



FISH SMOTHERED WITH ONION JAM

This is my take on a dish I learned in Safi. The original is prepared with conger eel, which I find impossible to source here. So, I've substituted monkfish, with excellent results. Being thicker, it takes a little longer to cook, but as a result, it has more time to absorb the flavors of the honey, raisins, and sweet spices in the onion jam.

The onions are cooked down to a jam, then a little lemon juice is added to bring the flavors into balance. The fish fillets are arranged in a baking dish with the onion jam and baked until they are opaque and juicy. All in all, a perfect example of good Moroccan home cooking.

Serves 4

Four 1¼-inch monkfish fillets or other thick white-fleshed fish fillets, about 1½ pounds	1¾ teaspoons ground Ceylon cinnamon
Coarse sea salt	¼ teaspoon grated nutmeg
¼ cup extra virgin olive oil	Pinch of ground ginger
2 pounds red onions, halved and thickly sliced lengthwise	3 tablespoons floral honey
2 tablespoons saffron water (see page 48)	½ cup golden raisins
Fine sea salt and freshly ground white pepper	Juice of ½ lemon, optional
	A handful of flat-leaf parsley sprigs
	1 lemon, quartered

1. Sprinkle the fish on both sides with sea salt. Cover and refrigerate for at least 1 hour.
2. Meanwhile, heat 3 tablespoons of the olive oil in a wide straight-sided skillet over medium-low heat. Add the onions, saffron water, ½ teaspoon salt, ½ teaspoon ground white pepper, and the cinnamon, nutmeg, and ginger, cover, and cook over very low heat until the onions are golden, about 30 minutes.
3. Add the honey and raisins to the onions and continue cooking until the onions have a glazed appearance, about 15 minutes. Correct the seasoning with salt, pepper, and a few drops of lemon juice. Set the onion jam aside, uncovered.
4. Preheat the oven to 400°F.
5. Brush the bottom of an 9-inch baking dish with the remaining tablespoon of oil. Scatter the sprigs of parsley over the bottom. Sprinkle with 3 tablespoons water and place the fish fillets side by side on top. Spread the onion jam over the fish and bake for 10 minutes. Turn off the heat, prop the oven door ajar (about 2 inches), and leave the dish inside for 20 more minutes. Serve with the lemon wedges.