

Braised Hard-boiled Eggs ***huevos haminados***

Huevos haminados is one of the most ancient and characteristic foods in the Judeo-Spanish repertoire. In a Sephardic kitchen red and brown onion skins are always saved and stored ready to make these beautiful eggs. Although the recipe is straightforward, the result is quite spectacular. Eggs, in their shells, are slowly braised for 6 hours in water in which a little oil and red and brown onion skins have been added. Ground coffee can also be stirred in, imparting a unique flavour and colour. The porous eggshells become tinged with distinctive rich shades of golden brown, russet and maroon. Do not worry if the shells crack when simmering as the egg whites can become marbled with patterns in similar colours, encasing creamy yolks. *Huevos haminados* are served alongside savoury pies, gratins and fritters and at the Sabbath brunch. They also feature throughout Passover.

red or brown dried outer skins from 10 onions (about 4 cups)

8 eggs in their shells, at room temperature

water to cover

2 tbsp vegetable oil

1 tbsp ground Turkish coffee (optional)

1 tbsp red wine vinegar

1 tsp sea salt

½ tsp freshly ground black pepper

For sprinkling:

sea salt and freshly ground black pepper or cumin

Arrange the onion skins to line the base of a large, deep, stainless steel pan. Cradle the eggs on top of the onion skins and pour over enough cold water to cover the eggs by 7.5cm (3in). Add the oil, coffee (if using), vinegar and salt and pepper. Cover with a tight-fitting lid and bring to a slow boil. Cover, reduce the heat and simmer for at least 6 hours, checking the water level occasionally.

Scoop out the eggs with a slotted spoon and run them under cold water until they are just cool enough to handle. Roll the eggs to crack the shells and then slip off the shells.

Cut the eggs in half and sprinkle with salt and pepper or cumin. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Stella's Hint:

- The hard-boiled eggs can be refrigerated in their shells with the cooking liquid for up to a day. Before serving return to room temperature first and then bring the cooking liquid to a slow boil. Reduce the heat and simmer for 15 minutes.