

# Tagine Greats

## The Top 100 Moroccan Tagine Recipes

Second Edition



Jo Frank

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**Tagine Greats:  
The Top 100  
Moroccan Tagine Recipes**

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## ***Welcome***

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Welcome to the Second Edition of Tagine Greats with 20 new recipes and the new Essential ingredients chapter, to help you get started with the basics of tagine cooking.

A tagine is both an earthenware cooking pot from Morocco and the name of a meal with many delicious variations.

If you don't own a tagine, using a flame-proof casserole dish with a lid will also do.

Tagines are a great way to cook and the food is simply beautiful. If you love Moroccan cuisine, this recipe book is a must have.

The recipes in this book are easy to follow, the ingredients widely available and the meals are delicious, healthy and filling. The recipes are broken up into sections – Essential Ingredients, Vegetable Tagines, Chicken Tagines, Lamb Tagines and Other Great Tagines, encompassing fish, beef, pork, seafood and veal dishes..

The recipes are superb and delicious. Definitely great comfort food during winter. And don't forget the couscous!

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## Table of Contents

THE BACKGROUND OF TAGINE COOKING .....	9
<i>Moroccan Tagine</i> .....	9
<i>Tunisian Tagine</i> .....	11
<b>ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS .....</b>	<b>13</b>
PRESERVED LEMONS .....	14
TOMATO CHERMOULA .....	15
SMEN .....	16
RAS EL HANOUT (MOROCCAN SPICES) .....	17
<b>VEGETABLE TAGINES .....</b>	<b>19</b>
CHICKPEA TAGINE .....	20
FRUIT AND VEGETABLE TAGINE .....	22
FILLING VEGETABLE TAGINE .....	24
QUICK VEGETABLE TAGINE .....	27
VEGETABLE TAGINE WITH COUSCOUS .....	29
APRICOT AND VEGETABLE TAGINE .....	32
AFRICAN MIXED VEGETABLE TAGINE .....	34
CAULIFLOWER TAGINE .....	36
TAGINE OF CHICK PEAS WITH AROMATICS .....	38
MOROCCAN TAGINE WITH CHERMOULA .....	39
TAGINE OF OKRA AND TOMATOES .....	41
TAGINE OF PUMPKIN AND CHICKPEAS .....	42
TAGINE OF SPRING VEGETABLES WITH SPICED TOMATO BROTH AND COUSCOUS .....	44
SLOW COOKER ROOT VEGETABLE TAGINE .....	46
SPICY POTATO TAGINE WITH PRESERVED LEMON AND OLIVES .....	47
ARTICHOKE AND FAVA BEAN TAGINE .....	49
FRAGRANT VEGETABLE TAGINE WITH LEMON COUSCOUS .....	51

---

SWEET POTATO TAGINE .....	53
PUMPKIN AND CHICKPEAS.....	55
VEGETARIAN MOROCCAN TAGINE.....	57
<b>CHICKEN TAGINES.....</b>	<b>60</b>
TRADITIONAL CHICKEN TAGINE .....	61
SPICED CHICKEN TAGINE.....	63
BASIC CHICKEN TAGINE .....	65
MOROCCAN CHICKEN AND DATE TAGINE RECIPE .....	67
MOROCCAN CHICKEN STEW .....	69
NECTARINE AND PLUM CHICKEN TAGINE .....	71
MOROCCAN CHICKEN TAGINE .....	73
MOROCCAN CHICKEN TAGINE WITH COUSCOUS .....	75
QUINCE AND OKRA TAGINE WITH MOHA.....	77
MOROCCAN CHICKEN TAGINE WITH HONEY AND APRICOTS.....	79
HOT CHICKEN TAGINE.....	81
SPICY AND SWEET CHICKEN TAGINE.....	82
MOROCCAN TAGINE.....	84
CHICKEN TAGINE WITH APRICOTS AND ALMONDS .....	86
CHICKEN TAGINE WITH APRICOTS AND SPICED PINE NUTS.....	88
GREEN OLIVES AND CHICKEN TAGINE.....	91
CHICKEN WITH LEMON AND OLIVES.....	93
CITRUS CHICKEN TAGINE .....	95
MEDITERRANEAN CHICKEN WITH PRESERVED LEMONS .....	97
TAGINE WITH CHICKEN AND APPLE.....	99
CHICKEN TAGINE WITH ROAST PEPPERS.....	100
SPICED CHICKEN APRICOT TAGINE.....	103
CHICKEN AND SEVEN VEGETABLES.....	104
MOROCCAN-SPICED CHICKEN WITH BEANS .....	106

---

CHICKEN WITH SPRING VEGETABLES .....	108
CHICKEN WITH CANDIED PUMPKIN .....	110
FATIMA'S CHICKEN TAGINE WITH COUSCOUS .....	112
CHICKEN WITH CINNAMON AND DATES .....	115
<b>LAMB TAGINES .....</b>	<b>117</b>
LAMB WITH QUINCES .....	118
LAMB AND PEAR TAGINE .....	120
TAGINE WITH MINCE AND TOMATO .....	122
MARRAKESH LAMB WITH RAS EL HANOUT .....	123
LAMB AND DRIED FRUIT TAGINE .....	124
APRICOT LAMB .....	126
LAMB AND PRUNE TAGINE .....	128
ZESTY LAMB TAGINE.....	130
LAMB, SHALLOT AND DATE TAGINE .....	132
TRADITIONAL LAMB TAGINE .....	133
LAMB TAGINE WITH APRICOTS, OLIVES AND BUTTERED ALMONDS .....	135
TAGINE BERBER.....	137
LAMB WITH ARTICHOKE AND MINT .....	139
LAMB WITH CHICKPEAS AND RAISINS, BASMATI RICE AND HARISSA .....	141
SPICY LAMB TAGINE WITH COUSCOUS.....	144
LAMB TAGINE WITH GOLDEN RAISINS .....	146
LAMB AND CARROT TAGINE .....	149
LAMB TAGINE WITH HONEY, PRUNES, ONIONS .....	150
MOROCCAN LAMB TAGINE .....	153
LAMB TAGINE WITH PRUNES .....	154
MOROCCAN LAMB TAGINE SMOTHERED WITH OLIVES.....	156
MOROCCAN LAMB TAGINE WITH RAISINS, ALMONDS, AND HONEY .....	158
LAMB TAGINE WITH PRUNES AND CINNAMON GOURMET .....	160



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LAMB TAGINE WITH PRUNES, APRICOTS, AND VEGETABLES .....	162
LAMB TAGINE WITH TOMATOES AND CARAMELIZED SWEET ONIONS .....	164
LAMB TAGINE WITH DATES & ALMONDS .....	166
LAMB, SHALLOT AND DATE TAGINE RECIPE .....	168
<b>OTHER GREAT TAGINES .....</b>	<b>170</b>
SWORDFISH TAGINE .....	171
POTATO AND VEAL TAGINE .....	173
FISH TAGINE WITH PRESERVED LEMON AND TOMATOES .....	175
SHRIMP AND PRESERVED LEMON TAGINE .....	177
FISH TAGINE WITH TOMATOES, CAPERS, AND CINNAMON.....	179
BEEF TAGINE WITH PRUNES.....	180
MUTTON TAGINE WITH PRUNES.....	181
INDIAN-SPICED FISH TAGINE.....	183
MOROCCAN PORK TAGINE.....	185
TOMATO CHERMOULA FISH TAGINE .....	187
APPLE AND PORK TAGINE .....	189
MOROCCAN SPICED MEATBALLS W/ EGGS IN TOMATO SAUCE .....	191
CRANBERRY DUCK TAGINE .....	193
BENI MELLAL TAGINE .....	195
<b>INDEX .....</b>	<b>197</b>

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## The background of Tagine cooking

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A tajine or tagine (pronounced /tɑːˈʒiːn/; Arabic: تاجين , IPA: [tˤ aː dʒ iː n]) is a type of dish found in the North African cuisines of Morocco, which is named after the special pot in which it is cooked. The traditional tagine pot is formed entirely of a heavy clay which is sometimes painted or glazed. It consists of two parts; a base unit which is flat and circular with low sides, and a large cone or dome-shaped cover that rests inside the base during cooking. The cover is so designed to promote the return of all condensation to the bottom. With the cover removed, the base can be taken to the table for serving.

Recently, European manufacturers have created tagines with heavy cast iron bottoms that can be fired on a stovetop at high heat. This permits browning meat and vegetables before cooking. While the similar Dutch oven and Sač spell (sach) (a cast iron pot with a tight cover) braises most efficiently in the oven, the tagine braises best on the stovetop.

### **Moroccan Tagine**

Tagines in Moroccan cuisine are slow-cooked stews braised at low temperatures, resulting in tender meat with aromatic vegetables and sauce. They are traditionally cooked in the tagine pot, whose cover has a knob-like handle at its top to facilitate removal. While simmering, the cover can be lifted off without the

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aid of a mitten, enabling the cook to inspect the ingredients, add vegetables, move things around, or add additional braising liquid. Most tagines involve slow simmering of less-expensive meats. For example, the ideal cuts of lamb are the neck, shoulder or shank cooked until it is falling off the bone. Very few Moroccan tagines require initial browning; if there is to be browning it is invariably done after the lamb has been simmered and the flesh has become butter-tender and very moist. In order to accomplish this, the cooking liquid must contain some fat, which may be skimmed off later.

Moroccan tagines often combine lamb or chicken with a medley of ingredients or seasonings: olives, quinces, apples, pears, apricots, raisins, prunes, dates, nuts, with fresh or preserved lemons, with or without honey, with or without a complexity of spices. Traditional spices that are used to flavor tagines include ground cinnamon, saffron, ginger, turmeric, cumin, paprika, pepper, as well as the famous spice blend Ras el hanout. Some famous tagine dishes are mqualli or mshermel (both are pairings of chicken, olives and citrus fruits, though preparation methods differ), kefta (meatballs in an egg and tomato sauce), and mrouzia (lamb, raisins and almonds). Other ingredients for a tagine may include any product that braises well: fish, quail, pigeon, beef, root vegetables, legumes, even amber and agarwood. Modern recipes in the West include pot roasts, ossobuco, lamb shanks and turkey legs. Seasonings can be traditional Moroccan spices, French, Italian or suited to the dish.

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## Tunisian Tagine

What Tunisians refer to as a "tagine" is very different from the more well-known Moroccan dish.

Tunisian tagine is more like an Italian frittata. First, a simple ragout of meat cut into very small pieces, cooked with onions and various spices, such as a blend of dried rosebuds and ground cinnamon known as *bharat*, or a robust combination of ground coriander and caraway seeds, is called *tabil*.

Then something starchy is added to thicken the juices - common thickeners include cannellini beans, chickpeas, breadcrumbs or cubed potatoes. When the meat is tender, it is combined with whatever ingredient has been chosen to be the dominant flavoring. Examples include but are not limited to fresh parsley, dried mint, saffron, sundried tomatoes, cooked vegetables, or even stewed calf's brains. Next, the stew is enriched with cheese and eggs. Finally, this egg & stew is baked in a deep pie dish, either on the stove or in the oven until both top and bottom are crisply cooked and the eggs are just set.

When the tagine is ready, it is turned out onto a plate and sliced into squares, accompanied by wedges of lemon. Tunisian tagines can be made with seafood, or as a completely vegetarian dish. In rural parts of Tunisia, home cooks place a shallow earthenware dish over glowing olive wood, fill it, cover it with a flat earthen pan, and then pile hot coals on top. The resulting tagine is crusty

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on top and bottom, moist within, and is infused with a subtle smoky fragrance.

***Now onto the recipes!***

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# ***Essential Ingredients***

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## Preserved Lemons

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Preserved lemons are a staple in Moroccan cuisine and are frequently used in stews or tagines. Although easy to prepare, this step must be done well in advance, since curing the lemons takes at least one month.

4 lemons, depending on size	6 black peppercorns
1/4-cup coarse salt, more if desired (kosher or coarse sea salt)	1 cinnamon stick
	4 whole cloves
	Lemon juice
6 coriander seeds	

### Procedure

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Make two cuts in lemon, from the top to within 1/2 inch of the bottom, nearly quartering them. Sprinkle salt on inside surface before reshaping.

Place 1 tablespoon salt on the bottom of a 1 -1/2 pint size jar. Place lemons in jar and push them down, adding more salt, and spices in between. Press the lemons into jar and add fresh lemon juice to approximately 3/4" from top of jar.

Allow lemons to ripen in a warm place. Invert jar upside daily (if possible). Takes approximately 30 days. May keep up to one year.

Servings: 4

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## Tomato Chermoula

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Tomato Chermoula goes well with seafood dishes.

1 tbsp olive oil	2 tbsp chopped flat leaf parsley
2 garlic cloves chopped	1 tbsp ground cumin
2 brown onions diced	2 tbsp chopped coriander
4 x 400g cans of crushed tomatoes	Salt & pepper
Juice of ½ lemon	

### Procedure

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Gently heat the oil in a saucepan and sauté the garlic and onion until soft. Add the tomatoes, cumin, and lemon juice. Simmer gently for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Stir in the fresh herbs and remove from heat. Season to taste.

This can be stored in the refrigerator for up to a week.



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## Smen

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Smen is a type of preserved clarified butter prepared in a way similar to Indian ghee. It may be flavored with wild herbs. It has quite a potent cheese taste that takes a little getting used to, especially for eating on bread. In cooking, smen lends a characteristic flavor to tagines, k'dras and couscous. In some Fez and Berber households, smen is packed in glass jars and kept for years, gradually becoming darker and more pungent with time.

2 cups sweet butter, diced      1/4 tsp herbes de Provence  
1 Tbs coarse salt

### Procedure

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Gently heat the butter in a saucepan until melted, then bring to the boil. Lower the heat and simmer for 3-4 minutes until the butter is clear and there is a separate layer on the bottom of the pan. Line a sieve with muslin that has been wrung out in hot water, and sprinkle with the salt and herb. Gradually spoon the clear butter into the sieve and allow it to strain through. Then strain it again into a clean, dry jar. Cover and keep in the refrigerator for up to 6 weeks.

Servings: 1

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## Ras el Hanout (Moroccan Spices)

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Literally "top of the shop," Ras el Hanout is a Moroccan spice blend that can contain more than 30 ingredients. For the Moroccan souks (spice merchants) it is a point of honor to have the most sought after version of this blend.

Ras el hanout is somewhat curry-like with a spicy kick, a floral fragrance and subtle nuances within an overall robust flavor. It is extremely versatile, adding a golden color and an aromatic and enticing flavor to chicken and vegetable tagines.

You can buy ready-made Ras el Hanout at supermarkets where it is often called Moroccan Spice Blend or similar. If you'd like to go the more traditional route and make your own, here is a great recipe.

1 teaspoon ground cumin	1/2 teaspoon ground white
1 teaspoon ground ginger	pepper
1 teaspoon turmeric	1/2 teaspoon ground
1 teaspoon salt	coriander seeds
3/4 teaspoon ground	1/2 teaspoon cayenne
cinnamon	1/2 teaspoon ground allspice
3/4 teaspoon freshly ground	1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
black pepper	1/4 teaspoon ground cloves

### Procedure

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In a small bowl whisk together all ingredients until combined well.

Spice blend keeps in an airtight container at cool room temperature 1 month.



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# ***Vegetable Tagines***

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## Chickpea Tagine

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1 cup dried chickpeas, soaked overnight and drained	peeled and cut into 1-inch dice
1/4 teaspoon saffron threads	2 medium red potatoes, peeled and cut into 1-inch dice
1 quart plus 2 tablespoons water	One 14.5 ounce can whole tomatoes, drained and chopped
1 large onion, finely diced	Salt
2 garlic cloves, thinly sliced	2 small zucchini, diced
1 tablespoon unsalted butter	1 tablespoon minced preserved lemon rind
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil	Freshly ground black pepper
2 teaspoons ground cumin	3 tablespoons chopped cilantro leaves
One 3-inch cinnamon stick	Yogurt and <i>harissa</i> , for serving
1/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper	
1/2 pound butternut squash,	

### Procedure

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In a saucepan, cover the chickpeas with 2 inches of water and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to low and simmer until tender, 45 minutes. Drain.

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In a bowl, crumble the saffron in the 2 tablespoons of water; steep for 10 minutes.

In a deep skillet, cook the onion and garlic in the butter and oil over moderate heat until golden, 8 minutes. Add the cumin, cinnamon stick and crushed red pepper and cook for 2 minutes.

Add the saffron water, chickpeas, squash, potatoes, tomatoes, the quart of water and a large pinch of salt; bring to a boil, then simmer until the squash and potatoes are tender, 30 minutes.

Add the zucchini and the preserved lemon; simmer until the zucchini is tender, 5 minutes. Discard the cinnamon stick.

Season the tagine with salt and pepper and stir in the cilantro.

Serve in bowls with yogurt and *harissa*.

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## Fruit and Vegetable Tagine

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1/4 cup olive oil	2 Tbs currants
1 large red pepper, chopped	1 tsp ground cinnamon
1 Tbs minced garlic	1 yellow squash, chopped
1 Tbs minced shallots	1 zucchini, chopped
Coarse salt	2 ripe bananas
Freshly ground pepper	1 tsp sugar
1 medium peeled eggplant, chopped	

### Procedure

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Heat 1 tablespoon olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add red pepper and cook for 1 minute. Add 1 teaspoon garlic, 1 teaspoon shallots, and 1 tablespoon water. Cook until tender, about 3 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove from pan and set aside.

Add 1 tablespoon olive oil to skillet and heat over medium-high heat. Add eggplant and season with salt and pepper. Cook for 1 minute, and add 1 teaspoon garlic, 1 teaspoon shallots, currants, and 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon. Cook until tender, stirring occasionally, about 3 to 4 minutes. Remove from pan and set aside.

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Add 1 tablespoon olive oil to skillet and heat over medium-high heat. Add yellow squash and zucchini. Season with salt and pepper and add 1 teaspoon garlic and 1 teaspoon shallots. Cook until tender, but not falling apart, about 2 to 3 minutes. Remove from pan and set aside.

Heat oven to 375 degrees. Slice bananas crosswise and then lengthwise. Add 1 tablespoon olive oil to skillet and heat over medium-high heat. Add bananas, 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon, and sugar. Sauté until just soft, about 1 minute. Remove from pan and chop.

Combine all vegetables in a tagine or baking dish. Cover and transfer to oven and bake for 20 minutes.

Servings: 6



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