



# Close to Home

*Recipes around the world*



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Salim bin 'Abdullah bin 'Umar said:

*"I heard my father  
say: 'I heard 'Umar bin  
Khattab say:*

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

*'Eat together and do not eat  
separately, for the blessing is  
in being together.'*

*Sharing meals together holds significant importance in cultures worldwide. It's about connection, tradition, and creating memories around the table.*

This experience brings communities together, while also providing an opportunity to give to those who need it most.

This year, we asked our staff and friends to share their favourite traditional recipes—those that are staples in their homes, whether it's for Eid or an everyday occasion.

These dishes represent love, tradition, and culture passed down through generations. From South Asia, to Africa, the Middle East, and many more. These flavours bring us closer together, no matter where we are in the world.

These recipes capture the essence of sharing and togetherness. Join us in the kitchen as we spread love through cooking, with dishes that bring us close to home.



For the first time in a while, we were able to receive meat to celebrate Eid. I'm so grateful that my children and I could prepare an Eid meal – something we haven't done in years. It brought us both nourishment and a sense of relief during these difficult times.

**Maliha  
Pakistan**

I am so happy to have received the gift of fresh meat this Qurbani, this will sustain my family for weeks.

**Zainah  
Afghanistan**

My mother was having a hard time putting food on the table for us. Some days, we didn't have enough to eat. But thanks to the fresh meat we received, we've been able to have good meals. It felt really special, and my mom doesn't look as worried anymore.

**Ameena  
India**

Receiving meat during Eid al-Adha made this year feel special for us. It was the first proper meal with enough protein we had in months. My siblings and I felt stronger and happier.

**Faiyaz  
Bangladesh**



**Share**  
the joy of eid  
Qurbani/Udhiya

Continue giving to our  
Qurbani program!  
[idrf.ca/qurbani](http://idrf.ca/qurbani)

# Afghan Mantu

Serves 4-5

Cook Time 2.5 hours

## Ingredients

### Yogurt sauce

1 cup plain yogurt  
1 tsp dried mint  
1 tsp dried dill  
1 clove garlic, minced  
Salt to taste

### Beef Filling

1 tbsp cooking oil  
1 pound ground beef  
1 tsp salt  
½ tsp ground turmeric  
1 tsp ground coriander  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
Pinch of ground black pepper  
2 medium onions, minced  
1 bunch fresh cilantro, minced  
Wonton wrappers pack (40-50)

### Tomato Sauce

1 onion, finely diced  
1 tsp garlic, minced  
1 tbsp vegetable oil  
½ cup tomato paste  
½ tsp coriander powder  
1 tsp cumin powder  
¼ tsp chilli pepper  
1 tsp black pepper powder  
¼ cup split peas, rinsed and soaked for an hour  
Salt, to taste

Mantu are Afghan dumplings filled with spiced ground beef or lamb and onions, delicately steamed and traditionally topped with a savoury tomato-based sauce and a layer of creamy yogurt. A beloved dish across Afghanistan, mantu are often served at gatherings and celebrations—a comfort food with the perfect balance of flavour and texture.

## Directions

### Yogurt sauce

- 1 In a bowl, whisk together the yogurt, dried mint, garlic, and salt to taste.
- 2 Set aside, covered in the refrigerator, until it is ready to use.

### Filling

- 1 Heat the oil in a pot over medium high heat until it begins to shimmer.
- 2 Add the ground beef, salt, turmeric, coriander, garlic, and pepper to the pot. Cook while stirring often and breaking up any large chunks of beef, until it's fully cooked and most of the moisture has evaporated.
- 3 Take the pot off the heat and mix in the minced onion and chopped cilantro.
- 4 Let the mixture cool slightly before proceeding to the next step.

### Stuffing the wrappers

- 1 Spoon a small amount of the filling into the center of a wonton wrapper.
- 2 Using your fingertip or a pastry brush, lightly moisten the edges of the wrapper with water to help seal it. To form a dumpling, start by pinching two opposite corners together. Then bring the remaining two corners up and pinch them together to create a little pocket.
- 3 Continue with the rest of the wrappers, keeping them loosely covered with a towel or plastic wrap until you're ready to steam them.

### Steaming the Mantu

- 1 Bring water to a simmer in a pot fitted with a steamer insert, making sure the water doesn't touch the bottom of the insert. Adjust the heat to maintain a gentle simmer, steamy and lightly bubbling, but not a full boil.
- 2 Lightly oil the surface of the steamer insert, then carefully arrange the mantu in a single layer, working in batches if needed. Cover and steam until the wrappers are soft and slightly translucent, about 15–20 minutes. Repeat with the remaining mantu.

### Tomato split pea sauce

- 1 Heat oil in a saucepan over medium heat and sauté the onions until they become translucent
- 2 Add the minced garlic and cook until aromatic.
- 3 Mix in the tomato paste, along with turmeric, coriander, cumin, chili powder, and black pepper.
- 4 Add the cooked split peas and a cup of water, then let the mixture simmer for about 15 minutes, or until most of the liquid has reduced. Season with salt to taste.

### Serve

- 1 In a serving platter, use a spoon to spread out some of the yogurt sauce on the platter.
- 2 Arrange the steamed mantu on the platter.
- 3 Pour the tomato and split pea sauce over the mantu and drizzle the yogurt sauce.
- 4 Garnish with chopped fresh coriander.



# Hyderabadi Talawa Gosht

**Serves 4-5**

**Cook Time 2.5 hours**

Talawa Gosht literally translates to “fried meat” and is a staple dish from Hyderabad, India, traditionally made with beef or mutton. Known for its bold spices and aromatic flavours, this classic recipe truly steals the show. In Hyderabad, food is all about combinations—Talawa Gosht is best enjoyed with rice and daal.

## Ingredients

2 lbs veal shank boneless cut into  
½” cubes  
1 tbsp oil  
1 tsp red chilli powder  
2 tbsp ginger garlic paste  
¼ tsp turmeric powder  
1 tsp coriander powder  
½ tsp cumin powder  
1 tsp salt or to taste  
¼ cup oil as needed for frying  
Chopped fresh coriander for garnish

## Directions

- 1** In a pot mix the first 8 ingredients.
- 2** On medium-high heat, cook until the meat has changed colour, stirring often.
- 3** Add ½ cup water. Mix well. Reduce the heat to low and cover the pot. Cook until the meat is tender (approximately 1 hour). If you are using a pressure cooker, cooking for 20 minutes is enough time to get the meat tender.
- 4** Remove the lid and cook on medium- high heat until a quarter of the liquid is left. Drizzle in the oil and fry on medium flame for 5-10 minutes, flipping the meat constantly with a spatula until it turns a nice reddish colour.
- 5** Garnish with freshly chopped coriander and serve with daal and rice.



# Pakistani Nihari

**Serves 8**

**Cook Time 4 hours**

## Ingredients

### Nihari Masala

10 green cardamom pods  
3 black cardamom pods  
3 black long pepper pods  
10 whole cloves  
1 cinnamon stick  
1 star anise pod  
1/3 cup coriander seeds  
1/3 cup fennel seeds  
2 tbsp cumin seeds  
1 tsp black cumin seeds  
1 tsp black peppercorns  
2 tbsp cayenne pepper  
2 tbsp. kosher salt  
1 tsp. ground turmeric

### Nihari and Assembly

2 heads of garlic, cloves separated, peeled  
1/2 inch piece ginger, peeled  
3 tbsp. vegetable oil  
5 lb. beef shank  
2 1/2 tbsp kosher salt  
3 tbsp. ghee or vegetable oil  
2 medium onions, thinly sliced  
2 bay leaves

### Garnish

Cilantro leaves finely chopped  
Thinly sliced serrano chilli peppers  
Thinly sliced ginger  
Fried onions,  
Lime wedges

**Nihari is a slow-cooked stew made with beef or lamb shanks, and is one of the most famous dishes in Pakistan. Known for its rich, aromatic flavours and thick, hearty broth, Nihari is a comfort food traditionally had at breakfast but can be enjoyed on any occasion.**

## Directions

### Nihari Masala

- 1 Toss 10 green cardamom pods, 3 black cardamom pods, 3 black long pepper pods, 10 whole cloves, one 3"-long cinnamon stick, 1 star anise pod, 1/3 cup coriander seeds, 1/3 cup fennel seeds, 2 tbsp. cumin seeds, 1 tbsp. black cumin seeds, and 1 tsp. black peppercorns in a small bowl to combine.
- 2 In a dry medium sized skillet over medium heat, toast spice mixture, stirring constantly, until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add 2 tbsp. cayenne pepper, 1 tbsp kosher salt, and 1 tsp. ground turmeric and toast, stirring constantly, until combined and fragrant, about 10 seconds. Transfer spices back to bowl and let cool.
- 3 Transfer spices into a small blender and pulse to a fine powder.

### Nihari and Assembly

- 1 Place a rack in middle of oven; preheat to 350°. Blend 2 heads of garlic, cloves separated, peeled, one 2-inch piece ginger, peeled, and 3 tbsp. vegetable oil in a small blender until smooth. Set garlic paste aside.
- 2 Season 5 lb. of beef shank all over with 2 1/2 tbsp. kosher salt. Heat 3 tbsp. ghee or vegetable oil in a large ovenproof Dutch oven or other heavy pot over medium-high. Working in batches if needed, cook short ribs, meaty side down, until a deeply browned crust forms, about 6 minutes per batch. Transfer to a plate with tongs, leaving fat in pot.
- 3 Cook 2 medium onions, thinly sliced, in same pot, stirring occasionally, until softened and golden, 10–12 minutes. Reduce heat to medium, add reserved garlic paste and cook, stirring often, until paste is beginning to stick to bottom of pot but not burning, about 4 minutes. Add 2 bay leaves and 3 tbsp. nihari masala; cook, stirring constantly, until fragrant, about 1 minute.
- 4 Pour in 6–7 cups water (there is little risk of the pot running dry, and you can adjust the sauce consistency at the end, so no need to be exact here) and bring to a simmer, stirring and scraping up browned bits stuck to bottom of pot. Put short ribs back into pot and return liquid to a simmer. Cover pot, transfer to oven, and braise until meat is tender, and liquid is thickened, 2 1/2–3 hours. If the braise seems too soupy for your liking, uncover and simmer until sauce thickens slightly, 20–30 minutes. You can also add a little more water to loosen if needed.
- 5 Skim as much fat from surface as possible; discard. Serve nihari in a bowl and top with chopped cilantro leaves, thinly sliced serrano peppers, thinly sliced ginger, and store-bought fried onions. Serve it with toasted naan, and lime wedges for squeezing over.



### Cooking Tips

Nihari masala can be made 2 months ahead. Store airtight at room temperature.



# Lebanese Kafta Kababs

**Serves 6**

**Cook Time 40 mins**

**These juicy Kafta Kebabs are a classic Lebanese dish full of flavor. Made with ground beef, finely chopped onion, fresh parsley, and warm spices like allspice, cinnamon, and black pepper, they're hand-shaped and grilled or pan-fried to perfection. Best served with bread, garlic sauce, and your favorite salad—this dish is sure to be a hit at the dinner table.**

## *Ingredients*

1 onion  
1 cup fresh parsley  
(2 lb) minced beef  
4 tsp Lebanese 7 spice

## *Directions*

- 1** Blend the onion and parsley in a food processor until finely chopped. Add the ground beef and spices, then pulse again until just combined—avoid overmixing.
- 2** Shape the mixture into 6 sausage-like kebabs, about 1 inch thick. If using skewers, thread them through the center. Lightly season the outside with salt flakes for a crisp finish.
- 3** Grill over high heat on a barbecue or griddle pan for 3–4 minutes per side, or until nicely charred. Serve with garlic sauce, tabbouleh, or your favorite salad.



# Zambia Lamb Curry

**Serves 4**

**Cook Time 40 mins**

**This lamb curry is a favourite in Zambia, known for its rich, hearty texture and bold flavours. Tender lamb is slow-cooked in a fragrant tomato-based sauce, infused with spices, curry leaves, and cinnamon. Served with rice, it's the ultimate comfort food that brings warmth to any table.**

## *Ingredients*

2 tbsp oil  
4 onions, sliced  
6 cloves garlic, finely  
grated  
2" inch ginger, finely  
grated  
3 chillies, halved  
Generous pinch of salt  
3lb lamb  
10 curry leaves  
3 bay leaves  
3 sticks cinnamon  
1-3 tsp chilli powder  
2 tsp ground coriander  
2 tsp ground turmeric  
2 tbsp hot curry powder  
100g tomato paste  
3 tomatoes, grated  
800g baby potatoes,  
halved  
2 cups vegetable stock  
A handful fresh coriander

## *Directions*

- 1** Heat oil in a pot and sauté the onions for 5–8 minutes, until soft and golden.
- 2** Add garlic, ginger, and chili, and cook for 2 minutes, stirring occasionally.
- 3** Season the meat, add it to the pot, and make sure it's browned evenly on all sides.
- 4** Add curry leaves, bay leaves, and remainder of all the spices, fry until fragrant.
- 5** Gently stir to coat the meat with the spices.
- 6** Stir in tomato paste, chopped tomatoes, potatoes, and stock, mix well.
- 7** Adjust seasoning and simmer on low-medium heat for 60–75 minutes, swirling the pot occasionally instead of stirring.
- 8** Once the meat is tender, add in fresh coriander and stir well.
- 9** Serve hot with rice or your choice of side.



# Palestinian Lamb Maqluba

**Serves 6**

**Cook Time 40 mins**

One of the most delicious and popular Palestinian meals. This version, made with lamb, baked cauliflower, and eggplant, is rich in flavour and absolutely worth trying. It's a blend of bold spices and tender textures that's sure to impress any guest.

## Ingredients

### For the meat

12 bone-in lamb shoulder pieces, medium cut  
1 onion, quartered  
4 cardamom  
4 bay leaves  
½ tsp ground allspice  
½ tsp sugar optional  
1 tsp salt  
½ tsp black pepper

### For the vegetables

2 eggplants, sliced  
1 cauliflower  
2 potatoes, peeled, sliced  
2 tomatoes, sliced  
3 tbsp olive oil  
Salt & pepper, to taste

### For the rice

2 cups basmati rice  
5 cups lamb broth  
1 tsp salt  
½ tsp black pepper  
½ tsp 7 spice  
¼ tsp cumin  
¼ tsp turmeric

### For the garnish

¼ cup parsley, chopped  
⅓ cup slivered almonds, toasted in olive oil

## Directions

- 1 Wash the lamb pieces thoroughly. Add them to a pot and cover with water. Simmer on medium heat.
- 2 After a few minutes of simmering, spoon off the residue that is floating into a bowl and discard.
- 3 Once the water is clear of the residue, add the onion, cardamom, and bay leaves along with the allspice, sugar (optional) salt, and pepper. Cover and boil oil on medium heat for 1.5-2 hours until the meat is tender.
- 4 While the meat is cooking, prepare the vegetables and rice for the dish. Preheat the oven to 400°F Toss the sliced eggplant, cauliflower, and potato, with the olive oil, salt, and pepper. Make sure everything is well coated. Add more oil if necessary. Add the vegetables to a baking sheet baking. Do not overlap the vegetables. Bake each vegetable variety in their own pan or one huge pan for approximately 30 minutes, flipping once.
- 5 Bake until tender and lightly golden. Keep it baking longer if necessary, then set to the side. Prepare the rice by stirring together the soaked rice with the spices listed above. Once the meat is cooked through, drain the water and save the lamb broth to cook the rice in. Put the lamb pieces a side.

## Assembling the Pot

- 1 Start with a thin layer of rice at the bottom of your prepped pot. The nonstick pot should be lightly sprayed with nonstick spray too or oiled. Then, add a layer of tomato slices. Top off the tomato slices with the baked eggplant slices, cauliflower florets, and potatoes (if using).
- 2 Then, add the lamb pieces followed by the rice. Cover the top of the rice with a fitted heat proof plate. This will help keep the rice intact while it simmers.
- 3 Pour the lamb broth on top of the rice. The broth should cover the rice entirely with an inch extra on top. Let this come to a light boil then simmer for about 25-30 minutes on medium heat while covered.
- 4 Once the rice is cooked through, take it off the heat and let it sit for 20 minutes in the pot before serving. When ready to serve, find a large platter with raised edges and swiftly flip the pot over the top of the platter. Tap at the bottom of the pot a few times and gently raise the pot to reveal the beautiful maqluba.
- 5 Top with the garnishes and serve with yogurt and salad.



# Yemeni Haneeth

**Serves 8**

**Cook Time 4 hours**

## Ingredients

### Ingredients

2 lamb necks & 1 lamb shoulder (bone in) large hand-sized chunks  
1 bunch green onion  
1 bunch chives  
2 tbsp cumin  
1 tbsp black pepper  
2 tbsp turmeric  
2 tbsp salt  
6-8 dry bay leaves  
6-7 cardamom pods  
5-6 cloves  
4 medium cinnamon sticks  
3 tbsp room temperature butter  
1 cup high quality olive oil  
2-3 dried lemon or lime

Haneeth is slow-roasted lamb that is so tender it falls right off the bone. A favourite at gatherings, the meat is marinated overnight, then roasted for at least two hours—often longer. While there are many variations, each Yemeni family has its own unique take on this beloved dish.

## Directions

- 1 In a food processor, blend all the ingredients except the dried lime or lemon until smooth. Make sure all whole spices are fully broken down.
- 2 Rub the marinade thoroughly into the lamb pieces, then cover and refrigerate overnight.
- 3 The next day, prepare a large cast iron pot by adding ½ cup of olive oil to the bottom.

## Oven Directions

- 1 Preheat the oven to 450°F. Cover and bake the lamb for 1 hour.
- 2 Gently toss or turn the meat. Lower the heat to 350°F and bake for another 30 minutes, covered.
- 3 Toss the meat again and bake for another 30 minutes, still covered.
- 4 Toss once more, then bake uncovered for 10–20 minutes to allow the top layer to brown nicely.
- 5 Serve hot and garnish with sliced green onions or parsley.



## Cooking Tips

- If the lamb doesn't release enough liquid during baking, add a bit of water to the bottom of the pot.
- If you've halved the recipe and are working with a single layer of meat, flip each piece during steps 2–4 instead of tossing. Be sure to baste the meat with the oil and juices at the bottom of the pot.
- If bone-in lamb isn't available, oxtail is a good alternative. Avoid using boneless lamb, as it won't yield the same result.



# Somali Lamb Suqaar

**Serves 6**

**Cook Time 40 mins**

## *Ingredients*

½ kg diced lamb meat  
1 large onion  
1 large red pepper or mixed peppers  
4 cloves garlic  
1 large tomato  
A handful of coriander  
1 tbsp garam masala  
2 tbsp fresh tamarind or 1 tbsp tamarind from a jar  
1 tbsp roasted coriander seed powder  
Generous pinch of salt  
Half a lemon

Suqaar is a meat dish originating from Somalia. It comes in different varieties and can be made with lamb, beef, or chicken. Fragrant with aromatic spices, lamb Suqaar is diced into chunks for a burst of flavour in every bite. This dish is best served with rice, flatbread, or a salad.

## *Directions*

- 1** Start by prepping the ingredients. Blend the tomato, 3 garlic cloves, and coriander into a semi-smooth mixture. Add a small splash of water if needed to help it blend.
- 2** Chop the onion, peppers, and remaining garlic clove finely.
- 3** In a pan over medium heat, sauté the chopped onion, peppers, and garlic until softened. Add the spices and mix well.
- 4** Add the lamb and season with salt right away. Stir to coat the meat, then cover and let it cook for a few minutes.
- 5** Stir in the tamarind, mix again, and cover the pan. Let it simmer for another 7 minutes.
- 6** Once the lamb starts to brown and caramelize, pour in the tomato mixture. Cover and cook for about 5 more minutes, allowing the flavours to come together.
- 7** Finish with a squeeze of lemon and a sprinkle of fresh coriander. Serve and enjoy



# Syrian Meat Pies

**Serves 6**

**Cook Time 40 mins**

## Ingredients

### For the dough

7 cups all purpose flour  
2 cups warm water  
¼ cup vegetable oil  
2 tbsp yeast  
2 tbsp sugar  
2 tbsp yogurt  
1 tsp salt

### For the Filling

1 lb lean ground beef  
1 tbsp coriander  
1 tbsp 7 spices  
1 tbsp salt  
1 tsp black pepper  
½ tsp paprika  
1 red pepper diced small  
½ cup pomegranate molasses  
1½ cups diced tomatoes  
1 cup pureed yellow onion (water squeezed out)  
A handful of pine nuts

Sfeeha is a tasty open-faced meat pie made with thin, delicate dough. Baked at a high temperature on a pizza stone, it comes out perfectly crisp on the outside, with a warm, flavourful meat filling—perfect for a snack, a meal, or sharing with friends and family.

## Directions

- 1** In a bowl, combine the wet ingredients and let sit for 5 minutes to activate the yeast.
- 2** Add the flour and salt, then knead the dough using a stand mixer for about 8 minutes.
- 3** Transfer the dough to a lightly oiled bowl, cover, and let it rise in a warm place for about 1 hour.
- 4** While the dough rises, prepare the filling by mixing all ingredients together, then place in a strainer to remove excess liquid.
- 5** Once the dough has risen, divide it into two portions and form small dough balls with your hands. Cover and let them rest for 15 minutes.
- 6** Lightly flour your work surface and roll each dough ball into a thin oval shape.
- 7** Spread the meat mixture on top, pressing it gently and leaving the edges clean.
- 8** Preheat your oven to 500°F.
- 9** Bake for about 5 minutes on a pizza stone for best results, or use a baking sheet placed on the lowest oven rack.
- 10** Serve with cold plain yogurt and enjoy!



# Sudanese Shaiyah

**Serves 4**

**Cook Time 1 hour 15 mins**

## Ingredients

3 lbs. lamb breast riblets, cut into pieces  
1 cup lamb stock  
1 jalapeno pepper, slit down one side but left whole  
3 bay leaves (preferably fresh, not dried)  
5 cloves garlic, peeled and sliced  
½ large red onion or 1 small red onion, sliced  
2 celery ribs, de-stringed and cut into long pieces  
2 tsp ground coriander  
1 tsp ground black pepper  
2 tsp ground cumin  
½ tsp ground cardamom  
½ fresh lime  
Slices of lime  
Mustard green leaves as garnish

Shaiyah is a traditional dish from South Sudan made with pan-fried meat, often using lamb, beef, or goat. Full of warm spices and bursting with flavour, it's often prepared for special gatherings and celebrations.

## Directions

- 1 Rinse the lamb and place it in a pot with sliced onions, celery, bay leaves, salt, garlic, your preferred seasonings, and 1 cup of stock.
- 2 Simmer for about 30 minutes—just until the meat is cooked through but still tender.
- 3 In a separate frying pan, heat 1 tbsp of oil and add the cooked lamb.
- 4 Pan-fry over high heat for 15–20 minutes. If the meat begins to stick, splash in a little stock as needed.
- 5 Finish with a squeeze of lime juice and garnish with mustard greens, if using.
- 6 Serve with raw onion slices, lime wedges, and a sprinkle of freshly ground black pepper.



# Bengali Mezban Beef Curry

**Serves 5**

**Cook Time 2 hours**

**Mezban Beef Curry is a famous dark and tender meat dish. It is prepared with large pieces of beef and traditional Bengali spices, usually served during a Chittagonian feast called Mezban, as well as at weddings, community gatherings, and Eid.**

## *Ingredients*

3 tbsp cooking oil  
2 kg red meat  
1½ tsp salt  
1½ tsp coriander  
1½ tsp red chillies  
1 tsp turmeric  
1¼ cup onion  
1 tbsp garlic paste  
1 tbsp ginger paste  
4 green chillies  
5 cardamom  
6 cloves  
8-10 black pepper  
3 cinnamon sticks  
2 bay leaves  
¼ tsp mace powder  
½ cup yogurt  
1 tsp sugar  
2 tbsp fried onions  
2 tbsp mustard oil  
½ tsp garam masala

## *Directions*

- 1** In a large pot, add cooking oil, red meat, salt, coriander, red chili, turmeric, onion and stir for a couple of minutes.
- 2** Mix in garlic paste, ginger paste, green chillies, cardamom, cloves, black pepper, bay leaves, cinnamon sticks, mace powder, yogurt, sugar, and fried onions. Cook for 1 hour and 45 minutes on low heat with the lid on.
- 3** Stir occasionally and continue to cook till the sauce is to your desired consistency.
- 4** Make sure that the dish is not too dry and not very saucy either.
- 5** Using a large pan stir fry onion and green chili in mustard oil. Transfer the meat to the pan and continuously stir. Add garam masala and mix it up before serving.
- 6** Serve the mezban beef curry with white rice or crispy parathas!



# Palestinian Knafeh (Kunafa)

Serves 15

Cook Time 45 mins

## Ingredients

1 lb kataifi (shredded phyllo dough)  
¾ cups ghee or butter + more to brush inside pan  
1 tsp Knafeh food color  
1 lb sweet cheese (or Queso Fresco or ricotta)  
1 lb fresh mozzarella, pressed dry  
1½ cups sugar  
1½ cups water  
Rosewater extract to taste  
Chopped pistachios for decoration

Knafeh (or Kunafa) is a beloved Middle Eastern dessert made with layers of crisp pastry and sweet, melted cheese, all soaked in syrup. Believed to have originated centuries ago in Nablus, Palestine, it was traditionally made with local Nabulsi cheese. It's crunchy on the outside and cheesy and gooey on the inside, a sweet treat that is perfect for any occasion.

## Directions

- 1 Prepare the cheeses: If using a salty alternative to sweet cheese, soak it in water for 2 hours. Then, slice it into ¼" pieces along with the mozzarella and press between paper towels to remove excess moisture. (Skip this step if using ricotta cheese.)
- 2 Preheat the oven to 450°F and grease your baking pan(s) with butter.
- 3 Shred the kataifi into 1-3" long strands and place them in a large bowl.
- 4 Mix the ghee with food coloring and add it to the kataifi. Rub the mixture in thoroughly with your hands, ensuring all strands are coated.
- 5 Place ¾ of the kataifi into the baking pan(s) and press down firmly, pushing some of the mixture up along the edges to form a tart-like casing.
- 6 Add a layer of sweet cheese, crumbling it by hand, then layer with mozzarella, tearing it into large chunks. Press down both cheeses gently.
- 7 Add the remaining kataifi on top and press it down firmly.
- 8 Bake for 20-25 minutes until the Knafeh is golden and crispy around the edges and bottom, and has loosened from the pan.
- 9 While baking, prepare the syrup: Combine sugar, water, and rosewater extract in a saucepan. Bring to a boil, then simmer for 1-2 minutes until the sugar dissolves. Remove from heat and let it cool.
- 10 Once the Knafeh is baked, carefully invert it onto your serving dish. Use a large spoon to pour the syrup evenly over the Knafeh, ensuring it is thoroughly soaked but not overflowing.
- 11 Garnish with chopped pistachios, slice, and serve! Knafeh is best enjoyed warm or hot.



# Yemeni Bint al Sahn

**Serves 8**

**Cook Time 1hr 25 mins**

## *Ingredients*

3 eggs  
3¼ cups flour  
½ cup butter, melted  
1 tbsp dry yeast  
2 tsp salt  
¼ cup butter  
1 egg yolk  
Sesame seeds Honey (warm)

**Bint al Sahn is a traditional Yemeni honey cake made with thin layers of dough, brushed with butter, and baked until golden. Once out of the oven, it's drizzled with honey and sprinkled with black seeds like nigella or black sesame. This sweet treat is rich, soft, and slightly flaky—and it melts in your mouth with every bite.**

## *Directions*

- 1** Dissolve the yeast in ¼ cup (60 ml) of lukewarm water and set aside for 10 minutes, or until it becomes foamy.
- 2** In a large bowl, mix the flour and salt. Add in the melted butter, 3 eggs, and the activated yeast. Knead the dough for about 15 minutes, until smooth and elastic. Cover the bowl with a clean cloth and let the dough rest for 30 minutes.
- 3** Once rested, divide the dough into small balls, each about 2½ inches in diameter, saving a slightly larger ball (around 3 inches) for the top layer. You should end up with 10 to 12 balls in total. Let the dough rise again for another 30 minutes.
- 4** Preheat your oven to 400°F (200°C) and generously grease a 10-inch (25 cm) springform pan.
- 5** Roll out one dough ball at a time as thinly as possible using a rolling pin. Lay the first sheet in the pan and brush it generously with melted butter. Repeat with the remaining dough balls, layering and buttering each one as you go.
- 6** For the final layer, use the reserved larger dough ball. Brush the top with beaten egg yolk and sprinkle with nigella seeds.
- 7** Bake for 25 minutes, or until golden and crisp on top. While the cake is still warm and the butter is bubbling, drizzle a generous amount of honey over the top. Serve warm.



# Guyanese Vermicelli Cake

**Serves 10**

**Cook Time 20 mins**

## *Ingredients*

200g vermicelli noodles  
4 tbsp salted butter  
½ cup brown sugar  
½ tsp ground cinnamon  
¼ tsp ground nutmeg  
¼ - 1 tsp ground clove  
2-4 cardamom pods  
1 tsp vanilla extract  
½ tsp almond essence  
12oz can evaporated milk  
3 ½ cups whole milk  
½ cup water  
¼ cup condensed milk (optional)  
14 maraschino cherries, chopped (optional)  
¼ cup currants (optional)

Vermicelli is enjoyed during special occasions and holidays in Guyana. During Eid, the loose (or soupy) version is enjoyed for breakfast. In Trinidad, it's known as 'Sawine,' and in Pakistan, it's called 'Seviyan.' While commonly served during Eid, variations of this dessert are cherished in many other cultural traditions.

## *Directions*

- 1** Melt butter in a deep pot on low heat. Add vermicelli noodles and toast it until some of the noodles become brown, about 3-4 minutes. This will happen fast so do not walk away from the stove!
- 2** Once some of the noodles are brown, add the water, whole milk, extracts, and spices.
- 3** Keeping the stove on low heat, let the noodles simmer in the milk until it starts to soften up, add the evaporated milk then add cherries and currants. Boil for about 15 minutes until the mixture starts to thicken. Stir frequently to avoid burning. If it has not reached this stage as yet, just wait until it dries down and starts to look like a really thick pudding.
- 4** When the mixture coats the back of a spoon thickly without dripping, then add condensed milk (if using) at this time. Stir to mix, then remove from heat and pour into a dish.
- 5** Let this sit out for a couple hours to firm up, or you can put it into the refrigerator to firm up faster. Cut and enjoy!





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