

## Poached Eggs with Yogurt and Hot Red Pepper Sizzle

Serves 2

Here's an unusual and delicious way to serve poached eggs, called cilbir in Turkey. Once you've poached your eggs, you set them in hot ceramic dishes to keep them warm, smother them with yogurt and then you devote full attention to preparing the last-minute sizzle of butter and hot red pepper. This sizzle heightens the flavor of the eggs and balances the richness of their garlic-yogurt toppings. Serve with hot toast.

Preferred Clay Pot:

2 small cazuelitas, porcelain ramekins, or small gratin dishes

6 ounces sheep's, goat's, or cow's milk yogurt

1 garlic clove, peeled

½ teaspoon coarse salt

1 tablespoon white vinegar

Kosher salt

4 very fresh eggs at room temperature

4 tablespoons (½ stick) unsalted butter at room temperature

½ teaspoon Marash or Aleppo pepper

Pinch of sweet or hot paprika

1. Drain the yogurt in a sieve lined with a paper towel for 30 minutes, until thickened.
2. In a small bowl, mash the garlic to a paste with the salt. Add the yogurt and blend well. Set aside at room temperature.
3. About 20 minutes before serving, put 2 small cazuelitas in a wide saucepan of water to cover. Set over medium heat and slowly bring to a simmer. Carefully transfer the cazuelitas to a doubled kitchen towel to drain. Leave the pot of water on the stove.
4. Add the vinegar to the water and maintain at a simmer. One by one, break an egg onto a saucer and slip into the water. Cover the pot, turn off the heat, and poach the eggs until the whites are set but the yolks are still soft, about 2½ minutes.
5. Carefully remove the eggs with a slotted spatula and place 2 eggs in each warm cazuelita. Top each egg with one-quarter of the garlic yogurt.
6. Quickly melt the butter in a small conventional saucepan. Add the Marash pepper and paprika and stir; the butter will turn bright red. Drizzle the butter over each serving, leaving the paprika powder and pepper flakes behind in the saucepan. Serve at once.

Moroccan Fish Tagine with Tomatoes, Olives, and Preserved Lemons

Serves 6

Fish baked in a clay pot takes beautifully to long, slow simmering in the famous complex Moroccan herb-and- spice sauce called charmoula. Ingredients that include garlic, cumin, cilantro, hot pepper, and preserved lemon permeate the flesh of most any type of fish. Add time to the equation and you have a dish that is bright, savory, and exciting to eat. Serve the fish at table directly from the clay baking dish.

Preferred Clay Pot:

An 11- or 12-inch Moroccan tagine, or tagra or Spanish cazuela, or 3-quart flameware or La Chamba shallow baking dish

2 teaspoons cumin seeds

3 garlic cloves

1 teaspoon coarse salt

1 tablespoon sweet paprika

1½ teaspoons crushed hot red pepper

2 tablespoons coarsely chopped flat-leaf parsley

2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro

4 wedges preserved lemon, rinsed, pulp and peel separated

3 tablespoons fruity extra virgin olive oil

1 pound monkfish fillet or thick slabs of halibut

1 large carrot, very thinly sliced

2 celery ribs, stringed and very thinly sliced

1 pound red ripe tomatoes, peeled with a swivel serrated peeler and sliced into thin rounds

1 small green bell pepper, sliced into very thin rounds

2 dozen Moroccan red (see Note) or picholine olives, rinsed and pitted

2 imported bay leaves

Fresh cilantro sprigs for garnish

1. Early in the day, or a day in advance, toast the cumin seeds by tossing them in a hot, dry conventional skillet over medium heat for about 1 minute. Grind to a powder and set aside. Make the charmoula: In a mortar or blender, combine the garlic, cumin, salt, paprika, parsley, cilantro, the pulp of the preserved lemon, and the olive oil. Puree to a smooth sauce.

2. Rinse the fish and pat dry with paper towels. If using monkfish, cut away the gray membrane and divide the fish into 4 even chunks. Rub half of the charmoula all over the fish, and let stand

for 1 hour at room temperature, or up to 24 hours in the refrigerator. Add ½ cup water to the remaining charmoula, cover, and refrigerate separately.

3. About 1½ hours before serving, preheat the oven to 300°F. Spread 2 tablespoons of the reserved charmoula sauce over the bottom of the tagine. Scatter the carrot and celery on top. Add half of the tomatoes and bell peppers; sprinkle with a little sauce. Lay the fish over the vegetables and cover with the remaining tomatoes and peppers. Spread the remaining charmoula on top. Scatter the diced preserved lemon peel and the bay leaves around the fish. Cover the dish tightly with a sheet of foil and bake for 1 hour.

## Chicken Thighs Roasted on a Bed of Salt in the Style of the French Alps

Serves 2 to 4

In this recipe, which I adapted from *Cuisine et Fêtes dans Les Alpes du Sud* by Jean-Jacques de Corcelles, chicken thighs are seasoned with pepper and a pinch of salt, rolled in chopped wild thyme, wrapped separately in a thin round of pancetta, tied up with string, and then roasted in a shallow flameware or ovenproof stoneware dish. The result is delicious silky, moist chicken thighs. Half-pound chicken thighs will roast in about 20 minutes.

Preferred Clay Pot:

An 11-inch flameware skillet or a 9½-inch Le Creuset stoneware oval baking dish suitable for use in an oven heated to 500°F

2 to 2½ cups kosher salt

4 large chicken thighs (2 pounds), preferably organic

½ teaspoon salt

¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1 tablespoon fresh thyme leaves

2 ounces pancetta, sliced paper thin

1. Make a bed of the kosher salt in the skillet. Set a lightly oiled cake rack on top and place in the oven on the upper middle rack. Set the temperature at 500°F and allow the oven to preheat.
2. Meanwhile, season the chicken thighs with the salt, pepper, and thyme. Wrap them in the pancetta slices and tie with white kitchen string.
3. Remove the hot skillet from the oven and place on a wooden surface or folded kitchen towel. Arrange the chicken thighs, side by side, on the hot rack and quickly return the skillet to the oven for 10 minutes.
4. Turn each thigh over and continue roasting for another 10 minutes. Serve at once.