

SPICE OF THE MONTH CLUB

May 2024

Join us to discuss

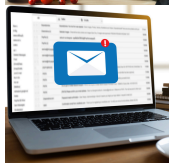
Tuesday, 5/28 / 6:00pm / Annex

Spend the month cooking with your spice and join us to discuss your opinions, experiences, and recipes!

Sign up for our e-mail list

We'll send you notices when kits are ready to pick up, meeting reminders, and shared recipes!

Sign up: bit.ly/KPLSpiceMail



This month's spice: Dried Mint

History

Spearmint is native to the temperate regions of the Old World (such as the Mediterranean) and is mentioned in Greek mythology. Its name is derived from Minthe, a nymph who inspired a fit of jealousy in Persephone, the wife of Hades, who transformed Minthe into a mint plant. It was frequently used in funeral rites and medicine.

Use

Mint (spearmint in particular) has myriad applications, made possible because its light, minty taste brings an element of freshness to the foods it is combined with. When many think of mint, the first dish that comes to mind is roast lamb with mint sauce or mint jelly. But mint is also a good accompaniment to chicken, pork, and veal, and is delicious sprinkled on new potatoes or cooked green peas that have been tossed in a little butter. It goes well with tomatoes and eggplant when used sparingly.

Middle Eastern, Moroccan, Indian, and Asian cooking all benefit from the inclusion of mint in a variety of recipes that range from stuffed vine leaves, tagines, butter chicken, and stir-fried vegetables to chutneys of freshly grated coconut, curry leaves, fried mustard seeds, and chile.



Red Lentil Soup with Warm Spices

Total prep and cook time: 55 minutes

Yields 4 to 6 servings

INGREDIENTS:

4 tablespoons unsalted butter

1 large onion, chopped fine

Salt and pepper

¼ teaspoon ground coriander

½ teaspoon ground cumin

¼ teaspoon ground ginger

⅛ teaspoon ground cinnamon

Pinch cayenne

1 tablespoon tomato paste

1 garlic clove, minced

4 cups chicken broth

2 cups water

10 ½ ounces (1 1/2 cups) red lentils, picked over and rinsed

2 tablespoons lemon juice, plus extra for seasoning

1 ½ teaspoons dried mint, crumbled

1 teaspoon paprika

¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro



STEPS:

1. Melt 2 tablespoons butter in large saucepan over medium heat. Add onion and 1 teaspoon salt and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened but not browned, about 5 minutes. Add coriander, cumin, ginger, cinnamon, cayenne, and 1/4 teaspoon pepper and cook until fragrant, about 2 minutes. Stir in tomato paste and garlic and cook for 1 minute. Stir in broth, water, and lentils and bring to simmer. Simmer vigorously, stirring occasionally, until lentils are soft and about half are broken down, about 15 minutes.
2. Whisk soup vigorously until it is coarsely pureed, about 30 seconds. Stir in lemon juice and season with salt and extra lemon juice to taste. Cover and keep warm. (Soup can be refrigerated for up to 3 days. Thin soup with water, if desired, when reheating.)
3. Melt remaining 2 tablespoons butter in small skillet. Remove from heat and stir in mint and paprika. Ladle soup into individual bowls, drizzle each portion with 1 teaspoon spiced butter, sprinkle with cilantro, and serve.

One-Pot Lamb Meatballs with Eggplant and Chickpeas

Total prep and cook time: 1 hour

Yields 4-6 servings

INGREDIENTS:

Meatballs:

1 pound ground lamb
½ cup panko bread crumbs
1 large egg, lightly beaten
1 tablespoon ras el hanout
2 teaspoons grated lemon zest
2 garlic cloves, minced
1 teaspoon table salt
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

Eggplant and sauce:

1 pound eggplant, cut into ½-inch pieces
1 onion, chopped fine
4 garlic cloves, minced
1 tablespoon ras el hanout
1 teaspoon table salt
1 (28-ounce) can crushed tomatoes
1 (15-ounce) can chickpeas, rinsed
¾ cup golden raisins
½ cup water
½ cup pitted green olives, halved
¼ cup harissa
2 teaspoons grated lemon zest
½ cup coarsely chopped fresh cilantro, divided
8 tsp dried mint, divided

STEPS:

1. FOR THE MEATBALLS: Combine lamb, panko, egg, ras el hanout, lemon zest, garlic, and salt in large bowl and mix with your hands until thoroughly combined. Divide into 16 even portions, about 1¼ ounces each. Using your hands, roll each portion into ball.
2. Heat oil in Dutch oven over medium-high heat until just smoking. Add meatballs and cook until well browned all over, about 5 minutes. Transfer meatballs to large plate, leaving fat in pot.
3. FOR THE EGGPLANT AND SAUCE: Heat fat left in pot over medium-high heat until just smoking. Add eggplant, onion, garlic, ras el hanout, and salt and cook until vegetables are beginning to soften, 8 to 10 minutes, stirring frequently.
4. Stir in tomatoes, chickpeas, raisins, water, olives, harissa, and lemon zest. Nestle meatballs into sauce. Reduce heat to medium-low; cover; and cook until eggplant is very tender and meatballs register 160 degrees, about 10 minutes.
5. Off heat, stir in ¼ cup cilantro and 4 tsp mint. Sprinkle remaining ¼ cup cilantro and remaining 4 tsp mint over top and serve.

Shirazi Salad

Total prep and cook time: 15 minutes

Yields 6 servings

INGREDIENTS:

3 Roma tomatoes, small diced

1 English cucumber (or 4 small Persian cucumbers), small diced

¼ to ½ cup finely chopped onions (red or yellow onions will work here)

½ green bell pepper (optional), chopped into small pieces

2 to 3 tablespoon EACH chopped fresh parsley, cilantro, and dill

1 tbsp dried mint

Salt and pepper

Sumac, to taste (optional)

Juice of 2 large limes (4 tbsp)

3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil

STEPS:

1. Place diced tomatoes for a few minutes in a colander to release excess liquid.
2. In a large bowl, place the diced tomatoes, cucumbers, onions, and bell peppers.
3. To flavor, add fresh herbs, dried mint, and a generous pinch of salt and pepper. Add sumac (start with 1 tsp and increase as needed). Finally, add lime juice, and a generous drizzle of extra virgin olive oil. Toss to combine.
4. If you have the time, cover and chill this salad in the fridge for 30 minutes to 1 hour for best taste.

