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Meat and Okra Stew

Ingredients

2 lb beef or lamb cut into 1" cubes
2 onions finely chopped
2 cloves garlic finely minced
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon coriander
1 cup tomatoes peeled, seeded and chopped
3 tablespoons paste
1 cup beef stock or water or more as needed
1 tablespoons fresh mint chopped
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
Juice of 1 lemon
1.5 lb okra

Directions

Okra must be cooked so that its slimy texture is eliminated. Trip the conical tops with a sharp knife then soak the okra in red wine vinegar (Khall) for 30 minutes allowing $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of vinegar per pound. Drain, rinse and dry the okra and proceed with the recipe. This dish is popular throughout the Middle East and can be prepared with lamb or beef. Serve with rice.

Preheat oven to 325°F. Warm 1 tablespoon of butter or oil per serving in a large frying pan over medium-high heat. Add the meat and try, working in batches, turning until browned on all sides (about 10 minutes). Using a slotted spoon transfer to a baking dish or stew pot. Add the onions to the fat remaining in the frying pan and sauté over medium heat until tender and translucent (8 to 10 minutes). Add the garlic, cumin, coriander, tomatoes, tomato paste, stock and mint. Stir well. Pour over the meat and season to taste with salt and pepper. Cover and bake until all the liquid is absorbed (about 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours). Taste and adjust the seasoning.

Meanwhile prepare the okra as directed above. In a sauté pan over medium heat warm $\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoon butter or oil. Add the okra and sauté for 3 minutes, stirring gently. Remove the stew from the oven and arrange the okra on top in a spoked pattern. Sprinkle the lemon juice evenly over the surface. Recover the dish and return it to the oven. Bake for 35 minutes longer. Add stock or water if the mixture seems too dry. Serve the Bamyas piping hot.

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