

Spice Roasted Chicken with Onion, Date & Lemon Compote (for 4)

Source: Food & Wine 11/01 (Jean-George Vongerichten) Cook/Prep Time: 2 hours

INGREDIENTS:

Kosher Salt	1/2 C water
1 3 1/2 lb chicken, rinsed & patted dry	2 TBS cumin seeds
1 cinnamon stick, broken into little pieces	1 TBS ground ginger
1 TBS curry powder	1 TBS grapeseed oil
5 TBS unsalted butter	4 pitted dates
2 medium onions, cut into 1/2" dice	Freshly ground pepper
Finely grated zest of 4 lemons	

DIRECTIONS:

In a deep bowl just large enough to hold the chicken, stir 1/2 C + the sugar into 1 C cold water till completely dissolved. Add the chicken, breast down & refrigerate 1 1/2 hours - then drain & pat thoroughly dry.

Meanwhile, in a small dry skillet toast the cumin seeds & cinnamon over moderate heat till fragrant (about 1 minute). Transfer to a spice grinder & grind to a coarse powder - mix that with the ginger & curry powder.

Preheat oven to 450° F. Season chicken inside & out with the spice mix - tie legs together. Heat the oil in a large ovenproof skillet. Add 1 TBS of butter & melt over moderately high heat. Add the chicken on its side & cook till browned (about 5 minutes) - turn & brown other side. Roast chicken breast side up in oven 55 minutes or till juices in the cavity run clear.

Meanwhile bring a small saucepan of water to a boil over high heat. Add the onions & simmer over moderate heat for 1 minute - drain. Peel dates & cut into 1/4" dice.

Melt remaining 4 TBS of butter in large skillet. Add the onions + 1/4 C water - cover/cook over low heat till onions are very tender (about 25 minutes). Add lemon zest & diced dates - season with salt & pepper.

Transfer chicken to carving board & let rest for 10 minutes - serve chicken with the warm compote. (Compote can be refrigerated up to 3 days - reheat gently before serving).

Wine: An intensely fragrant Vognier with lots of body will echo the exotic spices & highlight the fruitiness of the compote. Pick an elegant French bottling, such as the 1999 Cave Yves Cuilleron Condrieu or the bargain 1999 Georges Duboeuf Vognier.