

Moroccan Couscous Stuffed Chicken

September 12th, 2025

This recipe serves: 4

Prep Time: 00:30

Cook Time: 01:00

This Moroccan, single-pan chicken starts on the stovetop to make the couscous stuffing. The couscous is flavored with the strong citrus flavor from preserved lemon rind, the sweet pungent flavor of roasted garlic, and the creamy nuttiness of tahini, which acts as a binding agent for the stuffing. The chicken thighs are pounded out, using a kitchen mallet, then seasoned with cumin, pepper, and sumac, and then finally stuffed with the couscous stuffing and tied into individual serving-sized bundles using kitchen twine. The chicken is browned on the stovetop and then moved into the oven to be baked for half an hour. After the baking is complete, the chicken is removed to a cutting board to remove the twine. The pan, without the chicken, is moved back to the stovetop for a quick de-glazing with chicken stock, and the addition of red onion and garlic. The fond from the pan will mature the flavor of the sauce, as it is reduced for a few minutes and finally enhanced with additional preserved lemon rind and fresh chopped parsley.

Ingredients:

Spice Mixture

- 3/4 Teaspoon Ground Cumin
- 3/4 Teaspoon Ground Black Pepper
- 1/2 Teaspoon Ground Sumac (or dried thyme)
- 1.5 Teaspoons Salt

Stuffing

- 1 Tablespoon Olive Oil
- 3 Garlic Cloves, minced
- 1/3 Cup Couscous
- 1/3 Cup Chicken Broth
- 1/4 Teaspoon Salt
- 1 Tablespoon Preserved Lemon, remove the pulp and white pith, mince the remaining peel
- 1 Tablespoon Fresh Parsley, chopped
- 1.5 Tablespoons Tahini

Chicken

- 8 (about 2 lbs) Boneless Chicken Thighs
- 10 ounces Cherry Tomatoes, halved
- 1 Can (15 ounces) Quartered Artichoke Hearts

Sauce

- 1/2 Red Onion, finely chopped
- 1.5 Cups Chicken Broth, divided
- 3 Garlic Cloves, minced
- 2 Tablespoons Preserved Lemon, remove the pulp and white pith, mince the remaining peel
- 2 Tablespoons Fresh Parsley, chopped

Directions:

The Spice Mixtures

In a small ramekin, add the Cumin, Black Pepper, and Sumac. Mix well.
Measure out 1.5 Teaspoons of the Spice Mixture into a second ramekin.
Stir 1.5 Teaspoons Salt into the second Spice Mixture ramekin.
You will now have a Salted Spice Mixture (about 3 Tablespoons),
and an Unsalted Spice Mixture (about 1/2 Tablespoon).

Stuffing

Place a 12 inch skillet (with a lid) over medium heat.
Add 1 Tablespoon Olive Oil, 3 minced Garlic Cloves, and the unsalted Spice Mixture.
Heat until fragrant, about 1 minute.
Stir in Couscous, 1/3 Cup Chicken Broth, and 1/4 Teaspoon Salt.
Remove from the heat and Lid. Let sit for about about 5 minutes.
All the liquid should be absorbed and the Couscous should be tender.

Move the Couscous mixture into a medium-sized bowl.

Add 1 Tablespoon minced Preserved Lemon Rind, Add 1 Tablespoon chopped Parsley, and 1.5 Tablespoons Tahini. Stir together until fully integrated. Reserve for later.

Prepare The Chicken

Rinse and dry the skillet or wipe with paper towels until clean.

Adjust the top oven rack to the middle position.

Preheat the oven to 400° F.

Lay out the Chicken Thighs on the cutting board and trim to remove any fat.

Cover the Chicken with plastic wrap.

Use a meat mallet to flatten the Boneless Chicken Thighs until the thickness of each Thigh is reduced to about 1/4 inch.

Liberally apply the Salted Spice Mixture to the pounded-out Chicken Thighs.

Stuff the Chicken

Divide the Couscous mixture evenly across the 8 Chicken Thighs, usually about 2 or 3 Tablespoons for each Chicken Thigh.

Center the Couscous mixture on one end of each Chicken Thigh.

Carefully roll up each Chicken Thigh, with the Couscous inside the rolled Chicken Thigh.

Use two pieces of kitchen twine to secure each rolled Chicken Thigh.

Cook the Chicken

Heat 1 Tablespoon Olive Oil in the skillet, over medium-high heat.

Add the rolled Chicken Thighs to the skillet, seam side up.

Sauté about 5 minutes, until the the bottom of each Roll is well-browned.

Rotate the rolled Chicken Thighs.

Add the Cherry Tomatoes and the Quartered Artichokes into the skillet, around the rolled Chicken Thighs.

Sprinkle with another 1 Tablespoon of Olive Oil.

Move the skillet to the oven.

Roast for 30 to 35 minutes.

Use a meat thermometer to ensure that the thickest part of the filling reaches 185° F.

Use Hot Pads

Remove the skillet from oven.

Remove the cooked Chicken Thighs and reserve them on a clean cutting board or a serving platter.

Remove the twine, cover the rolled Chicken Thighs with parchment paper, and rest the Meat.

Remove the Artichoke quarters from the skillet and reserve in a separate bowl.

Finalize the Sauce

Set the skillet on the stovetop, over medium-high heat.

Add the chopped Red Onion and 3 Cloves Minced Garlic.

Add 1.5 Cups of Chicken Broth. Stir well.

Simmer for 5 minutes.

Remove the skillet from the heat. **Carefully, remember that the skillet was just in the oven**

, pour the Sauce into a blender or a large bowl. Use a blender or an immersion blender to puree the Onions and Tomatoes.

Carefully move the Sauce back into the skillet over medium-high heat.

Add the Artichoke Quarters back into the Sauce and simmer for another 5 minutes.

The Sauce should be thickened.

Remove from heat. Stir in 2 Tablespoons of minced Preserved Lemon and the freshly chopped Parsley.

To Serve

Spoon about an 1/8 of a Cup of Sauce onto a plate.

Arrange a rolled Chicken Thigh in the center of the Sauce.

Cover the rolled Chicken Thigh with several Artichoke Quarters and more Sauce.