LAMB STEW WITH TURKISH FLAVORS

John Willoughby

SERVES 6 TO 8

ACTIVE TIME: 25 MIN START TO FINISH: 2¼ HR

The mild heat and deep flavor of Maras and Urfa peppers are wonderful not just in kebabs but also in soups and stews.

- 2 lb lamb shoulder, cut into ¾-inch chunks
- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- 2 medium onions, thinly sliced
- 6 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- ¼ cup red-wine vinegar
- 7 cups reduced-sodium chicken stock or broth
- 1 (15- to 19-oz) can chickpeas, rinsed and drained
- ¼ cup apricot preserves or minced dried Turkish apricots
- 2 tsp ground coriander
- 2 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp Maras pepper plus more for sprinkling
- 1 tsp Urfa pepper plus more for sprinkling (for both peppers, see Shopping List, page 132)
- 1½ lb boiling potatoes (about 4 medium)
- ¼ cup dried currants
- ¼ cup chopped oregano
- 1½ Tbsp fresh lemon juice, or to taste

ACCOMPANIMENT: rice

▸Pat lamb dry and season with 1 tsp salt and ¾ tsp pepper. Heat oil in a wide 5- to 6-qt heavy pot over medium-high heat until it shimmers. Brown lamb on all sides in 3 batches until golden-brown, 4 to 5 minutes per batch, transferring to a plate with a slotted spoon.

▸Add onions to pot and cook, stirring occasionally, until golden-brown, about 8 minutes. Add garlic and cook, stirring, 1 minute. Stir in vinegar and cook, scraping up brown bits, until vinegar has evaporated, 1 to 2 minutes.

▸Return lamb with meat juices to pot. Stir in stock, chickpeas, preserves, and spices (including Maras and Urfa pepper) and simmer, uncovered, stirring occasionally, 1 hour.

▸Peel potatoes and cut into ½-inch pieces. Add to stew (after 1 hour) and simmer, uncovered, until potatoes and lamb are tender, about 30 minutes more. Remove from heat and stir in currants, oregano, and lemon juice. Season with salt.

▸Serve sprinkled with additional Maras and Urfa pepper.

COOKS' NOTE: Stew improves in flavor if made at least 1 day ahead and keeps up to 3 days.