

## FRAGRANT BAKED CORNISH HENS WITH APRICOT SAUCE

*(adapted from Elra s Cooking)*

2 (3 lbs) Cornish hens  
2 tbsp olive oil  
1 medium shallot, finely chopped  
1 small garlic, minced  
24 dried apricot  
¼ cup golden raisins  
2 cinnamon sticks  
1 whole star anise  
1 tsp ground ginger  
½ tsp ground cumin  
1-2 tbsp orange flower water (I omitted, could not find it)  
¼-½ tsp saffron threads, soaked in 2 tbsp hot water  
½ cup chicken stock  
salt and pepper to taste  
chopped parsley  
a handful of slivered almonds

Heat oven to 375 F.

Saute shallot over medium heat until translucent, add minced garlic, dried apricot, raisins, cinnamon sticks, star anise, ground ginger, ground cumin, saffron water, and the chicken. Stir to mix the ingredients, season with salt and pepper. As soon as it starts to boil, turn the stove off, add the parsley, mix, and let this mixture cool completely.

Clean, and cut the hens into quarters. Pat dry with paper towels. Arrange them neatly on an oven proof ceramic dish. Pour the apricot-spice mixture directly on the hens, turning to coat each of the pieces with this mixture, then arrange them back with the skin side up. Transfer to the oven, and bake for 1 hour. About 10 minutes before the hens are done, scatter slivered almonds on top, and continue to roast until the skin is brown and the meat cooked thoroughly. If you want, increase the heat slightly at the end to brown the skin.