



Guinea Fowl Bisteeya

Variously written as bisteeya, bastilla, bestela, bastila, pastilla or pastila, this Moroccan pie has many variations but is traditionally an elaborately spiced preparation of pigeon, egg, almonds and warqa pastry, which is similar to Greek fillo pastry. It works well with almost any birds, including quail, chicken and guinea fowl, and is a great way to use up leftover cooked poultry. Traditionally the egg is scrambled into some of the poaching liquid, but this method (which I borrowed from Chef Michael Rantissi of Kepos Street Kitchen) is a safer way to ensure crisp pastry. I like a refreshing salad alongside - like shaved fennel, fennel fronds, mint and oranges - and in the glass something rich and aromatic such as the pinot blanc from Bob and Rita Richter at Grey Sands in Tasmania.

Serves 6

METHOD

1. Remove fillo pastry from the fridge and set aside in the box to come to room temperature.
2. Place guinea fowl, cinnamon stick, parsley stems and coriander stems in a saucepan, cover with cold water and bring to the boil. Reduce heat and simmer, covered, for 30 minutes.
3. Meanwhile, preheat oven to 200°C.
4. Melt a little butter and fry almonds until aromatic and just starting to colour. Remove from pan and set aside.
5. Heat oil in a large frying pan over medium heat. Add onion, garlic and a good pinch of salt and cook, covered, for 10 minutes or so, until just starting to colour.
6. Stir in ground coriander, cumin, ginger, turmeric, nutmeg and pepper and cook for a minute. Set pan aside.
7. Remove guinea fowl from cooking liquid and set aside until cool enough to handle then shred meat into large pieces, discarding skin and bones (strain cooking liquid and save as stock for another dish).
8. Add meat to the frying pan and stir through saffron and its soaking water, egg, chopped coriander and parsley.
9. Butter a 20cm springform cake tin.
10. Lay a sheet of fillo in the tin with the excess hanging over the sides. Brush with butter, then continue layering all except 1 sheet of fillo so that pastry is overhanging all around the tin, brushing each sheet with butter as you go.
11. Sprinkle in half the almonds. Spoon guinea fowl mixture on top, pressing it down evenly. Sprinkle with remaining almonds.
12. Fold remaining sheet of pastry in half and place on top of filling, brush with butter and fold overhanging pastry in on top of it, buttering between layers. Press down gently and brush top with remaining butter.
13. Bake for 20 minutes or so, until crisp and golden.
14. Transfer to a serving platter, sprinkle generously with combined icing sugar and ground cinnamon and serve with salad.

INGREDIENTS

- 12 sheets fillo pastry
- 1 x 1-1.2kg guinea fowl (see below)
- 1 stick cinnamon, broken
- ½ bunch flat-leaf parsley, leaves chopped, stems reserved
- ½ bunch coriander, leaves chopped, stems reserved
- 150g salted butter, melted
- 80g slivered almonds, coarsely crushed
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 red onion, finely diced
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- Salt flakes and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- ½ teaspoon ground ginger
- ¼ teaspoon ground turmeric
- Freshly grated nutmeg, to taste
- Pinch saffron threads, soaked in a little water
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 tablespoon icing sugar
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

Excellent free-range guinea fowl are available online from Eugowra Game Birds.