



Spiced Moroccan Christmas Chicken and Rice

A New Kind of Christmas Dish

Our Christmas table always had a roast. One year, my grandson asked for “something with more adventure.” I still laugh at that. So, we tried this spiced chicken. It felt like a party in a pan.

Now, it’s a holiday favorite. The smells fill the house with warmth. It matters because traditions can grow. They can include new stories and old memories together. What’s one new dish your family has tried for a holiday?

The Magic is in the Spice

The key is ras el hanout. It means “top of the shop.” Shopkeepers blend their best spices. *Fun fact: it can have over 30 different spices!* Yours might smell different than mine. That’s okay.

When you cook it with the tomato paste, your kitchen will sing. Doesn’t that smell amazing? That step wakes up the spices. It makes the flavor deep and cozy. This matters. Good food isn’t rushed.

Building the Pot of Goodness

First, you brown the chicken. Get it nice and golden. That color is pure flavor for later. Then, we cook the onion and those crunchy silverbeet stalks. They add a sweet, fresh note.

Next, everything goes into the pan. The rice, tomatoes, chickpeas, and stock. It looks like a lot. But then you nestle the chicken back in. It all cooks together, becoming one happy dish. Do you prefer meals where everything cooks in one pot?

The Secret is the Rest

When the timer dings, wait. Let the pan sit, covered, for five minutes. I know it’s hard to wait! But this is the secret. The rice finishes steaming. It becomes perfectly fluffy.

Use this time to set the table. Call everyone to wash up. That little wait makes all the difference. It teaches us that the best things need a moment of quiet. What kitchen task do you find hardest to wait for?

How to Make it Yours

Serve it with a big spoonful of cool yogurt. Sprinkle fresh coriander on top. The yogurt is important. It makes the spicy, warm rice feel smooth and rich in your mouth.

You can use spinach if you can't find silverbeet. Leftovers are even better the next day. The flavors get to know each other more. This dish matters because it feeds a crowd with ease. It lets you spend less time fussing and more time with your people.

Ingredients:

Ingredient	Amount	Notes
Chicken thigh fillets	6 (approx. 800 g total)	Skinless
Extra virgin olive oil	1/4 cup (60 ml)	
Onion	1	Thinly sliced
Silverbeet	1 bunch	Stalks thinly sliced (2 cups), leaves roughly chopped
Ras el hanout	2 tablespoons	
Tomato paste	2 tablespoons	
Basmati rice	2 cups (400 g)	
Chopped tomatoes	1 can (400 g)	
Chickpeas	1 can (400 g)	Rinsed and drained
Chicken stock	4 cups (1 L)	
Coriander	2 1/2 tablespoons, roughly chopped	Plus extra sprigs for serving
Greek-style yoghurt	To serve	



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Instructions

Step 1: First, season your chicken all over. Get your big pan nice and hot with the oil. Brown the chicken pieces until they are golden. This gives our dish a lovely flavor base. Set the chicken aside on a plate for now.

See also [Sugar-Spared Pecan Shortbread Christmas Bites](#)

Step 2: Turn the heat down to medium. Now, add your sliced onion and silverbeet stalks. Cook them until they get soft and smell sweet. Stir them often so they don't stick. I love this part, it smells like the start of something good.

Step 3: Stir in the ras el hanout and tomato paste. Cook for just a minute or two. The spices will wake up and smell amazing. (A hard-learned tip: don't rush this step, it cooks out the raw tomato taste). Can you guess what spice mix makes this dish smell so warm and cozy? Share below!

Step 4: Toss in those big handfuls of silverbeet leaves. They will wilt down quickly in the warm pan. It's like watching magic happen. Now, add the rice, tomatoes, chickpeas, and all the stock. Give it a good stir and bring it to a boil.

Step 5: Nestle the chicken right back into that bubbly rice. Put the lid on and turn the heat way down. Let it quietly simmer for 25 minutes. The rice will drink up all that lovely stock. The waiting is the hardest part!

Step 6: Turn off the heat. Let the pan sit, still covered, for about 10

minutes. This lets the rice finish perfectly. Then, sprinkle with fresh coriander. Serve with a big spoonful of cool yoghurt on top. Doesn't that look wonderful?

Creative Twists

This recipe is like a cozy blanket. You can always add your own stitches. Try using sweet potato chunks instead of chickpeas for a sweeter touch. Use juicy apricots for a little fruity surprise in every bite. For a nutty crunch, toast some almonds or pine nuts to sprinkle on top. Which one would you try first? Comment below!

See also [Citrus and Currant Holiday Loaf](#)

Serving & Pairing Ideas

This dish is a full meal in a pan. I still love a simple side. A crisp cucumber salad with lemon is perfect. Warm, flatbread for scooping up every last bit is a must. For a drink, a cold glass of mint tea is so refreshing. Grown-ups might enjoy a light, fruity red wine. Which would you choose tonight?



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Keeping Your Feast Fresh

This dish makes wonderful leftovers. Let it cool completely first. Then, pop it in the fridge for up to three days. You can freeze it for two months. Use a sealed container.

I love making a double batch. It saves me a night of cooking later. My grandson calls it my “magic pan.” I once froze a portion for my neighbor. She said it tasted just-made when she reheated it.

Reheat it gently on the stove. Add a splash of water or stock. This keeps the rice from drying out. Batch cooking matters. It gives your future self a delicious, easy meal.

Have you ever tried storing it this way? Share below!

Simple Fixes for Common Hiccups

Is your rice a bit soggy? The heat was likely too high. Next time, keep it at a low simmer. I remember when I rushed this step. The rice was mushy.

Are the spices too strong? You can use less ras el hanout next time. Start with one tablespoon. You can always add more later. This matters because cooking should suit your taste.

Is the chicken not browning nicely? Make sure your pan is very hot first. Pat the chicken dry with a paper towel. A good sear locks in flavor and makes it look wonderful.

Which of these problems have you run into before?

Your Quick Questions, Answered

Q: Is this recipe gluten-free?

A: Yes, it is naturally gluten-free. Just check your stock label to be sure.

Q: Can I make it ahead?

A: Absolutely. Follow the storage tips above. The flavors get even better overnight.

Q: I don't have silverbeet. What can I use?

A: Spinach or kale are perfect swaps. Just chop the stems if using kale.

Q: Can I double the recipe?

A: You can! Use your biggest pot or divide it between two pans.

Q: Any optional tips?

A: Toast some almond slices for a crunchy topping. *Fun fact: Ras el hanout means "top of the shop." It's a blend of a merchant's best spices.*

See also [Creamy Holiday Scalloped Potato Bake](#)

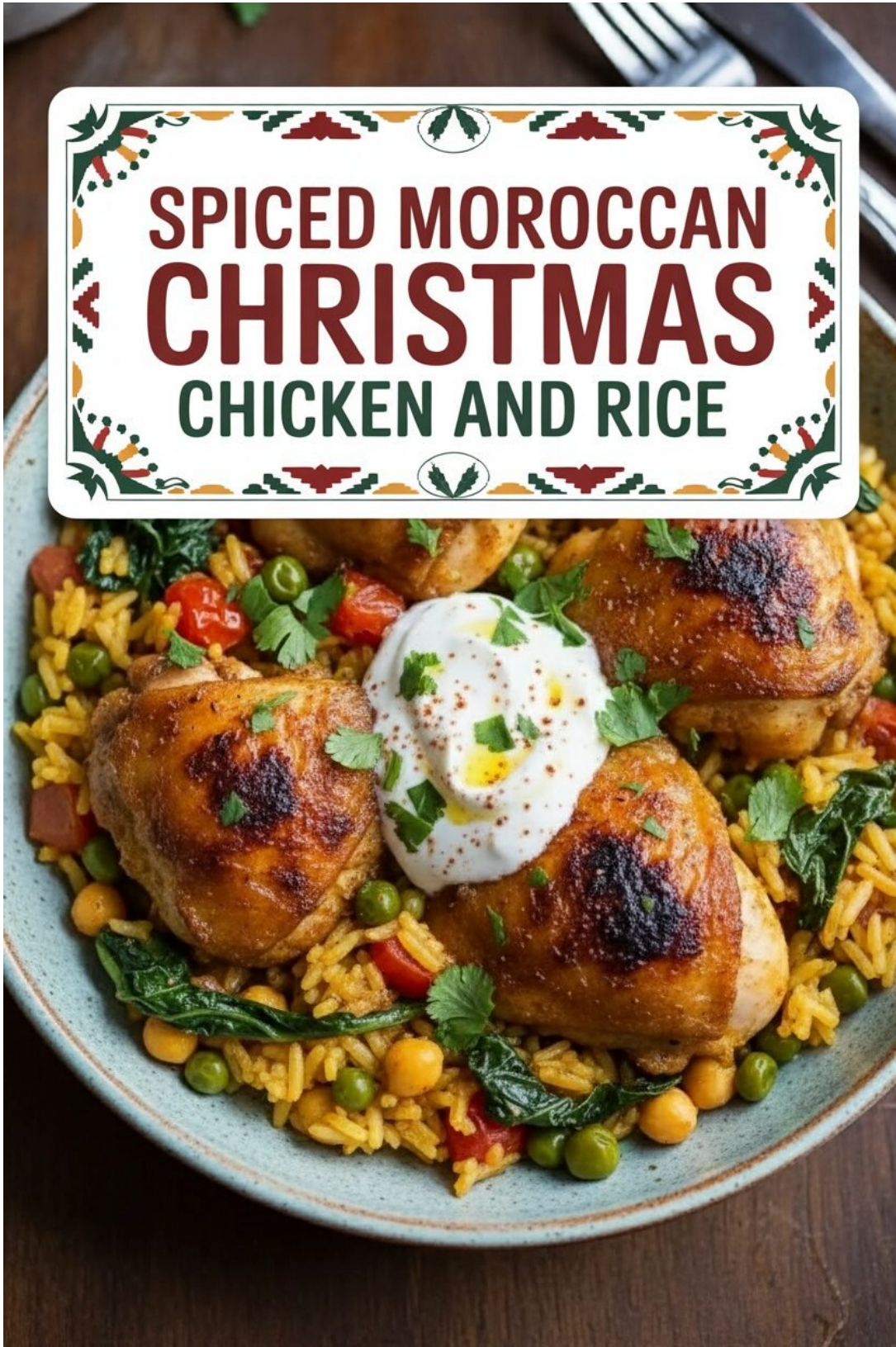
Which tip will you try first?

From My Kitchen to Yours

I hope you enjoy making this cozy dish. It fills the kitchen with the best smells. Cooking is about sharing and creating memories. I would love to hear about your experience.

Tell me all about it in the comments below. **Have you tried this recipe?** Did your family love it? I read every single note. Thank you for cooking with me today.

Happy cooking!
—Elowen Thorn.



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Spiced Moroccan Christmas Chicken and Rice | 13

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Spiced Moroccan Christmas Chicken and Rice

Author: Elowen Thorn



Spiced Moroccan Christmas Chicken and Rice | 15

Cooking Method: [Stovetop](#)

Cuisine: [Moroccan](#)

Courses: [Main](#)

Difficulty: **Beginner**



Spiced Moroccan Christmas Chicken and Rice | 19

Prep time: **15 minutes**



Spiced Moroccan Christmas Chicken and Rice | 20

Cook time: **40 minutes**

Rest time: **10 minutes**

Total time: **1 hour 5 minutes**



Spiced Moroccan Christmas Chicken and Rice | 23

Servings: **4 servings**



Spiced Moroccan Christmas Chicken and Rice | 24

Calories: **720 kcal**

Best Season: **Summer**

Description

A fragrant and hearty one-pan meal featuring spiced chicken thighs

nestled in a flavorful rice pilaf with silverbeet, chickpeas, and tomatoes.

Ingredients

- □ 6 chicken thigh fillets (approximately 800 g total), skinless
- □ 1/4 cup (60 ml) extra virgin olive oil
- □ 1 onion, thinly sliced
- □ 1 bunch silverbeet; stalks thinly sliced (2 cups), leaves roughly chopped
- □ 2 tablespoons ras el hanout
- □ 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- □ 2 cups (400 g) basmati rice
- □ 1 can (400 g) chopped tomatoes
- □ 1 can (400 g) chickpeas, rinsed and drained
- □ 4 cups (1 L) chicken stock
- □ 2 1/2 tablespoons roughly chopped coriander, plus extra sprigs for serving
- □ Greek-style yoghurt, to serve

Instructions

1. Season the chicken thigh fillets on all sides. Heat the extra virgin olive oil in a large deep frypan over high heat. Add the chicken and cook for 3–4 minutes, turning occasionally, until browned on all sides. Transfer the chicken to a plate and set aside.
2. Reduce the heat to medium. Add the sliced onion and silverbeet stalks to the pan. Cook for approximately 3 minutes, stirring frequently, until softened.
3. Add the ras el hanout and tomato paste. Cook for 1–2 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the spices become fragrant and the tomato paste has deepened in color.

4. Stir in the silverbeet leaves and cook for 1-2 minutes until the leaves are just wilted.
5. Add the basmati rice, chopped tomatoes, chickpeas, and chicken stock. Season as desired. Increase the heat to high and bring the mixture to a boil, stirring to combine.
6. Nestle the browned chicken thighs into the rice mixture. Cover the pan and reduce the heat to low. Simmer for 25 minutes, or until the chicken is fully cooked and the rice has absorbed the liquid.
7. Remove the pan from heat and allow it to rest, loosely covered, for 5-10 minutes to allow the rice to finish steaming.
8. Serve the dish topped with coriander sprigs and a spoonful of Greek-style yoghurt.

Notes

For a richer flavor, you can use bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs and brown the skin until crisp. Remove the skin before simmering and add it back on top before serving for extra crunch.

Keywords: Chicken, Rice, Moroccan, One Pan, Ras el Hanout