

## CHICKEN & VEGETABLE COUSCOUS

(meat and plant-based options)

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KITCHEN



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This comforting and warmly spiced North African-style dish makes the most of summer farmers market staples – onions, garlic, carrots, cauliflower, bell pepper, zucchini, and cilantro. It is equally delicious prepared with chicken or only with vegetables and chickpeas for a plant-based version.

The recipe has a long list of ingredients but try not to feel discouraged. Put on some music, pour a favorite beverage, and enjoy the cooking process. The dish is delicious and worth it. I recommend having all ingredients measured and prepped ahead of cooking to make the process seamless.

### Make Ahead:

The stew and couscous can be prepared ahead and refrigerated separately, and both also freeze well.

Makes: 4 - 6 servings

### INGREDIENTS

6 chicken thighs or 4 chicken breasts (all boneless, skinless), cut into bite-sized pieces  
2 tablespoons olive or avocado oil  
1 small onion, peeled, diced (about 1 cup)  
2 cloves garlic, peeled, minced (about 1 heaping tablespoon)  
1 tablespoon tomato paste (low or no sodium)  
1 teaspoon ground coriander  
1 teaspoon ground cumin  
1 teaspoon dried cilantro  
1/2 teaspoon ground turmeric  
1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper  
3 large carrots (about 8 ounces), cut into 2" chunks, thick pieces halved or quartered  
1 1/2 cups cauliflower florets, bite-sized pieces  
1/2 red or yellow bell pepper, seeded and diced (about 1/2 cup)  
1 – 1 1/2 cups water  
1 medium zucchini (about 8 ounces), cut into 1/2" slices  
1 (14 ounces) can chick peas, drained and rinsed thoroughly (low sodium)  
2 (14 ounces each) cans diced tomatoes (low or no sodium) or 3 cups fresh with juices  
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt  
1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper

1 tablespoon olive or avocado oil  
1 cup pearl or Israeli couscous, uncooked  
1 1/4 cups water or chicken or vegetable stock (no added sugar, no or low sodium)  
1/4 teaspoon kosher salt

fresh cilantro leaves for garnish, if desired, washed, patted dry and chopped

## **DIRECTIONS**

1. In a large sauté pan with sides or Dutch oven, heat the 2 tablespoons of oil over medium heat. Add the chicken (if using) and sauté until lightly browned on all sides, about 2 – 3 minutes. Transfer the chicken to a bowl and set aside. (It will not be fully cooked yet.)

2. In the same pan, add the onion and sauté until soft, about 2 minutes. Add the garlic and sauté an additional 30 seconds, until fragrant and just starting to soften.

3. Stir in the tomato paste, coriander, cumin, cilantro, turmeric and cayenne pepper. Cook, stirring almost constantly, for about 1 minute.

4. Add the carrots, cauliflower, bell pepper and partially cooked chicken to the pan. Pour enough water so that there is enough liquid to come halfway up the sides of the pan. (Discard any extra water.) Bring mixture to a boil, then lower the heat to a gentle simmer, cover and cook for 10 minutes.

5. While the stew is simmering, prepare the couscous. In a medium-sized saucepan, heat 1 tablespoon oil over medium heat. Add the couscous and toast, stirring often, for about 1 minute. Carefully pour the water or stock into the pan, add the salt, and stir to combine. Cover the pot and reduce the heat to a low simmer. Cook for 10 minutes, until water is absorbed and couscous is al dente (tender yet not mushy). Keep covered until ready to serve. When ready to serve, stir gently to fluff.

6. Finish the stew - add the zucchini, chickpeas, tomatoes, salt and pepper to the chicken-vegetable pan, stir gently to combine, and bring to a gentle simmer once again. Simmer uncovered, for 10 - 12 more minutes, until the carrots and cauliflower are soft yet hold their shape.

**To serve**, place about 1/2 cup couscous into an individual serving bowl and top with the stew. Garnish with chopped fresh cilantro, if desired.