabic rice dishes, adds an irresistibly exotic touch.

Try adding half a teaspoon of orange-blossom water to salad dressings. This is intriguing with carrot salad, avocado and smoked fish and stir-fried peppers with ginger and chilli.

Rose Water

A few drops streaked through cream, crème fraîche, custards, creamed rice puddings, baked semolina sweetmeats, fruit fools, sugar syrups and fruit salads, add an element of surprise.

It’s divine incorporated into sweet Middle Eastern pastries, and a little swirled through Khoshaf, a salad of dried fruit, pistachio nuts and almonds, is heavenly.

It is much appreciated in halva (sweetmeat), Turkish delight, lassi (yoghurt drink) and baklava (layered pastry and nut).

Orange blossom and rose water recipes

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Saffron and cardamom crème caramel  p39
Mint tea, known as atay bi nahna, is the national drink of Morocco, and is an integral part of Moroccan hospitality.

A steaming glass of the fragrant, sweet, light tea is offered as a sign of welcome. It is drunk in the morning; offered throughout the day while bargaining, conducting business, or wandering about; and served at the end of the meal to aid digestion.

A blend of Chinese gunpowder green tea and fresh mint, traditionally sweetened with at least four sugar lumps per glass, it is incredibly refreshing on a hot day.

Tea only arrived in Morocco in 1854 when, during the Crimean War, the blockade of the Baltic sea drove British merchants to seek new markets for their goods and they disposed of stocks of tea in Tangier and Mogador.

At feasts and on special occasions, mint tea making can be an elaborate ceremony: the best green tea is chosen and only fresh spearmint (mentha spicata) is used. A fine silver plated, bulbous teapot is selected for brewing, and the heavily sweetened tea is poured rhythmically into fine glasses. For additional ceremony, a fresh, fragrant orange blossom or jasmine flower may be floated in each glass.

**Mint Tea**

Serves 2

300ml (1/2 pint) water  
5 tsp sugar  
1 tsp green tea  
bunch of fresh mint leaves  

or  

300ml (1/2 pint) water  
5 tsp sugar  
1 tsp Maroque mint tea blend  

1. Bring the water to the boil. Put the sugar and the green tea with fresh mint leaves (or the mint tea) in a small traditional Moroccan teapot, and add the boiling water.
2. Leave to steep for 5 minutes, serve hot.

**Saffron Tea**

A variation on mint tea is saffron tea, less widely drunk but a very pleasant alternative. This tea is a speciality of the southern Moroccan town of Taliouine, the saffron capital of Morocco.

Serves 5

2 tsp of Chinese green tea  
1 tsp of saffron threads  
900ml (1 1/2 pints) water  
Sugar to taste

1. Rinse the teapot with boiling water. Add the tea and saffron to the emptied pot.

2. Bring the water to the boil and immediately pour into the teapot. Leave to stand for 5 minutes.

3. Pour the tea through a strainer into warm glasses. Add sugar to taste and decorate each glass with a lemon slice if liked and a mint sprig.

For a fascinating insight into the art of mint tea making, I recommend reading *Traditional Moroccan Cooking, Recipes from Fez* by Madame Guinaudeau. This book, first published in 1958, is by all accounts the first on Moroccan cooking since the 12th century. A very interesting read full of amazing details, it may be less useful as a cookbook unless you are cooking for 10 to 20 people (using a whole goat).
Skewered and grilled lamb

These little kebabs are the closest thing I have come across to the ones served at the many booths that set up in the Jemaa-el-Fna at dusk.

750g (1.5lb) boned leg of lamb, cut into 1.5cm cubes
1 tbsp olive oil
1 onion grated
2 tbsp finely chopped parsley
Salt to taste
1/2 tsp freshly ground black pepper

To serve

cayenne
cumin
salt

1. Place the lamb cubes in a shallow dish with all the other ingredients. Toss well and leave to stand for 2 hours.

2. Thread the meat onto metal skewers about 6 to 8 pieces per kebab.

3. Place the kebabs about 5 to 10cm away from the heat source, either grill or barbeque.

4. Cook until browned and turn over. The lamb should be cooked through but still juicy.

5. Sprinkle each kebab with a small amount of cayenne, cumin and salt to your taste, bearing in mind the heat of the cayenne, and serve hot with bread

Grill on highest setting or ideally a hot barbeque. Serves 6.
Carrot and orange salad

This simple salad is refreshing, and the orange blossom water adds an unusual touch.

- 500g (1lb) carrots
- 3 oranges
- 4 tsp orange blossom water
- 4 tsp caster sugar
- Juice of 1 lemon
- Salt
- Ground cinnamon

1. Peel the carrots and grate finely (a good job to give a willing helper!).
2. Peel the oranges and cut the flesh into small pieces, catching the juices.
3. Mix the oranges, carrots, orange blossom water and sugar together in a serving bowl, adding plenty of salt.
4. Sprinkle ground cinnamon over the surface and chill well before serving.

Serves 6 as part of a salad selection.

Prawn kebabs

These are quick to make and very tasty.

- 20 raw tiger prawns, peeled and deveined, tails left intact
- 3 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 1/2 tbsp virgin olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves, finely crushed
- 3 tbsp chopped mint
- salt & pepper
- lemon wedges to serve

1. Put the prawns into a glass or pottery bowl. Mix together the lemon juice, olive oil, garlic and mint, season with salt and pepper and pour over the prawns. Stir to coat the prawns with the dressing then leave for 30 minutes.
2. Thread the prawns on to skewers and cook under a preheated grill for about 3 minutes on each side until they turn pink.
3. Serve on a bed of salad, if you like, with lemon wedges.
Grilled aubergines in honey and harissa

This sweet, sticky, spicy dish has a fantastically decedent quality to it, one of the best ways to have aubergine, and if you can get hold of the baby ones even better.

2 aubergines, peeled and thickly sliced
Olive oil for frying
2-3 garlic cloves, crushed
5cm (2in) piece of fresh root ginger, peeled and grated
1 tsp ground cumin
1 tsp Harissa
3 tbsp clear honey
Juice of 1 lemon
Sea salt

1. Preheat the grill or griddle. Dip each aubergine slice in olive oil and cook in a pan either under the grill or in a griddle pan. Turn the slices so they are lightly browned on both sides.

2. In a wide frying pan, fry the garlic in a little olive oil for a few seconds, then stir in the ginger, cumin, harissa, honey and lemon juice. Add enough water to cover the base of the pan and to thin the mixture, then lay the aubergine slices in the pan.

3. Cook the aubergines gently for about 10 minutes, or until they have absorbed all the sauce.

4. Add a little extra water if necessary, season to taste with salt.

5. Serve at room temperature with chunks of fresh bread to mop up the juices.

Serves 4
Warm chickpea salad with ginger

This tangy chickpea dish is a great accompaniment to grilled fish.

- 5 tbsp virgin olive oil
- 1 large red onion, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves crushed
- 4cm (1 1/2”) piece of fresh root ginger, grated
- 2 x 400g (13oz) cans of chickpeas, drained
- Pinch of dried chilli flakes
- Juice of 1 1/2 lemons
- Leaves from a bunch of coriander, chopped
- Salt and pepper
- Mixed ground cumin and paprika, to serve

1. Heat 1 tablespoon of the oil in a frying pan, add the onion, ginger and garlic and cook gently for 5–7 minutes until soft and transparent.

2. Add the chickpeas and chilli flakes and stir for about 30 seconds, then add the lemon juice and let the mixture bubble until almost dry. Add the coriander and season to taste with salt and pepper.

3. Turn the chickpea mixture into a warm serving bowl and pour over the remaining olive oil. Sprinkle a little ground cumin and paprika over the top.

Serves 4

Aubergine and tahini dip

This creamy sesame dip is a delight to eat, stopping eating is the hardest part; your guests will love it.

- 4 large aubergines
- 8 tsp tahini paste
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 8 tsp lime juice
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 2 tsp sesame oil
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- Salt & pepper to taste

1. Preheat the oven to 230C (gas mark 8). Prick the aubergines all over and place on a baking sheet in the oven for about 30 minutes, until very soft.

2. Remove and cut the stems off, leave to cool. Split in half, remove and retain all the flesh, and discard the skins.
3. Put all the ingredients, except the olive oil, into a food processor and whiz to a smooth puree.

4. Spoon into a pretty serving dish and chill until needed. Just before serving, drizzle the olive oil over the dip.

**Briks** (pronounced 'breeks')

These little savoury pastries can be filled with minced lamb or beef, spinach or cheese and herbs. Traditionally made with ouarka pastry, deep fried and served immediately, these baked, filo pastry versions are ideally served just warm, so can be done a little way in advance.

![Image of filo pastry](image)

- 250g (8oz) filo pastry, thawed
- olive oil for brushing
- sesame seeds

**Cheese filling:**
- 250g (8oz) feta cheese
- 1 egg
- bunch of coriander, mint and flat leaf parsley all finely chopped

**Beef or lamb filling:**
- 200g (6 1/2oz) mince
- 1 small onion finely chopped
- 2 tbsp pine nuts
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp ras el hanout

1. Prepare the fillings in advance.

2. To make the cheese filling, mash the cheese with a fork, then mix in the egg and chopped herbs.

3. To make the meat filling, heat the oil in a heavy frying pan. Add the onions and pine nuts and cook until coloured, then stir in the ras el hanout. Add the meat and cook for about 15 minutes, stirring, until browned. Season and cool.

4. Both these can be made and kept in the fridge for a few hours, until needed.

5. Cut the pastry into approx 10cm by 25cm (4in by 10in) strips. Work with 3 or 4 strips at a time; keeping the rest covered with cling film.

6. Brush the strips lightly with oil and put a heaped teaspoon of filling at the top right-handed corner of each one. Fold the corner down to make a triangle. Continue folding the triangle along the length of the strip. Place on a baking sheet and brush with oil. Repeat until all the filling has been used.
7. Sprinkle the briks with sesame seed and bake in a preheated oven 190C, gas mark 5, for about 20 minutes until crisp and golden. Take out of the oven and leave to cool. Serve just warm.
Lamb Recipes

Tagine of lamb with peas, preserved lemon and olives

This is a fresh spring dish full of Moroccan flavours.

1kg (2lb) lean lamb, cubed
2 tbsp sunflower oil
1 onion chopped
Salt and pepper
1 tsp ground ginger
Pinch of chilli powder, optional
1/4 tsp of saffron threads, lightly crushed
1kg (2lb) fresh peas, shelled weight
1 tbsp chopped fresh coriander
Peel of 1 preserved lemon, cut into pieces
12 green olives

1. Put the meat in the pot with the oil, onion, salt and pepper, ginger, chilli and saffron.

2. Cover with water and cook covered for 1 1/2 to 2 hours until the meat is very tender, adding water to keep it covered in the sauce.

3. Add the preserved lemon peel and olives and cook uncovered for 10 minutes or longer, until the sauce has reduced.

4. Add the peas and coriander, and warm through.

5. Serve with bread or couscous.

Pre-heat oven to 180C (gas mark 4). Serves 6-8.
Harira

Moroccan lamb broth with lentils & chickpeas. This recipe was kindly given to me by Khalil at Nomades.

500g lamb cut into small cubes
1 large onion, peeled & finely chopped
100g lentils, soaked and drained
100g chickpeas, soaked overnight and drained
100g of sliced celery
200g chopped tinned tomatoes
2 tbsp of Nomades Lamb Tagine spice mix
1/2 tsp of ground cinnamon (optional)
salt & ground black pepper to taste
2 tbsp of sunflower oil
water to cover

4 tbsp of butter ghee or salted butter
100g fine vermicelli
3 tbsp of chopped fresh coriander
3 tbsp of chopped fresh parsley
2 tbsp tomato puree
1 tbsp of plain flour

1. Heat the sunflower oil in a large saucepan and add the first 9 ingredients. Stir well and sweat for a couple of minutes. Add the water to cover and gently bring to the boil.

2. Whilst the broth is starting to boil, make sure you skim all froth from the surface. Add half of the butter. Stir and cover with a lid, then turn down the heat to a gentle simmer. Leave to cook for between 1 1/2 - 2 hours, top up with a little water if necessary.

3. Add the vermicelli, stir well and continue to cook for a few minutes.

4. To finish the soup, dilute the flour in little water, stir in the tomato puree, chopped coriander & parsley, then add to the soup. Mix thoroughly, add the remaining butter and adjust the seasoning to suit your taste. Serve immediately.

5. A squeeze of lemon juice in each bowl will enhance this wonderful broth.

Serves 4 generously.
Tagine of lamb with quince

Quinces were popular with the Moors for their perfume and are still abundant in Morocco today (as well as my garden in Suffolk). In medieval times, to give a quince to a lady was a declaration of love.

750g (1 1/2lb) lean lamb cut into large chunks
2 onions, finely chopped
60g (2 1/2oz) butter
1/2 tsp ground ginger
1 tsp freshly ground black pepper
1/2 tsp saffron strands
1 cinnamon stick
600ml (1pt) vegetable stock or water
Sea salt
2 large quinces
2 tsp runny honey
1/2 tsp ground cinnamon

1. Place the lamb, onion, butter, ginger, pepper, saffron and stick of cinnamon either in a tagine on the hob (if your tagine is suitable) or in a heavy based pan and fry gently in the butter for about 10 minutes, until the spices give off their aroma.

2. Add the water and bring to a simmer. Transfer to a tagine, or transfer your tagine to the oven, for about 1 to 1 1/2 hours until the meat is tender, topping up the water if necessary.

3. Cut the quince into 8 pieces and remove the core but don’t peel. Place the quinces in the tagine and stir in the honey and ground cinnamon, add water if necessary: the quinces should be just covered. Continue to simmer for 30 minutes until the quinces are quite tender. Add salt to taste

4. Serve with warm bread.

Serves 4
Lamb tagine with honeyed prunes

This tagine is a firm favourite in our house.

1kg (2lb) shoulder of lamb, in 4cm (1 1/2”) cubes
2 Spanish onions, coarsely grated
3 plump garlic gloves, crushed
4 tbsp of olive oil
large pinch of dried chilli flakes
1/2 tsp ground ginger
1/2 tsp ground cumin
1/2 tsp paprika
pinch of crushed saffron threads
2 x 400gm (13oz) cans of tomatoes
1 strip orange rind
2 cinnamon sticks
bunch of coriander, chopped
24 large ready-to-eat prunes
3-4 tbsp clear honey
75gm (3oz) toasted blanched whole almonds
pepper
mint leaves to garnish

1. Put the lamb into a bowl. Add the onions, garlic, oil, chilli flakes, ginger, cumin, paprika, saffron and plenty of black pepper. Stir to coat the meat well. Cover and leave to marinade in a cool place for at least 2 hours, or in the refrigerator overnight.

2. Heat a large, heavy frying pan. Add the lamb in batches and brown evenly. Transfer to a tagine or heavy casserole. Put the marinade into the frying pan and cook, stirring for 2-3 minutes then stir in the lamb. Add the tomatoes, orange rind, cinnamon and half of the coriander. Mix well then cover and cook in a preheated oven, 160C (gas mark 3), for 1 1/4 hours.

3. Meanwhile, put the prunes into a saucepan with the honey and just enough water to cover and simmer for 10 minutes.

4. Add the prunes and the cooking juices to the tagine and cook for 15 minutes, adding the remaining coriander after about 7 minutes.

5. Scatter almonds over the tagine, garnish with mint leaves and serve with couscous.

Serves 6

Ras el Hanout lamb

This simple dish is a great recipe to try, the complex flavours of the Ras el Hanout are very different. Not a quick dish, but not difficult. The quantities of the spice make the dish
quite spicy, if you like something milder, you may wish to halve the spice mix the first time you make it.

2 tbsp of olive oil
500g (1lb) lean lamb cut into bite sized chunks
2 large onions chopped
2 garlic cloves chopped
30g (1oz) sliced almonds toasted
2 tsp Ras el Hanout spice blend
2 tbsp honey
1 pint of vegetable stock
salt and black pepper

1. Add the oil to a large saucepan or deep-sided frying pan and fry the onions and garlic until brown. Set aside.

2. Fry off lamb until coloured, add onions and garlic back into the pan.

3. Add Ras el Hanout, salt and pepper stir well to coat everything.

4. Add vegetable stock and bring to the boil, reduce to a simmer and cook for 1 hour 30 minutes.

5. Add the honey and continue to cook for 30 minutes, until the lamb is very tender.

6. Serve with rice and scatter the toasted almonds over as you serve it.

Serves 4
Seven vegetable couscous

Every family in Moroccan has its own version, this is mine. It does include lamb, but it works just as well without the meat for a veggie feast. Using seven vegetables is meant to be lucky.

1kg (2lb) lean lamb cut into large chunks or a lamb shank each
2 onions sliced
300g (11oz) couscous
1100ml (2pts) of vegetable stock
1 tsp paprika
1 tsp ground cumin
1 tsp ground cinnamon
1/2 tsp cayenne
1/2 tsp ground ginger
2 generous pinches of saffron strands
30g (1oz) butter
Coriander leaves chopped
Salt and pepper, to taste

8 small carrots
1 squash cut into slices
8 small courgettes
4 small aubergines
4 large tomatoes
2 peppers cut into quarters
400g (13oz) tin of chick peas (I class this as a veg)

You can substitute potatoes, parsnips, swede and cabbage, depending on season.

1. This dish is ideally cooked in a couscoussière, but a large pot with a lid and a large sieve or colander lined with damp muslin will do fine. Or for ease, cook the couscous separately with stock and butter.

2. Fry off the lamb and onions until brown.

3. Add all the spices (not the coriander leaves) and stir until coated. Add the stock and bring to the boil. Reduce the heat to a simmer.

4. Cook the lamb and spices for about an hour, longer for lamb shank.

5. While the lamb is cooking, rinse the couscous in water, drain and set aside, break up any lumps that form with your fingers.

6. Add the carrots and the chickpeas to the lamb and cook for 30 minutes.

7. During this time add the couscous to the sieve and place over the pot with the lid on, to steam the couscous in the aromatic steam, for about 10 minutes. Remove from the top of the pot and fork through to break up any lumps and then add the butter to the couscous working it through with a fork.
8. Add the rest of the vegetables to the pot along with the chopped coriander, add more stock if needed.

9. Place the buttered couscous back on top of the pot and replace the lid. Cook for about 10 minutes until the vegetables are tender.

10. To serve, heap the couscous onto a warmed platter and form into an even ring around the outside. With a slotted spoon, transfer the lamb and the vegetables to the centre of the dish. Pour some of the juice over and the rest into a serving jug.

Serves 4
Chicken Recipes

Chicken with preserved lemon and green olives

Preserved lemons give a distinctive flavour to this famous Moroccan dish.

1 large chicken
3 tbsp sunflower oil
1 onion finely chopped
2 garlic cloves crushed
1/4 tsp saffron strands crushed
1/2 tsp ground ginger
1 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
salt & pepper
good bunch of fresh coriander finely chopped
good bunch of fresh parsley finely chopped
peel of 1 to 1 1/2 preserved lemons, cut into quarters
75g (3oz) green olives soaked in 2 changes of water for 30 minutes

1. Put the chicken into a large saucepan with all the ingredients except the preserved lemon and olives.

2. Half cover with water (about 300ml or 1/2 pint) and simmer, covered, turning if necessary, for about 45 minutes.

3. Throw the lemon peel and drained, rinsed olives into the sauce and cook for 20 minutes or until the chicken is so tender that the flesh pulls off the bone and the liquid is reduced.

4. Serve hot with couscous.

Serves 4
Moroccan roast chicken with preserved lemons and saffron

A Moroccan friend advised me that once you start using preserved lemons you use them in everything. I’m not there yet, but this adds a great twist on the traditional roast chicken: Anglo-Moorish fusion cooking

1 medium free range chicken
2 small preserved lemons, quartered
pinch of saffron, lightly crushed
1 tbsp olive oil
300ml (1/2pt) of chicken stock
flour to thicken gravy
salt and pepper

1. Wash the chicken and wipe away excess water. Place the quartered lemons in the cavity of the chicken. Put in a medium sized roasting tin.

2. Rub the skin with the crushed saffron and season liberally with salt and pepper. Drizzle the oil over the chicken rubbing well into the skin and the saffron.

3. Roast for 20 minutes per pound plus 20 minutes (45 minutes per kilo plus 20 minutes). Basting every 1/2 hour.

4. When cooked, remove the chicken from the oven, wrap in tin foil and place on a warmed plate, make sure all the juices from the chicken are left in the roasting tin to flavour the gravy. Leave the wrapped chicken to rest in a warm place for 30 minutes.

5. Skim any excess fat from the roasting tin, leaving about 1/2 tablespoon behind to mix with the flour. Add the flour to the tin mixing well to form a paste. Place tin over a hot plate and slowly add the chicken stock to make the gravy. Season to taste.

6. Carve rested chicken and serve with the saffron and lemon flavoured gravy.

Chicken with coriander and lemon

4 chicken breasts
grated rind and juice of a lemon
seeds from 6 cardamom pods, roasted and crushed
1 1/2 tsp of ground cumin
1 1/2 tsp of ground coriander
1 garlic clove crushed
2 tbsp olive oil
1 onion finely chopped
450 ml (3/4 pt) chicken stock
bunch of coriander
salt and pepper
rice or bread to serve

1. Put the chicken breasts into a shallow glass or pottery bowl. Pour over the lemon rind and juice then add the cardamom, cumin, coriander and garlic. Cover and refrigerate for 24 hours, turning occasionally.

2. Heat the oil in a large, flameproof casserole. Add the onion and cook until translucent. Arrange the chicken on the cooked chopped onion. Rinse the bowl with some of the stock and pour over the chicken. Add the remaining stock and the coriander and season with salt and pepper.

3. Heat to simmering point then cover the casserole and poach the chicken, turning it over twice, for about 40 minutes until the juices run clear when the thickest part is pierced with the point of a sharp knife.

4. Remove chicken to a warmed serving platter, boil the cooking juices if necessary to concentrate them, then serve with the chicken, accompanied by rice or bread.

Serves 4

No-lemon chicken

This originated from an observation that all Moroccan chicken dishes seem to contain lemon.

1 tbsp of olive oil
2 chicken breasts chopped into bite-sized bits
1 large onion chopped
2 garlic cloves chopped
1 red pepper diced
a large pinch of saffron strands
a large shake of cumin seeds
1 tsp of ground coriander
1/2 tsp of chilli powder
1 pint of chicken stock
salt and a generous amount of black pepper
1. Add the oil to a large saucepan or deep-sided frying pan and fry the onions and garlic until brown. Set aside.

2. Fry off the chicken until coloured, return the onions and garlic to the pan.

3. Add saffron, cumin seeds, coriander, chilli, salt and pepper, and stir well to coat everything.

4. Add the chicken stock and bring to the boil. Reduce to a strong simmer and cook for 30 minutes, or until you have a nice consistency to the sauce. Serve with rice.

Serves 2, easily doubled

**La Karma chicken kebabs**

This very simple kebab is lovely cooked on the barbecue.

1. Combine all the ingredients together in a glass bowl, stir well to coat the chicken. Refrigerate for at least 20 minutes, longer if you have time.

2. Thread the chicken cubed on to skewers, and either grill or barbecue, turning until done.

3. Serve with warm pitta bread.

Serves 2
Beef Recipes

Meatballs with tomato and eggs

You will need a large shallow pan or pot that can go on the table. In Morocco the cooking is finished in a shallow earthenware tagine, which goes on top of the fire (although we do not recommend placing our tagines over a direct heat source).

For the meatballs:
- 750g (1 1/2 lb) minced beef or lamb
- 1 onion finely chopped
- 3 tbsp finely chopped flat-leaf parsley
- salt & pepper
- a pinch of chilli powder to taste
- 1 tsp of ground cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp ground ginger
- 1 tsp of ground cumin
- sunflower oil for frying

For the tomato sauce:
- 2 onions chopped
- 2 tbsp of olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves crushed
- 750g (1 1/2 lb) tomatoes, peeled and chopped (I used tinned)
- 1-2 tsp of sugar
- 1 small fresh chilli pepper, seeded and chopped (optional)
- 3 tbsp of chopped flat-leaf parsley
- 3 tbsp of chopped coriander
- 6 eggs

1. For the meatballs, mix all the ingredients together except the oil, and knead into a soft paste (I whizzed the onions, herbs and spices until chopped finely and then added the meat and gave it another quick whiz: it saved all the chopping finely).

2. Roll into 3cm (1") balls and fry them briefly in batches in shallow oil, shaking the pan to colour them all over. Lift out with a slotted spoon.

3. In a large shallow pot, which you will bring to the table, prepare the sauce. Fry the onions in the oil until soft. Add the garlic, tomatoes, sugar, salt and chilli pepper, and simmer for 20 minutes until reduced.

4. Add the parsley and coriander, put in the meatballs and cook for 5 minutes.

5. Break the eggs over the sauce and cook until the whites are set. Serve with plenty of warm bread.

Serves 6 (easily reduced)
Fish Recipes

Chermoula

Chermoula is a highly flavoured Moroccan marinade, which is the life saver of boring fish. There are hundreds of chermoula recipes, all different: every Moroccan cook book you pick up will contain at least three versions. It is worth trying several and ending up with a hybrid of your own. This is my version.

2-3 garlic cloves chopped
1-2 tsp ground cumin
Pinch of saffron threads
4 tbsp of olive oil
Juice of a lemon
1 small red chilli, seeded and chopped
1 tsp salt
Small bunch of fresh coriander, finely chopped

1. Place the garlic, cumin, saffron, olive oil, lemon juice, chilli and salt in a mortar and pound with a pestle. Or alternatively put all the above in a food processor and whiz until finely chopped, I have little baby processor which makes this a doddle.

2. Add the fresh coriander and mix in or give an additional quick whiz to combine.

3. Spread the mixture over the fish of your choice and leave to marinade for at least 15 minutes.


Chermoula marinated fish can be grilled, barbequed, baked or pan fried, whichever suits the fish of your choice. Pan fried salmon steaks are good, cod fillets cut into chunks and marinated are great barbequed.
Spicy couscous with aromatic shellfish broth

A recipe that conjures up sitting on the shores of the Mediterranean on a warm evening. This is the type of dish you may enjoy along the coast by Tangier or Casablanca. The soup-like stew is ladled over cooked couscous and mopped up with lots of bread. This recipe has been adapted from one by Gillie Basan.

500g (1 1/4lb) medium couscous
1 tsp salt
600ml (1pt) warm water
45ml (3 tbsp) sunflower oil
1-2 tsp harissa paste
25g (1oz) butter diced

For the shellfish broth:
500g (1 1/4lb) mussels in their shells, scrubbed and beards removed
500g (1 1/4lb) uncooked prawns in their shells
Juice of 1 lemon
50g (2oz) butter
2 shallots, finely chopped
1 tsp coriander seeds, roasted and ground
1 tsp cumin seeds, roasted and ground
1/2 tsp ground turmeric
1/2 tsp cayenne pepper
1-2 tsp plain flour
600ml (1pt) fish stock
120ml (4floz) double cream
Salt and ground black pepper
Small bunch of fresh coriander, finely chopped, to serve

1. Preheat the oven to 180C (gas mark 4). Place the couscous in a bowl. Stir the salt into the water, then pour over the couscous, stirring. Set aside for 10 minutes.

2. Stir the sunflower oil into the harissa paste until combined, then using your fingers, rub it into the couscous and break up any lumps. Tip into an ovenproof dish, arrange the butter over, cover with foil and heat in the oven for 20 minutes.

3. Meanwhile, put the mussels and prawns in a pan, discarding any mussels already open, add the lemon juice and 50ml/2floz water, cover and cook for 3-4 minutes, shaking the pan, until the mussels have opened. Drain the shellfish, reserving the liquor, and shell about two-thirds of the mussels and prawns. Discard any closed mussels.

4. Heat the butter in a large pan. Cook the shallots for about 5 minutes, or until softened. Add the spices and fry for 1 minute. Off the heat, stir in the flour, the fish stock and the shellfish cooking liquor. Bring to the boil, stirring. Add the cream and simmer, stirring occasionally, for about 10 minutes. Season with salt
and pepper, add the shellfish and most of the fresh coriander. Heat through, then sprinkle with the remaining coriander.

5. Fluff up the couscous with a fork or your fingers, working in the melted butter. To serve, pass round the couscous and ladle the broth over the top.

Serves 4-6.

Try making your own harissa paste from our harissa spice mix – I think the flavours beat ordinary ready-made pastes hands down.

**Trout stuffed with couscous, almonds and herbs**

A light fish dish to remind you of summers in Morocco.

4 tbsp olive oil  
1 small onion, finely chopped  
2 garlic cloves, crushed  
125g (4oz) couscous  
300ml (1/2pt) fish or vegetable stock  
1 tbsp of chopped parsley  
1 tbsp of chopped mint  
4 trout, each weighing about 375g (12oz), gutted, heads removed and boned (worth talking nicely to your fishmonger, and he should do this in no time)  
50g (2oz) flaked almonds  
salt and pepper

1. Heat 2 tablespoons of the oil in a frying pan, add the onion and fry until softened, adding the garlic towards the end. Stir in the couscous, fish or vegetable stock, parsley and mint. Bring to the boil then remove the pan from the heat and leave for 10-15 minutes until the liquid has been absorbed.

2. Season the trout with salt and pepper and fill the cavity of each one with a quarter of the couscous mixture. Lay the fish in a greased shallow baking dish. Mix the remaining oil with the almonds and spoon over the fish.

3. Bake in a preheated oven, 200C (gas mark 6), for 15-20 minutes until the fish flakes when tested with a fork.

4. Garnish with lemon wedges and serve with warm bread.

Serves 4
Hanane’s beans

This recipe was kindly given to me by a very good Moroccan friend, and has become a firm favourite in our house. It’s a fantastic way to have broad beans.

500g (1 1/4lb) broad beans (frozen will do)
1/2 preserved lemon, chopped
Good handful of fresh coriander, chopped
Vegetable stock enough to cover the beans
4 gloves of garlic crushed
1 tbsp olive oil
Pinch of paprika
Pinch of cumin

1. Add the olive oil to a pan and very gently fry the garlic, just enough to remove the raw taste.

2. Add the beans, preserved lemon and coriander to the pan and stir to coat

3. Pour in enough stock to cover the beans.

4. Simmer gently until beans are done, this should only take a few minutes

5. Transfer to a serving dish and sprinkle with a pinch of paprika and cumin

6. Serve with lots of bread to soak up the lovely juice

Serves 4
Ras el Hanout spiced green lentils

This spicy lentil recipe has been adapted from Ruth Watson's *Fat Girl Slim* recipe, and is a great dish to go with grilled meats. If you like this I highly recommend the original, and many of the recipes in Ruth's book, which can be found in our books section.

1 tbsp olive oil
1 large red onion chopped
2 garlic cloves crushed
1 tsp of Ras el Hanout spice blend
175g Puy or green lentils
700ml hot chicken or vegetable stock
2 medium tomatoes, skinned, de-seeded and chopped
1 large handful of fresh coriander chopped

1. Heat the olive oil in a large heavy pan over a low-medium flame. Tip in the onions and garlic and stir thoroughly. Cook gently for 10-15 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the onions are softened.

2. Add the Ras el Hanout and fry for 1-2 minutes, stirring. Raise the heat, add the lentils and stock, and bring to a boil uncovered. Reduce to a steady simmer and cook for 15-20 minutes, adding a good pinch of salt towards the end.

3. When the lentils are barely resilient to the bite, remove the pan from the heat. Season with black pepper, add more salt if necessary, stir in the tomatoes and coriander, and cook for 2-3 more minutes. They should be sloppy in consistency.

4. Keep warm and serve with grilled meat.

Serves 2
Sautéed celery

Simple and tasty.

675g (1 1/2lb) celery
1 tbsp lemon juice
salt
75g (3oz) butter
2 tsp Zahtar spice blend

1. Chop the celery into 5cm (2") chunks and blanch in boiling water for 4 minutes, drain.

2. In the mean time heat the butter in frying pan, add still hot celery and stir-fry for 3-4 minutes.

3. Add the Zahtar spice blend, lemon juice & salt, fry for a few minutes & serve.

Serves 4
Sesame-coated Majoun balls

Minus their most famous ingredient.

250g (9oz) blanched almonds
125g (4oz) walnuts
250g (9oz) raisins
125g (4oz) clear honey
65g (2oz) butter
1 tsp Ras el Hanout
1 tsp ground ginger
60-75g (4-5oz) sesame seeds

1. Finely chop the almonds, walnuts and raisins in a food processor or blender until they form a coarse, slightly sticky mixture.

2. Melt the butter in a large heavy pan and stir in the honey, Ras el Hanout and ginger.

3. Add the nuts and raisins and stir over a gentle heat for a few seconds until the mixture is thoroughly combined, firm and sticky.

4. Cool a little, then shape into about 30 balls.

5. Roll the balls in sesame seeds to coat completely.

6. Serve as an after dinner sweet with strong coffee.

Makes about 30 balls
Saffron and cardamom crème caramel

A creamy luxuriant dessert with subtle flavours reminiscent of Morocco.

600ml (1pt) milk
115g (4oz) sugar, plus 4 tsp for caramel
Good pinch of saffron threads
1/2 tsp cardamom seeds
1-2 tsp rose water
4 eggs lightly beaten
4 tbsp boiling water

1. Preheat the oven to 180C (gas mark 4). Heat the milk, sugar, saffron and cardamom in a pan until the milk is just about to boil.

2. Set aside to cool. Add the rose water, then gradually pour the mixture into the eggs, beating all the time. Set aside.

3. To make the caramel, heat 60ml/4 tbsp sugar in a small heavy pan until melted and dark brown.

4. Stir in the water, holding the pan at arm’s length as the caramel will spit. Let it bubble before tipping it into individual dishes. Swirl the dishes to coat the base and sides evenly. Leave to cool.

5. Strain the cooled custard, pour into the dishes and stand them in a roasting pan. Pour cold water around the dishes to two-thirds of the way up.

6. Bake in the oven for about 1 hour, or until the custard has set.

7. Cool, then chill for several hours or overnight.

8. To serve, run a knife around the edges of the crème caramel dishes and invert on to plates. Serve immediately.

Serves 4-6
All About Tagines

What is a Tagine?

Tagine is the Moroccan word that refers to both the unique glazed earthenware vessel with a distinctive conical lid, and also the food prepared in it.

Traditionally used by nomads as portable ovens over charcoal braziers for making stews, usually containing meat, the tagine is used for both cooking and serving, but care should be taken to protect your table when using the tagine as a serving dish as the base will be very hot.

Cooking Principles

The conical-shaped lid helps preserves moisture in the food as the steam condenses on the inside of the lid. The shape of the lid also creates circulation within the dish, infusing the food with spices and flavours.

The low indirect heat produces a rich, aromatic flavour as the food slowly simmers for hours and the resulting meat becomes meltingly tender.

Most tagines involve slow simmering of less-expensive meats. Very few Moroccan tagine recipes require initial browning, making them ideal to cook in the oven.

Types of Tagine

Tagines come in two types: those that can be used for cooking; and those used for serving only.

Traditional Moroccan cooking tagines

Traditional Moroccan tagines are made in Morocco of glazed terracotta and ideally require seasoning before use. They can be used in the oven and over a low gas flame with a heat diffuser, but are not dishwasher safe; please wash by hand in warm soapy water.

Seasoning your tagine for first use

This is not essential but will remove any earthenware ‘taste’ and strengthen your tagine.

1. The new tagine needs to be submerged in water for at least 1 hour.
2. Rub the inside of the base and lid with olive oil.
3. Put in a cold oven, set the temperature to 150C (gas mark 2) and leave for 2 hours.
4. Remove from the oven and leave to cool.

5. When completely cool, wash in warm soapy water and dry with a clean cloth.

6. Your tagine is now ready to use.

Other cooking tagines

Versatile tagines
These tagines are made in small factory in Spain, and are fired to a high temperature creating a tagine that can go on all hobs as well as an Aga; is fine on the barbeque; goes in the dish washer and the freezer; and of course cooks great in the oven and is virtually non-stick. Hence the name!

These tagines do not require seasoning, just washing before first use.

Tunisian tagines
These tagines are made using fine clay, they are not coloured on the inside, and the coloured glazes used do not contain any lead making the fine to cook with.

They work best in the oven, but can go on a low gas hob with a heat diffuser and with care. They don’t go in the dishwasher.

These tagines do not require seasoning, just washing before first use.

Serving tagines
These Moroccan tagines are often highly coloured and patterned, but are not suitable for cooking and are not dishwasher safe. The glazes may contain lead.

Recipes that cook well in a tagine

Tagine of lamb with peas, preserved lemon and olives  p20
Tagine of lamb with quince  p22
Lamb tagine with honeyed prunes  p23
Ras el Hanout lamb  p23
Chicken with preserved lemon and green olives  p27
Ingredients from maroque

All these ingredients are available online or by mail order.

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<td>Ricci couscous</td>
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**Couscous and other dried items**

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<td>Dates with almonds</td>
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<td>Figs and orange blossom chutney</td>
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**Jams, preserves and sweet things**

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**Other ingredients**

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**Prepared tagine sauces**

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### Spices

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**Herbs**

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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-25-019</td>
<td>Sage leaves whole</td>
<td>50g</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-25-020</td>
<td>Spinich leaves</td>
<td>50g</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-25-021</td>
<td>Tarragon</td>
<td>50g</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>70-25-022</td>
<td>Thyme</td>
<td>100g</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-25-023</td>
<td>Tomato powder</td>
<td>50g</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We also have an extensive range of traditional Moroccan ceramics, tagines and other cooking items.
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