

Shakshuka – Comfort du Jour

Shakshuka is usually served at breakfast, so it's part of my "better breakfast month" series, and it's remarkably simple to make and flexible to accommodate a variety of ingredients. It usually begins with a thick tomato sauce base, stewed together in a cast iron skillet with any other favorite vegetables and topped with fresh eggs.

It's a staple in Jewish cuisine, though you do not have to be Jewish to enjoy it! You may have seen a similar dish from Italy called "eggs in purgatory."

BASIC INGREDIENTS

Extra virgin olive oil (how much depends on what you're adding)
1/2 medium onion, chopped
3 cloves garlic, chopped
1 28 oz. can whole peeled tomatoes in puree*
4 eggs

OPTIONAL INGREDIENTS

Depending on your taste, and your inventory, consider adding any of these ingredients. It's your kitchen, and you can make your shakshuka as chunky or saucy as you'd like. For the most authentic experience of this dish, I'd recommend keeping with ingredients that are common to the Middle East, where shakshuka was born.

- Up to 1 cup other vegetables, such as fresh cauliflower, fresh cubed eggplant, fresh chopped bell peppers
- Up to 1 cup canned chickpeas or cooked lentils, or 1/2 cup in combination with your favorite vegetables
- Up to 2 cups fresh greens, chopped (they will cook down to small amount, so be generous)
- Other flavor enhancers, such as olives, capers, spices, tomato paste, chile peppers

There's so much tangy, rich sauce in this dish, you'll want to have some kind of bread nearby for sopping. Pita is a great option, or any other kind of soft bread is just right.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Place a cast-iron skillet over medium heat. Swirl in olive oil and sauté onions, peppers and cauliflower until lightly caramelized.
2. Add canned tomatoes, harissa and tomato paste. Stir to combine ingredients evenly and cook over medium low heat for about 20 minutes so that the tomatoes lose the "canned" flavor and mixture begins to thicken.
3. Use the back of a large spoon to create slight depressions to hold the eggs. Crack eggs right into the dents you've made, sprinkle with salt and pepper, cover the skillet and simmer about 10 minutes, or until whites are set and yolks are desired doneness. Alternatively, you can finish it in a 350° F oven for 15 minutes.
4. Garnish with fresh chopped parsley or oregano and serve with my [soft pita wraps](#) or other bread for sopping the rich shakshuka sauce. (Recipe is linked, or search by name from my blog below)