

Maqluba (Makloubah) with Lamb (Arabic rice dish)

From ottolenghi.co.uk/pages/recipes/vegetable-makloubah

Ingredients

200ml vegetable oil, for frying

1 large aubergine, cut lengthways into 0.5cm thick slices

2 medium potatoes, peeled and cut into 0.5cm slices

1 small cauliflower, cut into large florets

2 medium carrots, cut lengthways into 0.5cm thick slices

2 large tomatoes, cut into 1cm thick slices (in winter, use canned whole peeled tomatoes)

4 garlic cloves, peeled and sliced

200g basmati rice, washed and drained

400-500ml vegetable stock or water

½ tsp ground turmeric

1 tsp paprika

1 tsp ground nutmeg

1 tsp ground cardamom

1 tsp black pepper

2 tsp salt

Method

- 1) Pour the oil into a wide frying pan - it should come about 0.5cm up the sides - and place over a high heat. When hot, fry the aubergine in batches for a minute a side, until nicely tanned. Transfer to a paper towel. Repeat with the potato and then the cauliflower and carrot, but for only about 30 seconds a side - these vegetables need to take on some colour but stay crunchy.
- 2) Cut out a circle of greaseproof paper large enough to cover the base and some of the pan's edge, and line the pan with it (this step is optional). Cover the paper with aubergine slices, then layer up, in order, with the carrots, potatoes, tomatoes and cauliflower. Sprinkle the garlic on top and cover with rice.
- 3) Mix the boiling water or stock with the spices and seasoning. Gently pour the mix over the rice, making sure all the rice is immersed. Put the pot on the stove top and bring gently to a boil (you don't want a vigorous simmer because that will ruin the layers). Once simmering, reduce the heat to a bare minimum, cover the pot and cook for 30 minutes. Remove from the heat, lift off the lid, place a clean tea towel over the pan, pop the lid back on and leave to rest for 10-15 minutes.
- 4) When ready to serve, remove the lid and towel, and place your large serving plate over the pan. Carefully turn over, so the plate is now on the bottom and the pan on top, place on a stable surface and gently lift off the upturned pan. Carefully lift off the greaseproof paper if using - ideally, you want the rice to keep the pan's shape, though it's not the end of the world if it falls apart. Serve hot or warm, and enjoy!