

Shakshuka

Shakshuka is a traditional Northern African and Middle-Eastern meal typically served for breakfast. With the brightness of red pepper and the warmth of Harissa paste (a red chili paste), this meal packs a complex taste that compliments the sweetness of crushed tomatoes. Shakshuka serves as a counterpart to other Mediterranean tomato sauces and soups such as gazpacho or marinara while benefiting from the flavors prominent in the east. Shakshuka is traditionally eaten with toasted bread or pita, but it packs enough flavor to be eaten with nothing other than a spoon.

Ingredients (4 servings)

1 cup chopped yellow onion

1 red bell pepper, stemmed, seeded, and diced

3 garlic cloves, minced (or 1 tablespoon)

1 (28-ounce) can crushed tomatoes

1 cup fresh spinach, chopped

2 tablespoons olive oil

Black pepper

¼ salt, plus more to taste

½ teaspoon paprika

2 tablespoons harissa paste

½ teaspoon ground cumin

Pinch of cayenne

3 to 5 large eggs

Optional

(To be used as a topping after cooking is finished)

Crumbled feta

Chopped parsley

Instructions

1. Chop onion, spinach, and green pepper, removing the stem and seeds from the pepper. Finely chop garlic. It's fine to leave the spinach fairly large, as it will soften when cooked in the sauce.
2. Heat a pan to medium-high (all stoves are different, but don't max out the heat on your burner. This will result in scorching the vegetables, and burnt garlic doesn't taste great...).
3. Once pan is hot, add the olive oil, followed by the red pepper, onion, and salt and pepper. Cook for 6-8 minutes, or until the onion starts to turn slightly clear.
4. Add garlic, harissa paste, cumin, and cayenne to the pan. Stir the pan while cooking until you can start to smell the spices, not too long (less than one minute), or you can burn them.
5. Add the can of crushed tomatoes, and turn the heat down to medium to simmer for 10-15 minutes. The goal is to keep the sauce from boiling and making a mess, while still remaining hot enough to reduce the liquid.
6. Add spinach to the pan, and cook until it starts to wilt.
7. Once the sauce is thick enough that you can make a small well in it and it stays, taste for seasoning. Add more black pepper and salt to taste.
8. Make a well for each egg that you plan to add, then crack your eggs into these wells and cover the pan with a lid or foil. Cook until the eggs are set - 5 to 8 minutes depending on how well done you want them.
9. Pull your pan from the heat, top with optional garnishes, and serve straight from the pan on a towel or trivet with toasted bread, no silverware or other dishes needed!