

Global Recipes Explore Ancient Spice Route

(NAPSA)—Today's cooks have their pick of exotic spices, but these ingredients were once rare enough to inspire wars, send explorers on missions around the globe and, by some accounts, even factor in the purchase of the island of Manhattan by the Dutch.

In honor of this rich history, CanolaInfo's latest recipe collection, "Spice Route: A Journey of Global Flavors," celebrates these once-exotic spices with an array of international dishes inspired by the famous trade passage.

"These recipes integrate spices with regional flavors from some of the most important ports of call at the time of the ancient spice trade, including China, India, Persia, Arabia, North Africa and the Mediterranean," says award-winning chef Raghavan Iyer, who developed the collection. "Spices such as black pepper, cumin and cinnamon are standard ingredients around the world today, but it's fascinating—and delicious—to see how each cuisine handles them differently."

Iyer showcases the transformative flavor of whole spices in dishes such as an Indian-style wild halibut, rubbed with turmeric and finished with cracked black pepper, or a Persian lamb stew scented with cumin and cayenne pepper.

Each flavorful recipe is made with canola oil, which is neutral in flavor, light in texture and has the least saturated fat and most plant-based omega-3 fat of all common cooking oils. It is also free of trans fat and, like other vegetable oils, is cholesterol-free.

Recipes, all available at www.canolainfo.org, include:

- Phyllo Bundles with Saffron-Flavored Chickpeas
- Persian Lamb Stew with Dried Apricots
- Turmeric-Rubbed Wild Halibut with Cracked Black Pepper
- "Lentils of Arabia" with Rice, Cumin and Caramelized Onions
- Pork Tenderloin with Five-Spice Powder and Peppers
- Ethiopian Chicken with Berberi Sauce and Fresh Ginger.

"Canola oil is ideal for cooking with spices," Iyer explains. "It allows the aroma of a spice, whether delicate or assertive, to come to the forefront of a dish."

"These dishes are truly a 'passport' to flavors around the globe and a wonderful glimpse into the history of spices and cuisines we enjoy today."

Persian Lamb Stew With Dried Apricots

Here's a sweet and savory example of the rich flavors that can be found in the recipe collection.

- ¼ cup coarsely chopped, firmly packed fresh mint leaves
- 2 Tbsp finely chopped fresh ginger
- 2 Tbsp finely chopped garlic cloves
- 1½ tsp coarse kosher or sea salt
- 1 tsp cumin
- ½ tsp turmeric



CanolaInfo's new recipe collection celebrates the rich history of various spices through international dishes made with canola oil.

- ½ tsp cayenne pepper
- 1¼ lbs boneless leg of lamb, fat trimmed off and discarded, cut into 1-inch cubes
- ¼ cup canola oil
- 4 cups finely chopped red onion
- 1 cup dried apricots
- 1 cup water
- 1 Tbsp firmly packed dark brown sugar
- 2 Tbsp malt or cider vinegar
- ¼ cup finely chopped fresh cilantro leaves and tender stems

1. In medium bowl, combine mint and all spices; mix well. Add lamb and toss to coat with marinade rub. Refrigerate, covered, for at least 30 minutes or overnight, to allow meat to absorb flavors.

2. Preheat wok, well-seasoned cast-iron skillet, or Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Drizzle canola oil down its sides. As soon as oil forms shimmering pool at bottom, add onion and cook, stirring occasionally, while it stews in its own juices, about 5 minutes. Once liquid evaporates, reduce heat to medium and stir-fry until onion turns honey-brown with deep purple hue, 15 to 20 minutes.

3. Add lamb and apricots and raise heat to medium-high. Cook, stirring frequently, until meat sears and starts to brown, 8 to 10 minutes. Some canola oil will separate from onion and lamb, and glisten on top of mixture. Apricots will start to soften.

4. Add water and stir once or twice. Once it boils, which will be almost instantaneously, reduce heat to medium-low, cover wok and simmer, stirring occasionally, until lamb is fork-tender, about 30 minutes. Transfer lamb, apricots and onion to serving bowl and leave behind some sauce in wok.

5. Stir brown sugar into wok. Heat from sauce will melt sugar. Pour sauce over lamb and stir in vinegar. Sprinkle cilantro over stew and serve.

Yield: 8 Servings. Serving Size: 1 cup.

Nutritional Analysis per Serving: Calories 260, Total Fat 12 g, Saturated Fat 2 g, Cholesterol 55 mg, Carbohydrates 22 g, Fiber 3 g, Sugars 13 g, Protein 19 g, Sodium 510 mg, Potassium 578 mg