

Moroccan-Spiced Vegetable Couscous Salad with Yogurt-Marinated Chicken Skewers

Serves 6

This is the kind of meal that earns its place at the center of the table. Harissa-roasted cauliflower brings the heat, sweet potatoes and Medjool dates provide little pockets of sweetness, and lemon, orange zest, and plenty of fresh herbs keep the couscous bright. The yogurt-marinated chicken roasts on skewers above the pan, ready to settle over a generous bowl of vegetables and grains. Every forkful should offer something different: spice, citrus, crunch, and a little sweetness.

Ingredients

For the Yogurt-Marinated Chicken Skewers

2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into 1½-inch pieces
⅓ cup plain whole-milk Greek yogurt
2½ tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1½ tablespoons fresh lemon juice
1½ teaspoons finely grated lemon zest
2½ teaspoons ras el hanout
¾ teaspoon ground cumin
1¼ teaspoons sweet paprika
1½ teaspoons finely grated fresh ginger
4 garlic cloves, minced
1½ tablespoons chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
1 teaspoon Diamond Crystal kosher salt (or ½ teaspoon Morton kosher salt)
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

For the Roasted Vegetables

1 medium head cauliflower, cut into 1½-inch florets
1 medium sweet potato, peeled and cut into ¾-inch cubes
1 medium red onion, cut into ¾-inch wedges
2 teaspoons ras el hanout
1 teaspoon ground cumin
½ teaspoon ground coriander

1/2 teaspoon smoked paprika

1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon (omit if your ras el hanout is strongly cinnamon-forward)

1 teaspoon Diamond Crystal kosher salt (or 1/2 teaspoon Morton kosher salt)

1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided

3 tablespoons mild harissa paste, or to taste

For the Couscous Salad

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil

3 garlic cloves, minced

2 teaspoons finely grated fresh ginger

2 1/4 cups vegetable stock, or the amount specified for 1 1/2 cups pearl couscous on the package

1 1/2 cups dry pearl (Israeli) couscous

1/2 cup chopped pitted Medjool dates, divided

1/2 cup finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley, divided

1/3 cup finely chopped fresh cilantro, divided

2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh mint, divided

1/3 cup store-bought roasted, salted pistachios, roughly chopped

For the Lemon-Orange Dressing

1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil

1/4 cup fresh lemon juice, plus more to taste

1 teaspoon finely grated orange zest

1 small garlic clove, minced or finely grated

1/2 teaspoon ground cumin

1/4 teaspoon Diamond Crystal kosher salt, plus more to taste

Freshly ground black pepper

Instructions

Heat the oven to 425°F. Line a large rimmed baking sheet with parchment for the vegetables. Line a second rimmed baking sheet with foil, fit it with an oven-safe wire rack, and lightly oil the rack. Use metal skewers if possible.

In a large bowl, combine the yogurt, olive oil, lemon juice, lemon zest, ras el hanout, cumin, paprika, ginger, minced garlic, parsley, salt, and pepper. Add the chicken and coat

well. Cover and refrigerate for 20 to 30 minutes while you prepare the vegetables, or marinate 2 to 4 hours ahead for deeper flavor.

In a small bowl, stir together the ras el hanout, cumin, coriander, smoked paprika, cinnamon (if using), salt, and black pepper. Put the cauliflower in one bowl and the sweet potato and red onion in another. Toss the cauliflower with 1½ tablespoons olive oil, the harissa, and about two-thirds of the dry spice mixture. Toss the sweet potato and onion with the remaining 1½ tablespoons olive oil and remaining spice mixture. Arrange on the same large baking sheet in a single layer, keeping the cauliflower on one side. If crowded, use an additional sheet. Roast for 30 to 35 minutes, turning once, until the sweet potato is tender and the cauliflower has browned edges.

Thread the chicken onto 4 to 6 metal skewers, leaving small spaces between pieces and allowing excess marinade to drip off. When the vegetables have roasted for about 12 to 15 minutes, place the chicken rack in the oven. Roast for 15 to 20 minutes, or until the thickest pieces reach 165°F. Broil briefly, watching closely, if more browning is desired. Rest for 5 minutes.

Meanwhile, heat 1 tablespoon olive oil in a medium saucepan over medium-low heat. Add the minced garlic and ginger and cook for 30 to 60 seconds, stirring, just until fragrant. Pour in the vegetable stock and bring to a boil. Stir in the pearl couscous, reduce to a gentle simmer, cover, and cook according to package directions until tender, usually 8 to 12 minutes. Add a splash of water if needed; drain any excess liquid. Fluff with a fork.

Whisk together the dressing ingredients. While the couscous is warm, toss with about half the dressing. Fold in the roasted vegetables, ¼ cup of the dates, and most of the parsley, cilantro, and mint, reserving about ¼ cup combined herbs for finishing. Add the remaining dressing gradually, tasting for salt, lemon, and heat.

Spoon the couscous salad into a large serving bowl. Scatter the remaining ¼ cup dates, reserved herbs, and pistachios over the top. Arrange the rested chicken skewers over the salad, or slide the chicken off the skewers before serving. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Storage

Refrigerate the chicken and couscous salad separately in airtight containers for 3 to 4 days. Cool promptly and refrigerate within 2 hours. Keep the pistachios separate until serving. Reheat chicken to 165°F; enjoy the salad chilled, at room temperature, or gently warmed.

Kitchen note: Harissa and ras el hanout vary widely by brand. Use mild harissa for the full 3 tablespoons, or start with less if yours is hot. Taste and adjust the finished salad before serving. This is a revised test recipe; the updated quantities have not yet been retested together.