



More on Morocco: A Spread & Where To Stay

An argan oil recipe, scenic spots to stay and eat

By Leslie Pariseau - Mar 5, 2012

As a continuation of last week's article about argan oil, Paula Wolfert, author of *The Food of Morocco*, handed over her recipe for amlou, the Moroccan version of peanut butter. Just a hint sweet, amlou's dark and roasted flavor is a wonderful contrast when spread on fluffy sourdough or paired with salty couscous and vegetables. And in case you'd rather just go and taste it for yourself, we've provided a little travel guide for those who will follow their hungry stomachs just about anywhere.

Amlou

Adapted from *The Food of Morocco*

Makes about 1 ¼ cups

- 8 ounces peeled, blanched and toasted almonds (toast at 300 degrees F until golden)
- 1 teaspoon coarse sea salt
- ½ cup argan oil
- ¼ cup orange blossom honey, or any clear and thin mild honey

Grind warm almonds with the salt into a smooth paste in a heavy mortar. Slowly work in argan oil one tablespoon at a time. When mixture is smooth and creamy, gradually add honey a spoonful at a time. Scrape the amlou into an earthenware crock or airtight glass container and store in a cool place. Do not refrigerate. Amlou has a tendency to separate, so prepare it in small batches and use within a month.

Sources for Argan Oil: Make sure your vendor for argan oil is reputable and providing you with full disclosure on the product's source.

Cosmetic and Cooking: Zamouri Spices

Cooking: Kalustyan's



The Atlas Kasbah, the first eco-lodge in Morocco's High Atlas Mountains.

The Hungry Traveler's Guide

Stay:

- L'Heure Bleue: A courtyard hidden just inside Essaouira's walls, L'Heure Bleue is one-part swanky oasis, one-part enchanting hunting lodge putting one at risk of never actually leaving the premises. Burnished wood, tufted leather, sprays of palm and trays of homemade Moroccan pastries greet guests when ducking into hotel's the tiled archway.
- Atlas Kasbah: Outside of Agadir and set into the High Atlas Mountains, this eco-lodge is the first of its kind in the region, and has an incredibly helpful staff who welcome guests with basil tea made from the hotel's herb garden. The traditional Berber Kashbah is decked out with an educational kitchen, a rustic spa, a cushy tea room, a wood-fired oven and a lazy cat that lounges under the table at a breakfast of spiced coffee and warm bread. Invest in an afternoon hamam, a traditional steam bath session, where a small Berber woman will scrub you down with black soap and a very rough sponge in a very hot room. And then, of course, slap some argan oil on.

Eat:

- The small, plush Moroccan restaurant tucked inside L'Heure Bleue is traditional and very good, though they seemed to be out of several staple dishes the night I dined there. During the day, wander along the docks and sit down at one of the seafood booths where the day's catch is lined up and grilled in front of customers. Point at your fancy, and barter with the seller for a good deal on spiny sea urchin, languorous crabs, silver skinned sardines, and crisp, pink shrimp. Atlas Kasbah's restaurant is also exceptional, serving a special each evening (Friday's crunchy chicken pastilla laden with layers of chopped almonds is fantastic), and a full menu of teas sourced straight from the verdant herb garden is available for post prandial relaxing.

Visit:

- On the road between Marrakesh and Essaouira, Co-Op Marjana, a traditional argan oil co-op, is open for tours 9 AM to 6 PM daily. 14 kilometers from Essaouira on the road Marrakech. Phone: +212 664 69 87 82

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