Chicken Tagine

A tajine or tagine means "large pan" or "earthen pan" and is a historically a dish eaten by those that lived in the dessert and is named after the pot in which it is cooked. The name Tajine comes from a Persian word meaning large pan. The cooking pot is still used traditionally in North-Africa and in the Middle-East. It has two traditional forms, in which the small, shallow variety is used in North-Africa, and the big, deep variety is used in middle-eastern Bedouin or dessert cultures.

3000-4000 year old tagine cooking pot

Current tagine cooking pot with a vegetable dish
The dishes which are cooked in the pot are mostly stews with vegetables, meat and fish. The traditional method of cooking with a tajine is to place it over coals. Use of the tajine can be compared to stewing.

In North-African countries, the cooking pot is still called a "Tajine", and the dishes made in it are called "Marqa" "Maraq" or "Maraqa" meaning 'broth' or 'stew' in Arabic. It is an important part of the Bedouin cultures, North-African Arabian cultures and history.

The cooking pot is also adopted by other cultures, like the Berbers in North-Africa. Because the Berber people still live in the poor country sides of North-Africa, a cooking pot of clay is much more affordable for them.