

## Middle Eastern Poached Eggs – *Shakshuka*

*Shakshuka* gets its name from the Arabic word *shakka*, which means “to stick together,” referring to how the eggs become melded into the sauce, as they are poached. The exact country of origin remains disputed, but most historians and chefs grant the cradle of this dish to the region of North Africa. Two of the main ingredients in the sauce are tomatoes and peppers, which were introduced from Mexico after Spanish explorers and conquerors brought them to the Old World in the 16th century. *Shakshuka* is also popular all throughout the Middle East, including Israel, where it was introduced by Sephardic Jews from Tunisia, other regions of the Middle East, Spain and Portugal.

### Ingredients

3-4 large eggs  
2 cups tomatoes; washed, peeled, stem spot removed, and diced  
½ red bell pepper; washed, stem and seeds removed, and chopped  
½ onion; peeled and chopped  
2 cloves garlic; peeled and chopped finely  
1 tsp paprika  
¼ tsp cumin  
¼ tsp cayenne pepper  
2 tbsp olive oil  
1 small bunch parsley; washed, tough stems removed, and chopped  
1 small bunch cilantro; washed, and chopped  
Water, if needed  
Salt and pepper, to taste

Warm up oil in a large pan over medium heat, then add red peppers and onions, and sauté. Once onions have become translucent, add garlic, paprika, cumin and cayenne. Allow spices to bloom for a few seconds, then add tomatoes, with any of their juices. Cook for ten minutes, stirring and pressing the tomatoes with the back of the spoon, to break them up; if the sauce becomes too dry, add a little water, as needed. Season with salt and pepper, to taste, then create round wells with the spoon, to nest the eggs in; reduce heat to a simmer, and cover pan. Check every couple of minutes, until the eggs are cooked, from tender to firm, to taste. Top with chopped cilantro and parsley. Serve immediately in bowls, with a generous portion of sauce.

