CURRIED CHICKPEA AND VEGETABLE STEW WITH COUSCOUS

BY BRENDA LANGTON, SPOONRIVER

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Minnesota Landscape Arboretum

The curry spices in this dish make a fragrant and delicious stew. With the correct presentation, this is a very impressive meal to serve guests. Serve in bowls, with steamed green beans, black olives, and tomato wedges arranged on top of the stew. Garnish with fresh cilantro. Serves 4.

1 cup dried chickpeas
4 cups water for soaking
8 cups water for cooking
1 small eggplant
1 teaspoon salt
3 tablespoons olive or vegetable oil
1 medium onion, coarsely chopped
1½ tablespoons finely chopped garlic
2 medium potatoes, peeled and cut into 
½-inch squares
½ medium buttercup or butternut squash
or 1 large sweet potato, peeled and
cut into 1-inch squares
2 tomatoes, chopped
¼ cup finely grated peeled ginger root

1 teaspoon turmeric
1 teaspoon chili paste (or 1 jalapeño pepper,
chopped)
1 teaspoon ground coriander
1 teaspoon cumin seeds
1 teaspoon paprika
1 tablespoon curry powder
½ cup canned coconut milk
2 cups water or vegetable stock
½ tablespoon salt
½ head cauliflower, cut into florets
3 tablespoons lime juice
1 tablespoon tamari or soy sauce
2 cups cooked couscous

■ Soak chickpeas in 4 cups water for several hours or overnight.
■ Drain the chickpeas. In a large pot, cover chickpeas with 8 cups of water. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat and let simmer, covered, until chickpeas are tender, approximately 1½ hours. Check occasionally to see if more water is needed. (To cook the chickpeas in a pressure cooker, cover beans in cooker with 6 cups of water. Bring to the correct pressure and cook for 40 minutes.) Drain, reserving cooking liquid.
■ Partially peel eggplant, leaving about half of the skin on. Slice lengthwise and cut into 1-inch pieces. Salt liberally and set aside for 20 to 30 minutes, while the salt draws out bitter juices. Rinse the eggplant pieces thoroughly and pat dry with a towel.
■ Heat 2 tablespoons of the olive or vegetable oil and sauté eggplant until golden brown, approximately 5 minutes. Set aside.
■ In a pot large enough to accommodate the stew, heat the remaining 1 tablespoon of oil. Sauté the onion and garlic for about two minutes over medium heat. Be careful not to burn the garlic.
■ Add the potato and squash or sweet potato. Sauté over medium-low heat for about 5 minutes. Add the tomatoes.
■ Squeeze the grated ginger over the pan, squeezing the juice from the ginger into the stew. Add turmeric, chili paste or chopped jalapeño, coriander, cumin seed, paprika, and curry powder. Stir well and cook for 1 minute.
■ Add the cooked chickpeas, coconut milk, and stock or water. If more liquid is needed, add up to 2 cups chickpea cooking liquid or more stock. Add salt. Bring to a boil. Turn down heat and simmer, covered, for 10 minutes.
■ Add cauliflower and simmer for another 10 minutes. Add eggplant, lime juice, and tamari or soy sauce. Stir a few times, and serve over couscous. Serves 4.