

Fesenjan (walnut & aubergine stew)

Ground nuts are so good in savoury dishes, adding both flavour and a luscious, thick texture. Traditionally, this Persian dish is made with meat – duck, lamb, chicken or beef – but aubergine makes a great alternative.

Serves 6

Prepare 15 minutes

Cook 55 minutes

- 4 aubergines, sliced into wedges
- 120ml olive oil
- 3 tsp fine sea salt
- 300g walnuts
- 2 onions, finely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1 tbsp tomato purée
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp ground turmeric
- 650ml hot vegetable stock (or water)

- 150g pomegranate molasses
- 100g pomegranate seeds
- $\frac{1}{2}$ x 25g pack flat leaf parsley, leaves roughly chopped

1 Preheat the oven to 220°C, gas mark 7. Line a large baking tray with baking parchment. In a bowl, mix the aubergines with 75ml oil, 1½ tsp salt and some black pepper. Spread out on the lined tray and bake for 30 minutes, flipping halfway through, until golden. Remove from the oven and set aside.

2 Meanwhile, put the walnuts in a food processor and whizz to large crumbs; set aside. Heat the remaining 45ml oil in a large sauté pan over a medium heat. Add the onions and cook for about 8 minutes, stirring a few times. Add the garlic, cook for 1 minute, then add the tomato purée, spices, 1½ tsp salt and some black pepper. Cook for another 5 minutes, adding a splash of stock if it starts catching, then stir in the walnuts. Stir for a minute or two, then pour over the stock and pomegranate molasses. Simmer for about 40 minutes, covered, but stirring quite frequently.

3 To serve, very gently stir through the aubergines, then scatter with the pomegranate seeds and parsley. Enjoy with flatbreads, steamed rice and/or a chopped salad, if liked.

✓ Per serving 2747kJ/663kcal/54g fat/7.1g saturated fat/28g carbs/25.8g sugars/9.1g fibre/11g protein/3.5g salt/vegan/gluten free

