

# February Spice Club:

# Ras El Hanout



Ras el hanout is a spice blend that originated in North Africa and is often attributed to Morocco. The name translates to "head of the shop" in Arabic, indicating that it is a "top shelf" blend of the best spices a store has to offer. Traditionally spice purveyors have created and guarded their own unique blends, though ras el hanout typically contains black pepper, turmeric, cumin, cinnamon, nutmeg, and coriander. It is commonly used in North African and Middle Eastern cuisines in dishes such as tagines and couscous, as well as meat dishes and stews. On the day to day, use 1-2 teaspoons of seasoning to 1 cup rice or couscous while cooking; you can also use it as a meat rub. Ras el hanout is known for its complex and bold flavor, with a mix of sweet, warm and earthy notes. It's a versatile spice blend that has been used for centuries and is perfect for adding a unique touch to your dishes.

This Frontier Co-Op blend contains all-organic coriander, turmeric, cardamom, black pepper, cloves, cinnamon, nutmeg, and sea salt. They describe it as "a robust curry-like blend that is spicy, with a floral fragrance and many flavor subtleties." Regular Spice Club participants will have the opportunity to compare the similarities and subtle distinctions between this and last-month's Baharat spice blend. Perhaps you will even be inspired to customize your "ras el hanout" by adding a dash of your own favorite flavors!

# Best Moroccan Chicken Recipe

## Mansaf of Halal Chef

Watch Halal Chef's video!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AUIRtbbEizU>

- CHICKEN
  - 1 large whole chicken
  - 2 tablespoons ras el hanout spice
  - 2 garlic cloves, minced
  - 3 tablespoons sunflower oil
  
- COUSCOUS
  - 3 tablespoons sunflower oil
  - 1 tablespoon sultanas (golden raisins)
  - 10-12 prunes
  - 1 cup couscous
  - 1 ½ cups water
  - ½ teaspoon black pepper
  - ½ teaspoon salt
  - 1 teaspoon ras el hanout
  - 12-15 olives use good quality ones
  - 2 teaspoons tabasco sauce

Take chicken and score it 3 times down each side of the body and once on each thigh (8 cuts total). Place your chicken in a bowl. Sprinkle garlic, ras el hanout and 3 tablespoons sunflower oil over it. Wash hands and rub these ingredients all over the chicken as well as in the scored flesh. Let marinate for at least 3-4 hours or ideally overnight in the fridge before cooking.

To cook chicken, preheat oven to 220°C / 430°F. Put chicken on a baking tray with a lip and cook in the oven for 90 minutes. Don't throw away the cooking juices!

To make couscous, put a large or deep medium-sized frying pan over low-medium heat and add 3 tablespoons oil. Once the pan is hot, toss in sultanas and prunes and sauté for a few seconds while stirring. Throw in couscous and mix. Add water and season with black pepper, salt, and 1 teaspoon ras el hanout; give it another mix and then bring it to a simmer. Once simmering, turn off the heat (but keep the pan on the same warm burner), cover, and let sit 8-10 minutes. Gently fluff couscous with a fork. Add olives and a splash of tabasco, and gently mix with serving spoon.

To serve, arrange a bed of couscous on a large serving plate and place whole cooked chicken atop it. Drizzle the cooking juices from the chicken over the plated dish. We defer to Halal Chef with eating utensils: "Use your hands – it's better."

## Spicy Moroccan Chickpea Stew

Dannii Martin, Hungry Healthy Happy

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 ½ cups cooked chickpeas (drain water if canned)
- 1 onion, thinly sliced
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon paprika
- 1 ½ teaspoons ras el hanout
- ½ bunch fresh cilantro, chopped
- 1 pinch sea salt and black pepper
- 14 oz. can chopped tomatoes
- 1 tablespoon tomato puree
- 2 cups boiling water
- 1 vegetable stock cube
- ¼ cup dried red lentils, rinsed
- 2 tablespoons harissa

Heat some oil in a large pan, add the onion and gently cook for 2 minutes. Add the cumin, paprika, ras el hanout, salt and pepper and stir well and cook for another minute.

Add the chopped tomatoes, tomato puree, harissa, water, and stock cube and stir well. Add the lentils; stir and then simmer for 10 minutes. Then add the chickpeas and simmer for a further 10 minutes. Add a little more water if needed. Add the chopped cilantro, stir and simmer for 5 more minutes.

Serve with bread, rice or couscous; you can also cut the spiciness by crumbling some feta on top.