

Moroccan Meatball Tagine with Green Olives and Lemon

Start to finish: 1 hour 15 minutes | Servings: 4

SERVE THE TAGINE from the skillet, using a spoon to break the eggs, letting the yolks run into the sauce. Offer crusty bread, naan or pita.

Don't use ground beef less than 90 percent lean or the sauce will be greasy. —DIANE UNGER

- ½ cup pimento-stuffed green olives, roughly chopped
- 2 tablespoons grated lemon zest
- 28-ounce can whole tomatoes
- 4 tablespoons (½ stick) salted butter
- 1 large yellow onion, finely chopped
- Kosher salt and ground black pepper
- 10 medium garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tablespoons ground cumin
- 1 tablespoon ground coriander
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 1 cup low-sodium beef broth
- ⅓ cup panko breadcrumbs
- 1 pound 90 percent lean ground beef
- 1 cup finely chopped fresh cilantro, divided
- 2 large eggs, cracked into a small bowl

■ **In a small bowl**, stir together the olives and lemon zest; set aside. In a blender, puree the tomatoes with their juice until smooth, about 30 seconds. Set aside. In a 12-inch skillet over medium, melt

the butter. Add the onion and ½ teaspoon salt. Cook, stirring, until softened, about 5 minutes. Stir in the garlic, cumin, coriander, cinnamon and pepper flakes and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Remove from the heat. Transfer ½ cup of the onion mixture to a large bowl and set aside.

■ **Return the skillet to medium** and add the broth and pureed tomatoes. Bring to a simmer, scraping up any browned bits. Cover and cook for 15 minutes, stirring halfway through. Remove from the heat.

■ **While the sauce simmers**, stir the panko and ½ cup water into the reserved onion mixture. Let stand until the panko softens, about 5 minutes, then use your hands to mash to a smooth paste. Add the beef, ½ cup of the cilantro and 1 teaspoon each salt and pepper. Mix thoroughly with your hands. Divide into 16 (2-tablespoon) portions, rolling them into smooth balls. Place on a plate, cover and refrigerate for 15 minutes.

■ **Return the sauce to medium** and bring to a simmer. Add the meatballs in a single layer and spoon sauce over each. Cover, reduce to low and cook for 15 minutes. Flip each meatball, then continue to cook uncovered, stirring occasionally, until the sauce is slightly thickened and the meatballs are cooked through, about 15 minutes.

■ **Push the meatballs** to the sides of the skillet. Taste and season the sauce with salt and pepper. Gently pour the eggs into the center, cover and cook over medium-low until the egg whites are barely set and the yolks are still runny, 4 to 5 minutes. Off heat, sprinkle the olive mixture and remaining ½ cup cilantro over the tagine. ♦