

Lamb and Chickpea Stew

Ingredients

Dried chickpeas	2 cups	Ground turmeric	2 tsp.
Kosher salt (for soaking)	3 Tbsp.	Ground cinnamon	1 tsp.
Lamb shoulder*	3 lbs.	Tomato paste	6 Tbsp.
Kosher salt (for lamb)	1 Tbsp.	Kosher salt (for stew)	1 Tbsp.
Black pepper (for lamb)	1 tsp.	Chicken broth or lamb stock	3 cups
Vegetable oil	1/4 cup	Diced tomatoes	28 oz. (2 cans)
Onions, large	2	Dried apricots	1 1/2 cups
Garlic cloves	8-10	Fresh cilantro	1 cup
Fresh ginger	2 Tbsp.	Fresh lemon juice	1/2 cup
Ground cumin	5 tsp.	Honey	3 Tbsp.
Ground coriander	5 tsp.	Harissa	for table
Sweet paprika	4 tsp.		
Smoked paprika	2 tsp.		

Beef chuck shoulder may substitute for lamb (same method and timing)

Directions

Night Before: Combine chickpeas, water, and 3 Tbsp. salt in a large bowl. Cover and refrigerate overnight (8-12 hours). — Preheat oven to 300°F — Drain and rinse soaked chickpeas — Pat dry lamb and cut into 1 1/2" cubes; set aside in Large Bowl #1 — Season lamb (Large Bowl #1) with 1 Tbsp. salt and 1 tsp. pepper — Dice onions; set aside in Medium Bowl #1 — Mince garlic; set aside in Small Bowl #1 — Grate ginger; set aside in Small Bowl #2 — Chop apricots into 1/4" pieces; set aside in Medium Bowl #2 — Measure all spices; combine in Small Bowl #3 — Chop cilantro; set aside in Small Bowl #4

1. Heat 6-quart enameled dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add 2 Tbsp. oil. Working in 3-4 batches to avoid crowding, brown lamb cubes on multiple sides until deeply caramelized, about 8-10 minutes per batch, adding more oil as needed. Transfer browned lamb to a large bowl and set aside.
2. Reduce heat to medium. If pot is dry, add final portion of oil. Add diced onions and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened and golden brown, about 8-10 minutes. Add minced garlic and grated ginger; cook, stirring constantly, for 1-2 minutes until fragrant.

3. Add **cumin**, **coriander**, **sweet paprika**, **smoked paprika**, **turmeric**, and **cinnamon** to the pot. Stir constantly for *45-60 seconds* until spices are darkened and very fragrant. Add **tomato paste** and stir constantly, scraping to prevent scorching, for *2-3 minutes* until paste is brick-red and caramelized.
4. Add 1 Tbsp. **salt**; stir to combine. Immediately add **chicken broth** and use a wooden spoon to scrape bottom of pot vigorously, releasing all browned bits. Add **diced tomatoes** with their juices. Bring to a simmer.
5. Return browned **lamb** and any accumulated juices to pot. Add drained **chickpeas** and 1 cup chopped **apricots** (*Medium Bowl #2*). Stir to combine. The liquid should come about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way up the solids; add additional **broth** if needed.
6. Bring to a full simmer on stovetop. Cover with tight-fitting lid and transfer to pre-heated 300°F oven.
7. Braise for *3-3½ hours*, checking at *2½ hours*. **Lamb** should be pull-apart tender and **chickpeas** should be creamy. If liquid level seems low at the *2½ hour* check, add $\frac{1}{2}$ -1 cup hot **broth**. If stew seems too liquidy, crack lid slightly for final *30-45 minutes*.
8. Remove from oven. If sauce needs reducing, place uncovered pot on stovetop over medium heat and simmer for *5-10 minutes* until thickened to coat the back of a spoon. If desired, skim excess fat from surface.
9. Stir in remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped **apricots** (*Medium Bowl #2*), **fresh cilantro** (1 cup, *Small Bowl #4*), **lemon juice** ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup), and 3 Tbsp. **honey**. Taste and adjust seasoning with additional **salt** if needed. Let rest for *10-15 minutes* before serving.
10. Serve over **couscous** or **cooked rice** with **harissa** on the side.

Equipment Required

- 6-quart enameled dutch oven with tight-fitting lid
- Large mixing bowl (for soaking chickpeas)
- Large bowl or plate (for browned lamb)
- Cutting board and sharp knife
- Wooden spoon or heatproof spatula
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Microplane or fine grater (for ginger)
- Ladle
- Timer

Mise en Place

- Soak **chickpeas** the night before in salted water
- Allow *45–60 minutes* total for prep work on day of cooking
- If using whole lamb shoulder, trim excess fat but leave some for flavor
- Cut **lamb** into uniform $1\frac{1}{2}$ " cubes for even cooking
- Prep all aromatics and measure all spices before beginning—once you start browning, the process moves quickly
- Have **broth** ready and warm for easier deglazing

Ingredient Tips

- Lamb shoulder is ideal for braising due to marbling and connective tissue; leg meat is leaner and won't be as tender
- Use whole spices and grind fresh for maximum flavor if possible
- San Marzano or fire-roasted diced **tomatoes** add extra depth
- Turkish or California **apricots** are ideal; avoid overly sweet or sugared varieties
- Fresh **ginger** is essential; powdered won't provide the same brightness
- If making homemade **lamb stock**, this elevates the dish significantly

Preparation Tips

- Don't rush the browning—deep caramelization is the foundation of flavor
- Work in small batches; crowding the pot steams meat instead of browning it
- The **tomato paste** will threaten to scorch; keep stirring and scraping constantly during step 3
- Vigorous deglazing in step 4 is critical—every bit of fond adds flavor
- Starting the braise at a full simmer on the stovetop ensures immediate cooking when transferred to oven
- If your dutch oven lid doesn't seal tightly, cover pot with foil before adding lid to minimize evaporation
- Check liquid level at *2½ hours*; ovens and pots vary, so adjustment may be needed
- **Lamb** texture varies by cut quality; check tenderness and extend cooking if needed
- The stew will continue to thicken as it rests; it should be slightly looser than desired final consistency when removed from oven

Make Ahead & Storage

- This stew benefits from sitting; make up to *3 days* ahead and refrigerate
- Fat will solidify on surface when chilled, making it easy to remove if desired
- Reheat gently on stovetop, adding **broth** if needed to restore consistency
- Add finishing ingredients (**cilantro**, **lemon juice**, **honey**) only when reheating to serve
- Freezes well for up to *3 months*; thaw overnight in refrigerator
- If freezing, slightly undercook (reduce time by *30 minutes*) as reheating continues cooking
- Leftover stew thickens significantly; thin with **broth** or water when reheating

Serving Suggestions

- Serve over basmati rice, couscous, or with crusty bread
- Accompany with **harissa** for heat, plain yogurt for cooling contrast
- Garnish with additional **fresh cilantro**, toasted sliced almonds, or sesame seeds
- A simple cucumber-tomato salad provides refreshing contrast
- Pairs beautifully with full-bodied red wines or Moroccan mint tea
- Consider topping with a poached or fried egg for brunch service
- Leftovers make excellent filling for savory hand pies or empanadas