

دجاج محشي

Djej Mahshi

roasted cornish hens stuffed with long-grain rice and meat

Recipe by Julie Ann Sageer ~ Julie Taboulie

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Growing up, whenever the weather turned cool and the leaves began to fall from the trees, my mother would make Djej Mahshi—one of my family's all-time favorite meals. Beautifully browned and slightly crisp on the outside, the Cornish hens are filled with a fragrant rice, meat and nut Heshwi, or filling. Whether you make this for a special weeknight or weekend meal, or during the holiday season, Djej Mahshi is always a magnificent and memorable dish!

MAKES 6 INDIVIDUAL-PORTION HENS (WHICH CAN BE SPLIT FOR 12 SERVINGS)

1 large yellow onion, quartered

1 large red onion, quartered

3 shallots, quartered

1/2 small bunch fresh rosemary, washed and left whole

1/2 small bunch fresh sage, washed and left whole

1/2 small bunch fresh at-leaf parsley leaves, washed and left whole

1/2 small bunch fresh thyme, washed, half left whole, half stemmed and leaves picked

2 teaspoons sea salt

1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

6 Cornish hens, necks and giblets removed

1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil

1 recipe Rez b Heshwi Long Grain Rice Stuffing, cooked and divided (see rice recipe, half should be completely cool for stuffing the Cornish hens, half should be warm/hot for serving as a side dish).

6 small wooden skewers, soaked in cold water for 30 to 60 minutes

Preheat the oven to 450°F.

In a small pot, bring 3 cups of cold water to a boil. Turn off heat and set aside.

In the bottom of a large roasting pan, combine the onion and shallots and lay the rosemary, sage, parsley, and the whole thyme on top. Season with 1 teaspoon of the salt, 1/2 teaspoon of the black pepper, and cover with the 3 cups of hot water. Place a roasting rack on top and set aside.

Drizzle the hens evenly with olive oil and season with the remaining 1 teaspoon of sea salt, 1/2 teaspoon of black pepper, and the reserved thyme leaves. Thoroughly rub the hens so they are coated with oil and seasonings.

Put half of the cooled Rez b Heshwi stuffing into a bowl for filling the hens, and keep the rest of the stuffing warm in a pot for serving. Spoon the stuffing into each hen, making sure to push it down to the bottom of the cavity until the stuffing reaches about 1/4 inch from the top. Then, enclose the stuffing by weaving a wooden skewer in and out of the top cavity skin until it is completely sewn up and the stuffing is enclosed.

Lay the hens, breast side up, on the roasting rack, cover with aluminum foil, and roast on the center rack of the preheated oven for 30 minutes.

Reduce the heat to 350°F, remove the foil, and roast for about 1 hour, or until the hens are golden brown and cooked completely through (to an internal temperature around 160°F), basting the hens with the pan juices every 30 minutes. Let the hens rest at room temperature for 5 to 10 minutes before

carving and serving. During this time, you may need to very gently reheat the reserved rice before putting it on a large serving dish.

Serve the hens over the hot rice, and ladle some of the pan juices over, so the meat remains moist. Remove the roasting rack and strain the onions and remaining pan juices into a fine-mesh sieve. Serve the remaining pan juices alongside the hens and rice.

NOTE You will need a large roasting pan and rack.

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