

Fish Couscous with Onion T'faya

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T'fayas, special-occasion dishes, served all along Morocco's Atlantic coast, are known for their thick, sweet and heavily spiced sauces.

This one gets a pleasant layer of sweetness from raisins and a touch of sugar, which marries perfectly with mahi mahi.

Ingredients (serves 8)

- ½ cup raisins
- 5 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 2 tbsp butter
- 8 saffron threads (see Ingredient Note)
- 2 tsp salt
- 1 tsp ground ginger
- 1 tsp ground turmeric
- ½ tsp ground allspice
- ½ tsp ground nutmeg
- ½ tsp ground cinnamon
- ½ tsp freshly ground pepper
- 3 large onions, very thinly sliced
- 1 tbsp sugar
- 2 ⅓ cups reduced-sodium chicken broth, fish broth or vegetable broth, divided

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- 1 kg mahi mahi or other firm white fish, skinned and cut into 1 cm wide pieces
- Freshly ground pepper to taste
- ½ cup sliced or slivered almonds
- 1 cup whole-wheat couscous

Method

Place raisins in a small bowl and cover with warm water; let soak for 10 minutes. Drain.

Crush saffron and salt together in a mortar and pestle until a coarse powder forms. (Alternatively, place saffron and salt on a cutting board and use the flat side of a chef's knife to grind into a coarse powder.) Combine with ginger, turmeric, allspice, nutmeg, cinnamon and pepper in a small bowl.

Heat two tablespoons olive oil and butter in a casserole dish over medium heat. Add the spice mixture and cook, stirring, until the mixture starts to foam. Add onions, sugar and the plumped raisins. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the onions turn light brown, 20 to 25 minutes. Add one cup broth and nestle [fish](#) into the onion mixture. Cover and cook until the fish is flaky, eight to 10 minutes. Remove from the heat and season with pepper. Cover and set aside.

Meanwhile, heat one tablespoon of olive oil in a small skillet over medium-high heat. Add almonds and cook, stirring, until just beginning to turn golden, about one minute. Drain on paper towels.

Bring the remaining 1½ cups broth and the remaining two tablespoons olive oil to a boil in a small saucepan. Add couscous in a stream. Stir once. Cover, remove from the heat and let stand for five minutes. Fluff with a fork.

To serve, mound the [couscous](#) on a shallow platter. Top with the fish and onion t'faya and sprinkle the almonds on top.

Recipe note:

The dried stigma from *Crocus sativus*, saffron adds flavour and golden colour to a variety of Middle Eastern, African and European foods. Find it in the spice section of supermarkets and gourmet. It will keep in an airtight container for several years.

Recipe by Kitty Morse

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