



CLOVE, ALLSPICE, CUMIN, CITRUS ZEST

GARAM MASALA BASTILLA

This rich but vegetarian take on a medieval 'greyte pye' includes an unorthodox garam masala that is really more like a medieval spice blend. In this modern version, vegetables, dried fruit and pulses replace the traditional game or fowl, enabling these once exotic and sought-after fragrant spices to be savoured in a new way.

SERVES 4

2 or 3 small sweet potatoes, peeled and thinly sliced	6 filo (phyllo) pastry sheets, opened out flat, covered with a damp cloth
400g (14oz.) can white cannellini beans or chickpeas, rinsed and drained well	½ quantity Turmeric Melted Onions (see page 146)
70g (2½oz./½ cup) sultanas (golden raisins)	200g (7oz.) baby spinach, rinsed and patted dry
2 pieces preserved lemon peel, shredded (see page 20) or zest of ½ lemon	3 large eggs
100g (3½oz./¾ stick + 1 tbsp) butter	100g (3½oz.) punnet ricotta (or farmer's cheese or cottage cheese)
about 5 tsp Garam Masala Spice Blend (see below)	13 cherry tomatoes, with stalks

Preheat the oven to 190°C (375°F/gas mark 5). Lightly oil a 30 x 15cm (12 x 6in.) baking dish.

Blanch the sweet potato slices in boiling salted water until al dente, about 2 minutes. Drain well and set aside.

Mix the beans, sultanas (golden raisins) and lemon peel or zest together in a bowl and set aside.

Melt the butter with 2 teaspoons of the spice mix. Brush two filo (phyllo) pastry sheets with this spiced butter, fold them in half and lay them side by side in the bottom of the baking dish so that they just overlap in the centre and the edges hang over the sides of the dish.

Layer the potato slices over the bottom of the dish, then add an evenly spread layer of the Turmeric Melted Onions and sprinkle over ½ teaspoon of spice blend. Next add an even layer of the bean and sultana (golden raisin) mix then sprinkle with a further ½ teaspoon of the spice blend. Cover with the spinach.

Beat the eggs with 1 teaspoon of spice mix. Pour over the spinach and gently shake the pan to settle. Spoon dollops of ricotta on top. Fold the edges of the filo (phyllo) just inside the edges of the dish.

Brush spice butter on the remaining filo (phyllo) sheets, fold in half, then cut into a grid of eight rectangles. Scrunch the filo rectangles into kerchiefs and arrange over the top. Pierce each tomato then tuck randomly on top, scattering a big pinch of spice blend over all. Sprinkle salt flakes on top if you like.

Bake in the oven for 30 minutes, until filo (phyllo) is browned and vegetables bubbling. Serve hot or at room temperature with a nice flagon of wine or ale!

GARAM MASALA SPICE BLEND

2 tbsp cardamom seeds, toasted and ground	2 tsp ground allspice
4 tsp coriander seeds, toasted and ground	2 tsp cumin seeds, toasted and ground
4 tsp ground cinnamon (or 1½ cinnamon sticks, charred and ground)	2 tsp chili powder
1 tbsp fennel seeds, toasted and ground	1 tsp ground cloves
1 tbsp ground nutmeg	1 tsp licorice powder (optional)
	½ tsp fenugreek powder

Blend the spices in a mortar and pestle and transfer to a jar.

