



EGGS POACHED IN MEDITERRANEAN VEGETABLE RAGÙ *SPEZZATINO DI VERDURE CON UOVA*

Throughout the Mediterranean, including North Africa and the Middle East, there are variations on the theme of eggs poached or baked in a tomato sauce. I like to include a variety of Mediterranean vegetables, as well as borlotti beans, to make it more substantial. This is a delicious, colourful dish for brunch, lunch or a light supper, and what's more it's all cooked in one pan, so very little washing up is needed. Serve with my Cheesy ciabatta (see page 62).

1 Heat the oil in a large shallow saucepan or sauté pan over a medium heat. Add the onion and fry for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Tip in the pepper and fry gently for about 8 minutes. Add the chilli flakes, aubergine and courgette, sprinkle over the salt and fry for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally.

2 Increase the heat. Stir in the tomatoes, beans and stock and bring to the boil. Reduce the heat to medium, add the parsley and simmer for 10 minutes or until you have a fairly thick sauce, stirring occasionally.

3 Reduce the heat to low. Using the back of a spoon, make 4 dips in the vegetable mixture. Carefully break an egg directly into each dip, being careful not to break the yolk. Cover the saucepan with a lid and simmer gently for about 7 minutes or until the whites are set but the yolks are still runny.

4 To serve, carefully transfer to warm bowls, allowing 1 egg per person. Sprinkle over the pecorino.

Serves 4

6 tablespoons olive oil
1 large red onion, peeled and thinly sliced
1 large yellow pepper, deseeded and sliced into strips 5mm thick
1 teaspoon dried chilli flakes
1 medium aubergine, cut into 1cm cubes
1 large courgette, halved lengthways then cut across into slices 5mm thick
2 x 400g tins of chopped tomatoes
1 x 400g tin of borlotti beans, rinsed and drained
100ml hot vegetable stock
2 tablespoons chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
4 medium eggs
30g freshly grated pecorino cheese
Salt