

شيشي برك

Makbouseh

summer squash stew

Recipe By Julie Ann Sageer (Julie Taboulie)

Makbouseh translates literally as “to mix things up,” which is exactly what this vibrant summertime stew does! We use the over flowing bounty of fresh vegetables from Mama’s summer janah (garden) to flavor our Makbouseh, particularly including the kousa squash, which is a light green summer vegetable native to Lebanon. I’ve selected sweet, round Sicilian eggplant, because I love the tender texture and delicate taste. The colors and flavors that come out of this fresh and hearty vegetable stew are just like a plate full of summer!

Makbouseh can be served hot or cold, with or without Arabic Rice and pairs perfectly with my homemade Lebanese pasta, Macaroune b Toun.

MAKES 8 TO 10 SERVINGS

1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil

1 large Vidalia onion, finely diced

3 shallots, finely minced

6 garlic cloves, finely minced

2 medium Sicilian or Italian eggplants, half-peeled in vertical strips and cut into 1-inch cubes

2 medium kousa squash half-peeled in vertical strips and cut into 1-inch cubes

2 medium green zucchini, half-peeled in vertical strips and cut into 1-inch cubes

2 medium yellow squash, half-peeled in vertical strips and cut into 1-inch cubes

1 ½ teaspoons salt

6 large vine-ripened garden tomatoes

2 cups canned chickpeas, drained and rinsed

1 small long hot green or red pepper, seeded and finely diced

1 ½ teaspoons ground allspice

1 cup cherry or grape tomatoes

In a large, heavy-bottomed pot, heat the olive oil on medium-low heat. Add the onion and sauté, uncovered, until translucent, about 10 minutes. Add the shallots and garlic and sauté for 1 to 2 minutes until fragrant and lightly browned.

Add the eggplant, and cook for about 10 minutes, making sure that the pieces are coated in olive oil and well incorporated with the aromatics.

Add the kousa and cook for a couple of minutes then add the zucchini, yellow squash and season with 1 teaspoon of the salt, and sauté together for 10 to 15 minutes more, or until the squash pieces are softened and tender.

Slice each tomato in half horizontally, and squeeze the juice and seeds into the pot. Then, finely dice the juiced tomatoes and add these to the pot with the remaining ½ teaspoon salt. Stir to distribute and simmer, uncovered, on low heat for approximately 10 to 15 minutes.

Stir in the chickpeas, peppers, and allspice and simmer the mixture, uncovered, for an additional 5 to 10 minutes, or until the chickpeas have heated through. Add the cherry tomatoes, and slowly simmer just until the tomato skin blisters slightly. The soup should be thick and juicy, and the squash, eggplant, and chickpeas tender but not mushy. Taste and adjust the seasonings as needed.

Serve hot, warm, or at room temperature.

TABOULIE TIP! Because of its smooth thin skin, small seeds, sweet taste, and tenderness, I think that this type of eggplant (Sicilian) makes all the difference in the taste and texture of my Makbouseh!

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