

Freekeh and pinto bean soup  
Shorbat Freekeh

2 tablespoons olive oil or any neutral oil  
1 onion, finely chopped  
1 teaspoon coriander seeds  
1 teaspoon cumin seeds  
1/2 teaspoon ground allspice  
2 garlic cloves, crushed  
14 oz./400g can of pinto beans, drained and rinsed  
1 cup/150g freekeh  
2 carrots, peeled and finely chopped  
2 celery sticks, finely chopped  
4 cups/500ml vegetable or chicken stock  
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper  
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, plus more to serve  
2 tablespoons lemon juice unflavored yogurt, to serve  
3 1/2 tablespoons/15g chives, finely chopped

Heat the cooking oil in a saucepan, add the onion and fry over a medium heat for 10–15 minutes, until soft. Toast the coriander and cumin seeds by stirring them in a dry pan over a low heat for a minute or so until their aromas are released. Crush them in a mortar and pestle or spice grinder and add to the onion with the allspice and garlic. Fry for another 2 minutes until fragrant.

Add the pinto beans, freekeh, carrots, celery, stock and 2 cups/500ml just-boiled water, cover and simmer for 45 minutes until the freekeh is quite soft. Then season with 1/2 teaspoon pepper and the 2 tablespoons each of extra virgin olive oil and lemon juice.

Depending on how salty (or not) your stock was, you may want to add a little more salt. Stir well and cook for 2 minutes.

To serve, ladle into warmed bowls, add generous dollops of unflavored yogurt, a sprinkling of chives and a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil.

Zaitoun: Recipes from the Palestinian Kitchen Cookbook