

# WILLIAMS-SONOMA

## Moroccan Lamb Stew

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Many people assume that wrinkled, sticky dates are a dried fruit, much like prunes or dried apricots. In fact, regular dates are fresh fruits that acquire many of the same characteristics as dried fruit (thin skin, extreme sweetness) because they are grown in the desert. This recipe calls for dried dates. You will find this specialty food sold chopped and often covered with flour to prevent sticking. They act as a perfect sweet foil to highly spiced lamb stews.

### Ingredients:

4 Tbs. olive oil  
2 yellow onions, finely chopped  
3 carrots, peeled and chopped  
3 lb. cubed lamb for stewing  
1/2 cup all-purpose flour  
Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste  
3 garlic cloves, minced  
1 tsp. ground cumin  
1/4 tsp. saffron threads  
1 Tbs. peeled and minced fresh ginger  
2 1/2 cups beef stock  
1 cup canned crushed tomatoes  
1 cup chopped dried dates  
Grated zest and juice of 1 orange  
2 Tbs. finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

### Directions:

Preheat an oven to 350°F.

In a Dutch oven over medium heat, warm 1 Tbs. of the olive oil. Add the onions and sauté until softened, about 5 minutes. Add the carrots and cook until slightly softened, about 3 minutes more. Transfer to a bowl and set aside.

Pat the lamb dry with paper towels. Place the flour in a large bowl or sealable plastic bag and season with salt and pepper. Add the lamb in batches and stir or shake to coat thoroughly with the seasoned flour.

Warm the remaining 3 Tbs. oil in the pot over medium-high heat. Working in batches to avoid crowding, add the lamb and brown on all sides, 4 to 5 minutes for each batch. Transfer to a bowl and set aside.

Return the onion mixture and the lamb along with any accumulated juices to the pot. Add the garlic, cumin, saffron and ginger and stir to coat the meat and vegetables. Add the stock and bring to a boil, stirring with a wooden spoon to scrape up the browned bits from the pan bottom. Add the tomatoes, dates, and orange zest and juice and bring to a boil over high heat.

Cover the pot, transfer to the oven and bake until the meat is tender, 1 1/2 to 2 hours. If the sauce seems too thin, using a slotted spoon, transfer the meat and vegetables to a bowl and boil the sauce on the stovetop until thickened. Return the meat and vegetables to the pot. Taste and adjust the seasonings.

Transfer the stew to a serving bowl and garnish with the parsley. Serve immediately. Serves 6.

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma Collection Series, *Soup & Stew*, by Diane Rossen Worthington (Simon & Schuster, 2004).