

Salt and Serenity

Braised Pomegranate-Pistachio Chicken Thighs

Serves 4

1½ kilograms chicken thighs, with skin and bones (about 8-9 thighs)
1 ½ teaspoons kosher salt
1 teaspoon paprika
1 Tablespoon vegetable oil
1 large onion, diced into ¼ inch pieces
1 clove garlic, grated on microplane
1 Tablespoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon cinnamon
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
¼ cup shelled pistachios, ground into a paste in food processor
1 cup pomegranate juice
1 cup chicken or vegetable stock or water

For Garnish:

2 tablespoons coarsely chopped mint
2 tablespoons coarsely chopped Italian parsley
¼ cup shelled pistachios, toasted and coarsely chopped
¼ cup pomegranate seeds

1. Preheat oven to 400°F. Lay chicken thighs out in a single layer on some paper towels and pat dry. Mix salt and paprika together. Liberally season both sides of thighs with the salt-paprika mixture.
2. Heat a 12-inch cast iron or other heavy bottomed skillet over high heat. (You could also use a 5-quart Dutch oven.) Add vegetable oil and add chicken thighs, skin side down and cook for 2 minutes. Reduce heat to medium-high; continue cooking skin side down, occasionally rearranging chicken thighs and rotating pan to evenly distribute heat, until fat renders and skin is brown, about 7-8 minutes. Turn thighs over and cook on second side for a further 5 minutes. Remove chicken from pan and set aside.
3. Pour off all but about 2 tablespoons fat from pan. Add diced onions and cook on medium heat, stirring frequently, until they soften, about 3-4 minutes. Add garlic, cumin, cinnamon and pepper. Stir well and cook for an additional minute.

4. Add chicken thighs back to pan. Pour in pomegranate juice and stock or water. The liquid should come about $\frac{1}{3}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ way up the side of the chicken thighs. The amount you need will depend on the size of your pan. Place in preheated oven, uncovered, and roast for 35-40 minutes.
5. Scatter herbs, pomegranate seeds and pistachios over top and serve.