

## MOROCCAN BISTEEYA (CURRIED CHICKEN PIE)

Okay, I'll admit that this is probably the most daunting recipe in this book. It all gets easier after you ace this one. I will also say with great conviction that it is the most astoundingly satisfying recipe to execute. I was never so pleased with myself than when I made this pie, and I almost had a tear in my eye when I served it, so beautiful was the result. I have had many bisteeyas in my time, and while the most authentic use ground pigeon, I have saved you from the arduous task of searching for it. Plus you'll find a greater audience for this most grand and deserving of dishes if it's filled with chicken. You could also use ground lamb, and indeed ground turkey, veal, or beef. These flavors are otherworldly and transport one's spirit immediately to the dark and mysterious souks of Marrakech. No matter how complicated this dish appears, it is undeniably worth it.

16 sheets filo dough (17 inches x 12 inches)  
 3 tablespoons canola oil  
 1 cup minced shallots  
 4 cloves garlic, minced  
 3 tablespoons minced ginger  
 2 pounds ground chicken  
 2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce  
 2 tablespoons anardana  
 (dried pomegranate seeds;  
 available at Indian grocery stores)  
 2 cups quartered cherry tomatoes  
 (retain as much juice and as  
 many seeds as possible)  
 2½ teaspoons dried mango powder  
 (amchoor; see page 3)  
 2 teaspoons curry powder  
 1 teaspoon salt  
 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted and cooled

### GARNISH

2 tablespoons unsalted butter  
 2 cups slivered almonds  
 ½ teaspoon grated nutmeg  
 ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon  
 Confectioners' sugar

- 1** Remove the filo dough from the fridge and let it sit at room temperature for 30 minutes.
- 2** Heat the oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Toss in the shallots, stir for 2 minutes, then add the garlic and ginger. Sauté the ingredients for a few minutes before adding the chicken, breaking it up with the back of a wooden spoon. Add the Worcestershire sauce, stir, and add the pomegranate seeds. Cook, stirring, over medium-high heat for 15 minutes; if the chicken releases a lot of liquid, continue to heat until the juices evaporate. When the meat has browned and just starts to dry out, add the cherry tomatoes, mango powder, curry powder, and salt. Reduce the heat slightly and cook for another 10–15 minutes, stirring vigorously. If the chicken starts to stick to the skillet, add a tablespoon or two of water to help the cooking process. When done, remove from the heat and set aside. Preheat the oven to 425°F.
- 3** Prepare the filo dough by laying out a dishcloth on a flat surface large enough to accommodate the flat filo sheets. Lay the filo in a stack on the cloth and cover it with another hand towel. With hot water, dampen and wring out a third hand cloth and lay it flat over the top towel.
- 4** Carefully center 1 sheet of the filo over a 12-inch tart pan, allowing the ends to drape over the sides, and push filo gently down into the pan to create a reservoir. Brush it with the melted butter. Do the same for 7 more sheets of filo, for a total of 8, placing each at a 45° angle to the one before it and butter it. The sheets of filo should all have their corners hanging over the edge.
- 5** Carefully spoon in the ground chicken filling and fill the pie, smoothing out the filling with the back of the spoon. Center 1 sheet of the filo over the filling, allowing the ends to drape over the sides, and brush it with butter. Do the same with 7 more sheets of the filo, again each layered at about a 45-degree angle to the one below it. Close the pie by carefully folding the draped sheets of filo over the filling. Brush the top with the melted butter.
- 6** Bake the pie for 15 minutes. Remove from the oven, and place a flat baking sheet over the pie pan. Carefully flip the pie onto the baking sheet. Brush this side of the pie with butter, and bake for an additional 10–15 minutes, until golden brown.
- 7** For the garnish, melt the butter in a skillet over medium heat. Stir in the almonds and cook for 3 minutes. Add the nutmeg and cinnamon, and stir for another 3–4 minutes. Remove the pie from the oven, and pour the almonds over the top of the pie. Sprinkle the confectioners' sugar through a fine sieve (by tapping its sides) over the whole pie. Let the pie cool slightly and settle for about 20 minutes. Serve warm. **SERVES 6**







