

Lamb Stew with Dried Plums

1 cup sliced almonds
2 ½ pounds onions (yellow or white) coarsely chopped
½ cup plus 2-4 tablespoons canola or vegetable oil
3 tablespoons honey
2 teaspoons cinnamon
2 ½ tablespoons cane sugar
4-4 ½ pounds lamb cut into 1 ½ inch cubes
2 teaspoons kosher salt
1 ½ teaspoons pepper
1 ½ cups red wine
2 cups chicken stock
2 pounds dried prunes

1. Pre-heat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Place almonds on a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper and bake for 5-7 minutes, or until they are light brown.
3. Remove from oven and set aside to cool.
4. Pour ½ cup of oil into a 6-8 quart pot and heat until the oil starts to bubble.
5. Add the onions to the oil and reduce to a simmer. Stir occasionally so the onions don't stick to the bottom of the pot. Cook until onions are caramelized and very dark brown but not black, about one hour.
6. Add the honey, cinnamon, and sugar. Stir well and set aside.
7. Add 2 tablespoons of oil to a 12-14 inch pan. Heat until oil bubbles. Add about half the lamb (make sure the pan is not too crowded) and sauté until meat is light golden brown. Repeat until all the meat is browned (you will probably be able to brown all the meat in two batches, but it will depend on the size of your pan).
8. Once all the meat is lightly browned, add the lamb to the onion mixture, along with the wine and chicken stock.
9. Simmer over a very low heat for 60-90 minutes until the lamb is tender but does not fall apart (if you cook it too long, the meat will be stringy). Stir occasionally in order to assure the meat does not stick to the bottom of the pot.
10. Taste and adjust salt and pepper seasoning if needed.
11. Serve with basmati rice and top each plate of stew with toasted almonds (you may also add the almonds into the stew, but we like to preserve the crunchy texture of the almonds by adding the nuts to the top of each serving.)