

KURDISH Cook Book

Over 254 pages of recipes of Kurdish Cuisines
From Greater Kurdistan



Collected by: Louisa Attar



KURDISH HERITAGE INSTITUTE

INSTITUT KURDE DE PARIS

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Louisa Attar

2009

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Reçu le 13/02/2018

INSTITUT KURDE DE PARIS

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Offert par G. GAUTIER



KURDISH HERITAGE INSTITUTE

Book Name: Kurdish Cook Book

Author: Louisa Attar

Editors: Dr. Behruz Shojaee, Mary Jane Zimmerman, Leslie Ashcraft
Vivian Han

Photographers: Sheilan Osman, Ari Jabar, Maryam Motaghiyan, And other
sources

KHI Publication No: 100 - Suleimany

Graphic Designer: Maryam Motaghiyan & Karwan Salar

Printing: Aras Press and Publisher

First Printing: 2009

Prints Run: 1000

Registration No: (1843) Ministry of Culture

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Address: 22. Ali Naji. Suleimany City. Iraq

TELFAX: 964 53 3137233

www.khi03.com

khi_2003@hotmail.com



Aras Press and Publisher

Introduction to the Traditional Kurdish Cook Book

This is more than a cook book. It is a trip into the past on a journey through a culture that still remains. The Kurdish people are known for their hospitality and, as you read the pages of this book, you will see evidence of the cultural traditions carried out through their cooking, eating, and social experiences associated with the meals. It has been my observation that, in entertaining a large group, it takes six "foreign" women to prepare a meal that one Kurdish woman can do alone.

The names of the dishes have been translated from Kurdish script into an English phonetic form, to enable you to pronounce them. This has been a challenge, since there are some sounds in the Kurdish language that are not pronounced in English. Make a cup of chai, sit back, relax, and enjoy reading the anecdotes in this charming book; a representation of the Kurdish lifestyle and folklore.

Mary J. Zimmerman

Institut kurde de Paris

Vowels

Kurdish	sample	IPA	IPA Pro.	Eng. Eq.
a	aw (water)	A	A ω	Father ($\phi A:\Delta\cong$)
e	dem (time)	{	$\delta\{\mu$	Cat ($\kappa\{\tau$)
ê	mêw (grape tree)	ε	$\mu\varepsilon\omega$	Grey ($\gamma\rho\varepsilon I$)
i	dil(heart)	\cong	$\delta\cong S$	sir ($\sigma\cong$) (unstressed)
î	dîl (prisoner)	ι	$\delta\iota:\lambda$	Deed ($\delta\iota:\delta$)
o	dol (valley)	O	$\delta O\lambda$	Organ ($O\rho\gamma\cong v$)
u	kuř (son, boy)	Y	$\kappa Y P$	Pull ($p Y I$)
û	mûm (candle)	u:	$\mu u:\mu$	Zoo ($\zeta u:$)

Consonants

Kurdish	sample	IPA	IPA pro.	Eng. eq.
b	ba (wind)	β	βA	buy
c	car (time)	δZ	$\delta Z A\rho$	jam ($dZ\{m$)
ç	çar (four)	$\tau\Sigma$	$\tau\Sigma A\rho$	chain ($\tau\Sigma\varepsilon I v$)
d	dar (tree)	δ	$\delta A\rho$	dam
f	fil (elephant)	ϕ	$\phi\iota:\lambda$	fame
g	gêla (leave)	γ	$\gamma\{S A$	game
h	hermê (pear)	η	$\eta\{\rho\mu\varepsilon$	hail
ĥ	hêwt (seven)	\square	$\square\{\omega\tau$	Arabic pharyngeal h
j	jan (pain)	Z	$Z A v$	pleasure ($pleZ\cong$)
k	kiç (girl)	κ	$\kappa\cong\tau\Sigma$	key
l	gul (mud)	λ	$\gamma Y\lambda$	softer l
l̂	gul (rose)	S	$\gamma Y S$	label
m	mar (snake)	μ	$\mu A\rho$	mine
n	nan (bread)	v	$v A v$	nice
p	par (last year)	π	$\pi A\rho$	pine
q	qaz (goose)	θ	$\theta A\zeta$	glottal q
r	beraz (pig)	ρ	$\beta\{\rho A\zeta$	flap r
ř	řeng (colour)	P	$P\{v\gamma$	trill r
s	sar (cold)	σ	$\sigma A\rho$	sea
ş	şar (city)	Σ	$\Sigma A\rho$	shake ($\Sigma\varepsilon I\kappa$)
t	tam (taste)	τ	$\tau A\mu$	time (not as retroflex as in English)
v	Mirov(human)	ω	$\mu\cong\rho O\omega$	vain
w	wîlat (country)	ω	$\omega\cong S A\tau$	waist
x	xoş (good)	Ξ	$\Xi O\Sigma$	Arabic kh
ğ	bulğur	Γ	$\beta Y\rho\Gamma Y\lambda$	Epiglottal g
y	yar (friend)	ϕ	$\phi A\rho$	year

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INGREDIENTS

GRAINS

Rice

Rice is grown in Kurdistan and is a very important staple food for the Kurds in the south and east of the country, whether added as a thickening to Ash or served steaming and perfumed (flavored) with the many stews of Kurdish cooking. You would never invite someone to your house and not serve them rice. Both short and long grained rice are used. Short grained rice is used most often as it is grown in southern Kurdistan. Long grain is more common in eastern Kurdistan.



Short grain rice is used especially in qubûli and thick soups and long grain for pilaus, though short grain is used for pilau in parts of Kurdistan. The rice that is used is always white. Broken rice is also used. The smallest pieces are usually ground and used for puddings and kiftes. The larger pieces are used for dolma and soups.

Wheat

It is important to distinguish between cracked wheat birwêş and sawar bulgur. Cracked wheat is raw. Bulgur is boiled and then crushed and can be used fine or coarse.



Danûle

While wheat is most often cooked in saucepans, it is sometimes soaked and then put in a samovar and boiled. Then drained and salted, it is given as a snack, called danûle in Sulemani.

Genime Kutaw

Whole grain wheat is not cooked or cracked. It is washed, dried, skinned and cleaned and then used for soups and pilaus.

Wheat - Bulgur (Sawar)

Bulgur is used all over Kurdistan though it is most popular in the north. It is made from whole wheat. In the autumn large grains of wheat are chosen for making bulgur because the tiny grains are not suitable for this purpose. Bulgur is made in large amounts, especially in big families.



The wheat is prepared by cleaning and washing it well. It is then drained and strained through large straw strainers. Then a large saucepan is prepared over a wood fire. The wheat is put in and covered with water. The wheat is boiled until partially cooked, then drained again. Very large deep spoons are used to take out the wheat, and transfer it to the straw drainer. When it has drained well, the boiled wheat is thinly spread out on a large cloth on a straw mat and left in the sun to dry. It is usually dry

within 3-4 days but can take a week, depending on the strength of the sun. It must be very dry before storing.

Then, in batches, the wheat is placed in a huge wooded mortar. It is sprinkled with water and then beaten until the skin of the wheat comes off. The wheat is placed outside again for the wind to blow away the skins. Then it is left to dry again for a few days and sent to a mill or milled at home.

There are three kinds of sawar: a coarse one for pilau or tubule, a medium grain for soups, and a fine one, which is used for kiftes, bread, salads and many other dishes.

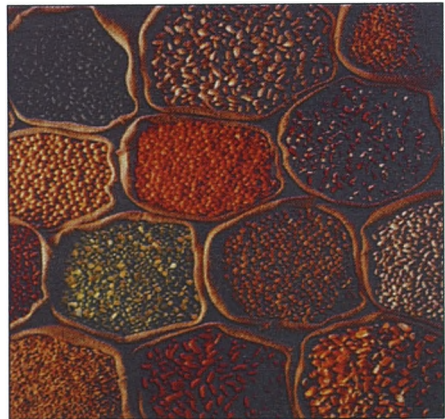
Frike or Qerexerman

The word in Kurdish means unripe or green, as in green chickpeas, which are called frike noke and is used for nuts, grains and seeds as in frike keşwan. But the word is usually applied to green unripe wheat and is specially used in Western Kurdistan (Syria).

The green wheat is put over a fire and roasted, cleaned and then used for pilau instead of rice. It is also used for stuffing lamb and poultry. The fine pieces are used in soups, etc.

Legumes (a better word is legumes)

A variety of legumes (legumes) are used: lentils both large and small, brown and green, mung beans, chick peas, split peas, white beans and broad beans. Most are used for soups and sometimes for stews.



FRUITS

Fruits are very common and much appreciated all over Kurdistan. Fruit can be eaten with bread as a meal. Towards the end of the summer the surplus fruits are dried to store for the long winter months when fresh fruit is less available. The fruits are dried whole or are beaten into a paste which is dried in sheets or made into syrup or is preserved in sugar and water...

Dried figs - Henjîrî Wuşk

Take some ripe figs and lay them out on a towel in the sun for 3-5 days. The figs should become almost dry. Boil some water in a pan and then put in the figs. Bring to a boil and boil for 2 minutes. Drain the figs and leave them in the sun for another 3 days to dry. Put a little flour in a bowl and then dip each fig in the flour, making



sure that it is completely covered. Then the figs can be stored until they are eaten. They can be kept in a clean clay pot or glass dish. Traditionally they would be stored in bags made of animal skins.

The figs can be put straight into the sun to dry, without boiling first. The figs can be squeezed over a tray and this pulp left to dry. When dry and sprinkled with flour, it forms a kind of bread. This is then stored in many layers on top of each other.

Other fruits such as apricots, apples, pears, peaches, when they are very soft, can be squeezed onto trays in the same way, but oil is spread between layers, not flour.

Grapes dried - Mêwîjî Wuşk

Take some grapes and lay them out on trays to dry in the sun. When they are dry, boil some water in a pot and mix some wood ash with the water (**about one tablespoon to a litre of water**). Mix the ash with the water and then bring to a boil. Add the dried grapes to the water and then boil for 2 minutes. Drain and put back out in the sun. When dry, store them in containers. The ash improves the flavour.



Grape syrup - Doşawî Trê

Either black or white grapes can be used.

Doşawî spî (**white syrup**) or doşawî reş (**black syrup**).

First of all the juice is extracted, either by rubbing through a sieve or by liquidizing first and then rubbing through a sieve, or by putting through a juicer and then put in a pot.

Then 250 g of very fine calcium carbonate (**white soil**). Which(should be: which has been dug up out of the ground is added to 30 kg of white grapes to whiten and clean the colour of the juice.

The calcium carbonate sinks to the bottom of the pot. Then the juice is carefully taken out using a large ladle or cup and put in a clean pan, taking care not to disturb the sediment at the bottom. Put the pan with the juice on the heat and then heat until it gets foamy and golden on the top which means the syrup has nearly formed. When the juice becomes honey-like, it is ready. Put to one side and cool and place in a storage container into bottles or skins or clay pots. The little bit of juice that is left is also cooked with the sediment in it and made into a syrup that is used separately.

Then put the juice in a saucepan and heat.

Black grape juice is cooked in the same way but without the calcium carbonate being added as a cleaner and whitener.

Manna - Gezo

This is a special sweet substance found on the leaves of the apple oak tree. From May to August this substance appears on the leaves and covers them. The gezo is scraped off the leaves and used for different sweetmeats. It is considered a great delicacy. Traditionally gezo and honey and fruit syrups were used to sweeten rather than sugar.



When the gezo appears on the leaves, it is collected quickly. The ground under the tree is covered with a cloth and then a strong man shakes the tree fiercely many times until the gezo falls from the leaves on to the cloth below. The cloth is then scraped and the gezo is put in cotton sacks and stored. It is greenish /brown in colour because some of the leaves have mixed into the gezo.

The gezo takes on the shape of the sack and becomes quite hard and solid. The most important process is to change the solid gezo into syrup for use. It is broken into pieces with a hammer and the pieces are put into a large saucepan, covered with cold water and left for several hours, or overnight. It is stirred occasionally. Eventually it dissolves into the water and forms a syrup. The pieces of leaf rise and can be skimmed off. The stones and other things drop to the bottom.

The syrup is then poured through a sieve carefully to remove all the debris and then poured into another clean pan.

The gezo is now put over a gentle heat. Some egg whites are well whisked, then put into the syrup to clean and clear it.

Ground espon is then put in water and stirred over a low heat until it foams. The whole mixture is then added to the gezo mixture. It helps to clean, whiten and clear the gezo.

The syrup is kept on the heat until it becomes thick and puree-like. It is put in a jar and used like honey or jam and used for preparing many kinds of sweets.

Helwa Gezo

Very thick gezo syrup is mixed with coarse cut walnuts and ground cardamoms. Heat it and mix well. When it is thick, take it off the heat and spread it over a large tray which has been well floured (**wheat or corn flour**). Flatten the paste and when cool cut into 2 in square shapes. Flour all sides so that it is white on all sides. Then put them into small wooden boxes specially prepared for this. Each layer is floured. These boxes are sold in the market and are often given as presents (**see recipe in sweets chapter**).

Gezo is used like honey for preparing many kinds of delicious sweets.

Espon

Espon is a wild plant whose roots are used for several purposes. Dried so that they will keep for a long time, they are ground into a powder when needed. Besides clearing and whitening gezo and other sweets, espon is used instead of soap for washing clothes and is considered to be very good for fine silks and wools.

Seeds

All salted and toasted seeds are called brêške.

Sesame and other seeds

Grown in Kurdistan, black sesame is very popular because of its reputed medicinal properties. These days, taken with honey, it is supposed to be good for cholesterol.

Fennel, coriander and fenugreek are used for bread making and pastries and sweets. Pumpkin, sunflower, melon, watermelon, marrow, and kinger seeds are all roasted and used as snacks. Fennel and coriander are also used in teas.

Nuts



Walnuts are the most important. Walnut trees are found in the mountains and are harvested in October and November before the rains come. First the green peel is removed. Then the walnuts are dried and stored in sacks for the winter, although fresh walnuts are eaten before drying at harvest time. The green peel is used as a powerful brown dye for everything from hair to cloth, and is considered good for the skin. Both the green peel and leaves are used.

Walnuts are eaten at all meals, for instance with bread and honey for breakfast. They are also boiled in salty water and stored in this water, then taken out to eat as a snack often being mixed with other nuts. Chopped walnuts are used in soups and stuffings. Often, if walnuts are used, no other oil is considered necessary. They are put

in many sweets or simply eaten with figs and dates. Walnut bread is also made.

Pistachios:

Both fresh or dried and salted pistachios are eaten as snacks or, otherwise, are used in pastries.

Almonds:

Almonds are used in fillings and stuffings, with rice dishes and also salted and eaten with other nuts and seeds as a snack.

Green almonds (**çeqele**) are also eaten at harvest time before drying.

Çeqelû:

Bitter when raw, wild almonds are boiled in salted water which makes them sweet and then dried. Very popular in the Sulemaniah region they are often eaten with qezwan.

Qezwan:

Qezwan is a small fresh green nut, with a sourish aromatic taste that is used either whole or skinned.

Fresh green qezwan is used as a seasoning for pickles and is also eaten mixed with yoghurt. The very small qezwan can be eaten with its skin on and is considered very medicinal for intestinal problems. The medium sized nut is soaked in cold water for a week and then boiled in salty water and kept in this water until eaten as a snack. It can be served with other nuts and seeds to visiting guests. The large nuts are salted and dried. Prayer beads are also made from qezwan.

A natural form of chewing gum is made from the sap of the qezwan tree. The bark is cut and the sap drains into a bowl placed underneath. The sap is washed and then put over a gentle heat, poured into a tray, cut into small pieces and sold wrapped in paper.

OILS & FATS

Ghee

Ghee or butter is used a lot and is the most preferred, especially for rice, although vegetable oils are becoming a substitute in these health conscious days.

Nivîşk / Keře:

Nivîşk / keře is butter or ghee made from sheep's milk and is traditionally eaten with bread and honey and for cooking rice. It adds a special flavour.

Ronî Dûg

Ronî dûg is a fat which comes from the tail of a sheep. In Kurdistan there is a special breed of fat tailed sheep that are specially kept for their large fat tails. The fat is melted and stored like beef dripping in jars. It is used for frying meat, kiftes and şifte, and for frying special bread (**naw sacî**).

Olive Oil

Olive oil was used traditionally only in the north and west . Olive oil is now being introduced throughout Kurdistan, due to a program of extensive planting, nowadays olive trees are to be found everywhere.

Walnut Oil

Walnut oil is used for cooking in Northern Kurdistan, whereas in the south it is considered medicinal. It is expensive and much valued.

Almond Oil

Almond oil, usually used in winter, is supposed to be good for colds. In Northern Kurdistan, a small cup of almond oil and water is drunk before going to sleep when someone has a cough.

Spices:

Herbs are used more commonly as they grow in Kurdistan, whereas most spices are imported. However, they are used in southern Kurdistan more frequently than in the north.

Saffron is commonly used on the Iranian side and turmeric in the south and west, although both are used in both places. It really depends on what is grown locally and according to local customs. Other spices used are cumin, pepper, cinnamon, cardamom, coriander, cloves and fennel. Nowadays in southern Kurdistan more spices are finding their way into the food as they are becoming more easily available.

There are a number of different combinations of mixed spices that are used. Everyone grinds them freshly at home and each family has its own preferred quantities of each spice. I use the following mixes at home:

Mix 2 Tbsp cumin, 1 Tbsp pepper, 1 Tbsp cinnamon, and $\frac{1}{2}$ Tbsp cloves; grind together to a powder. This is used commonly for rice, for pilau, for kifte and for gîpe.

Mix 2 Tbsp cumin, $\frac{1}{2}$ Tbsp cinnamon, $\frac{1}{2}$ Tbsp pepper, $\frac{1}{2}$ Tbsp cardamom, and $\frac{1}{4}$ Tbsp cloves.

Some people do not like to add cloves or cardamom and some people do not use pepper at all. Alternatively cardamom can be used instead of cloves, or both of them can be left out. The pepper and the cloves and cinnamon are sometimes not ground into the mix but added separately so as not to change the colour of the dish.

I use these mixes for pilau, purde pilau, gîpe, kifte and boiled chickpeas, etc. according to family traditions. Pickles are usually made

with herbs, but pepper, cardamom, cloves and turmeric are also sometimes used.

Herbs

Herbs are often eaten fresh like salad. They are served alongside many meals and are also put in parû (**sandwiches**).

Mint, dill, parsley, tarragon, celery, lovage, garlic, green spring onions, oregano, coriander, small baby leeks, watercress, mustard and cress are the herbs that are eaten.

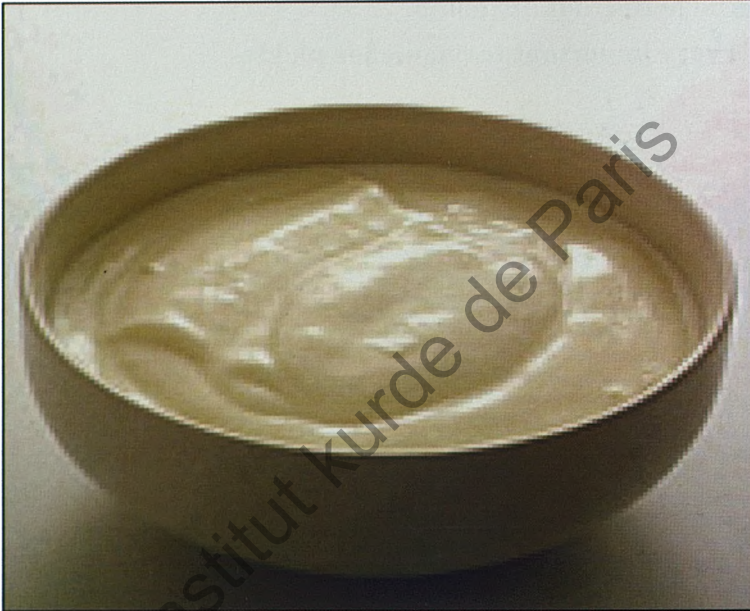
Celery is very important in cucumber pickles.

Institut kurde de Paris

MILK AND CHEESE

Mast: (Yoghurt)

Yoghurt is very basic to the Kurdish diet, not just nowadays. The old stories talk about yoghurt treating disease. People were being advised that they should take a lot of yoghurt. It is said to be good for children, for diarrhoea and for skin disease.



Yoghurt is used, especially as a breakfast food. It is also used for other meals. It is taken with bread and honey and with fruit jams and syrups. It is made into a drink, mastaw, by mixing it with water and ice.

Yoghurt is a basic ingredient for many essential Kurdish dishes. It is used fresh and is best when made from fresh milk directly from the farm. Yoghurt is also preserved by drying and can then be reconstituted to be used as fresh yoghurt. Besides the use of live yoghurt as a culture, giya şîre, an herb, is used to turn milk into yoghurt in villages. The stem is cut and a few drops of the white sap are added to warm milk, and it turns it into yoghurt.

Preparation:

1½ pt milk (**Even dried milk reconstituted can be used to prepare yoghurt.**)

2 Tbsp live yoghurt or cold starter

Put the milk in a saucepan and bring to a boil. As the milk froths and rises, turn off the heat. Allow the milk to cool to 60°C or until it stops steaming or when you can dip your finger for a minute in the milk without screaming.

Add two tablespoons of the warm milk to the live yoghurt. Mix well until it is smooth and then pour it into the saucepan of milk. Pour into a bowl or jug or whatever container you want the yoghurt to set in. Cover the top of the yoghurt and then wrap the container in a warm blanket or old towel. Leave at room temperature for 3-4 hours or overnight. If after 4 hours it is still not set, a few extra drops of yoghurt can be added. In another few hours it should be ready.

When the yoghurt has set, take off the blanket and transfer the dish to the refrigerator. The cream that has formed on top of the yoghurt (**twêjî mast**) is skimmed off and eaten separately with bread. This is usually best when made from full fat milk. The yoghurt can be kept for up to a week, before it starts to turn sour. Keep a little of the yoghurt to make new yoghurt each time.

The yoghurt can be thickened by soaking up the whey from the yoghurt by placing a kitchen towel over the bowl onto the yoghurt. Thick yoghurt can be mixed with chopped herbs such as dill or mint or fresh green qezwan. This is called torax (**τΟΡΑΞ**) and eaten like a cheese.

Butter muslin can be used to drain off the whey also.

Alternatively if there is no live yoghurt, 1 tablespoon of keşik powder mixed with two tablespoons of water can be used. If available, liquid keşik can also be used.

Mastaw: (Yoghurt drink)

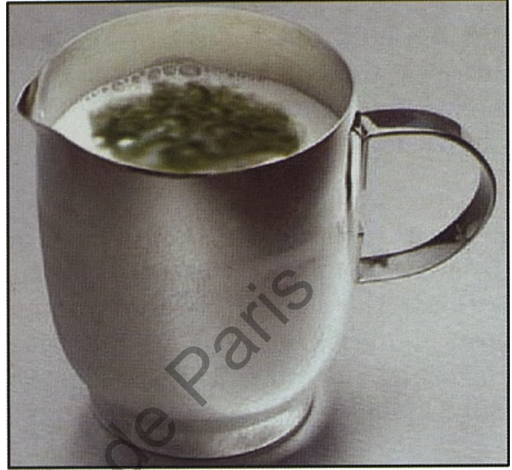
This is a very popular drink which can be bought from a **mastawfroş (vendor)**. He has 2-3 huge blue pots of yoghurt and ice. One pot might have some added mint and tarragon. Some have salt and some

without. "Mastaw, mastaw", he calls. People flock for a cool, refreshing drink. He sells yoghurt, penîr, mastaw and butter from the village. Mastaw can also be found in teahouses or çayxane.

Mastaw bokiz: (Smoked Mastaw)

Milk is slightly burnt when boiling it, just enough to give the milk a slight smell. Then yoghurt is made from this milk. It has a slight aroma and is very appreciated, especially in Hewlêr, which is famous for its yoghurt. Mastaw made from smoked mast does not need to have herbs added.

Mastaw is served with meals, especially kebabs, and with yaprax or just with bread.



250 g / 9 fl oz natural yoghurt (Greek yoghurt or any other)

500 ml / 1 pt water

Salt

½ tsp dried or 1 tsp fresh chopped tarragon or mint (optional)

Mix the yoghurt, water and the salt together.

Mix well, preferably in a blender or food mixer.

Add the dried or fresh tarragon or mint if wanted.

Serve cold with meals. At home this is prepared especially in the summer to serve to family and visitors.

Do: (Buttermilk)

Do is much lighter than mastaw and has a lighter taste. It is also very popular drink with meals or just with bread. Do with bread is called nanûdo, Which very popular in villages



"Nanî wuşk û doy tirş, exoy bixoy, naxoy çîş!" (Dry bread and sour do is all we have; if you like you can have some).

This is an old folk saying said jokingly to mean, "We don't have much to eat".

Take some mast and an equal amount of water, beat or shake until the butter separates. This is traditionally made in a meşk

(a sack made of a goat skin). Nowadays a food processor or plastic container can be used. Do made in a skin has a special smell which is much appreciated. The butter is then used for cooking.

In some places fizzy do can be made by adding $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp (more or less according to taste) of baking soda to the water. There are some naturally fizzy springs in Kurdistan and that water is used. Nowadays bottled sparkling water can be used. To this are added some chips from a block of ice.

A short cut is to use yoghurt made from skimmed milk blended with sparkling water. A little salt is added to taste before serving and some ice cubes if you want it chilled.

Yoghurt:

The various yoghurt drinks so popular in Kurdistan Do and mastaw are described in the chapter entitled "Ingredients".

Keşik:

(How to preserve and store yoghurt)

In the spring and summertime the farmers have a lot of milk. Of course they are preparing a lot of yoghurt from that milk so they have to preserve some of it to store it for the other seasons when the milk is less or they will sell it in the market.



The best way to preserve the yoghurt is first to separate out the butter. A special sack is used made from sheep, goat or cow skin or sometimes from thin wood. In most regions this is called meşk.

The yoghurt is put in this sack with some water, tightened well, put over a special frame, and shaken well. This is often done by women in the early morning when the weather is still cool. When the butter is separated from the yoghurt the remaining yoghurt or buttermilk is called do. This do is also very important to the Kurds. It is a popular and refreshing drink and used to prepare various dishes. It is also very good for drying and storage.

Sîrêj:

A large amount of do is boiled, cooled and then put in a sack to drain away the whey. The remaining curd (**sîrêj**) is put in a bowl, mixed with salt (**optional**) and then made into balls. (**Sîrêj can be used for breakfast, eaten with butter and bread**).

Put balls in the sun to dry, or somewhere windy but dry. When the balls are dry they are kept in closed sacks made of cotton and stored for winter, or taken to the market for sale. Sometimes these balls are ground and easily used as a powder in cooking. This form of yoghurt is called keşik in some parts of Kurdistan and doyîne in Sulemani. But both names are recognised all over Kurdistan.

A thick liquid keşik can be found in shops. It can be diluted in water and used directly for cooking. However, the dried yoghurt needs to be put into cold water and left overnight to soften. It then can be used to make drinks or make food. A food processor can be used to mix the keşik and the water.

The sîrêj can be mixed with bulgur, made into balls, dried in the sun, and then stored. This is called danûk or doyîne. Any dish that is cooked with keşik or doyîne is often garnished with hot butter or oil.

Jajî [ZAZı:]:

Sîrêj is mixed with a wild herb, jaj or kuřad (a kind of wild leek) to give it nice aroma and put in a skin sack for 20 days. It turns into a cheese called jajî. The jajî is mixed together with cheese penîr balls and is now called penîrî jajî. This is considered a great treat. The whole lot is put into sacks and buried in snow or in high caves, where it keeps through the winter.



Penîr: Cheese

Best made from full fat milk, the milk is boiled and rennet (**emirjen**) is added. Traditionally the emirjen is made from the fourth stomach of a young goat. It is dried and ground. Then, it is mixed with ground chick peas, melon seeds, pepper, salt and alum.

The milk immediately turns into cheese and is put into a cheese sack (**made from the skin of a sheep or goat**) and allowed to drain. The cheese is then made into balls. It is eaten fresh or placed in salty water to store.

Penîrî pête / penîrî eyar (cheese in a sack)

Salty cheese which has been pressed to extract all the water is placed in a skin sack and pressed hard into the sack, layer by layer, until the sack feels rock hard to the touch. It is then buried in snow or a high cave and kept until the autumn or winter. When winter comes and it is time to use it, the cheese has become very hard. It is then sliced with a sharp knife in very thin layers. It is especially popular for breakfast.

Penîrî Swêr: (Salty cheese)

Take penîr, cut it into pieces, sprinkle with salt and put over a sieve. Cover with a cotton cloth and put a weight on it to push out all the liquid. Leave overnight. The following morning, the cheese is put into a jar and covered with brine. This stores well. Before serving the cheese can be soaked in water for some time to remove the salt.



Quick cheese

An easier way of making cheese is to boil the milk and add some whey from yoghurt making while it is boiling. Add approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ pt to every pint of boiling milk. Allow it to boil for a minute more, until it becomes cheeselike. Salt and sugar can be added and it is drained again in a cheese sack or through layers of muslin.

Fro:

A special cheese is made from milk that comes from a nursing animal in the first three days after the birth of the baby animal. This cheese is called fro. A little salt is added to the milk. It is very soft and delicate cheese. Something similar, covered with grape syrup, is sold in small containers on the street and is called dêleme.

Lorîk:

When milk is used directly from the animal the remaining whey from cheese making is heated. A little milk is added and the whole lot brought to boiling. The cheese that is formed is called lorik.

When milk is boiled the cream is skimmed from the top and collected layer upon layer. It becomes quite hard. This is called twêj or qeymag and is eaten with honey or other syrups.

Rubenar: (Pomegranate syrup)

Sour or sweet / sour pomegranates are used to make the sour syrup necessary for food. In Kurdistan fresh pomegranate juice is drunk. Juice stalls will prepare it for you and mix it with ice. However, the juice cannot be kept for a long time. So, the juice is also preserved as syrup, to be used at other times of the year and for cooking.

Sour pomegranate seeds can be dried and stored for a long time and then used instead of lemon juice or sumac.



For one bottle of syrup, approximately 3-4 kg of pomegranates is needed.

The pomegranates are cut into several pieces and the seeds are separated from the skin. Put the seeds in a large sieve over a bowl and squeeze with the palm of your hand to separate the hard seed from the juice and flesh. Put the juice in a saucepan and cook slowly until the juice thickens into syrup. Leave to cool and then pour into a dry sterilized glass bottle or jar. Seal well. It can be stored for a long time. If the seeds are left during the boiling period, the colour of the syrup is not as good.

This kind of syrup is used as an ingredient for preparing a number of different dishes, for example: tubule be tirs, or yaprax.

The pomegranate juice can also be boiled with sugar, so that a sweet syrup results, although this is really up to you according to what you like. However, approximately 200 g of sugar can be added to one litre of juice if the juice is sour. It is then used diluted with cold water as a summer drink.

There is an ancient alcoholic drink made from pomegranates, nardank, which is reputed to be 2000 years old and is still known in central Kurdistan.

Meats:

A variety of meats are eaten in Kurdistan, predominantly beef, lamb and goat. However, a wide variety of birds are eaten. Poultry such as chicken, ducks, geese and turkey are eaten. Other birds eaten are quails, robins and partridges...

The bones also are dried and then used to flavour soups.

BREAD & PASTRIES

Bread is a very important part of the Kurdish diet, tea and bread being the staple of the poorest people. Each village has a water mill next to a mountain stream and the villagers take their grain to be milled there. Wheat, barley or a mix of the two, and various other grains are milled. The miller also mills legumes to make flour, husks lentils and rice.



The rice husks are brought back in a separate bag to use for washing dishes, either mixed with soap or just on their own. The husk mix is regularly used to clean the Samovar and sometimes to fill cushions or mattresses. Other times the winnowing is done at home. Picnics are often eaten at the mill while waiting for the milling to be finished or sometimes just because the mills are situated beside a beautiful waterfall. My mother would never buy wheat from the shops. She would buy whole wheat, clean it and wash it and then send it to the mill to be ground. "How can I use flour from a shop? How do I know what has been put in it?" she would say.

Traditionally bread is made in a *tenûr* for baking and also on a *sac*, an inverted black metal bowl ($\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ of metre across), which is placed on a small raised wall over a fire (traditionally over a wood fire). Kurdish bread, *nanî tîrî*, is made very thin and in large sheets $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ metre across. The dough, made of wheat flour mixed with sourdough, is kneaded in large quantities, made into many balls, and then



covered with a sheet. Then each ball is placed on a *pîne*, a round table made of walnut wood or plaster, which has been floured and then the ball is rolled out using a very long, 1 metre, wooden roller, $\frac{3}{8}$ cm in diameter. The bread should be very thin, the thinner the better, as thin as paper. The dough is rolled out with quite a flourish and then placed on the *sac* and turned over after 30 seconds. Finally, it is taken off and stored in a large basket for 1-2 months. For travellers the bread will be folded over twice and then rolled up to keep it fresh or it is made into rolled sandwiches (*parû*). The dry, hard bread is sprinkled with water just before eating.

If a *sac* is not available a griddle or *çapatî* maker or any other flat or domed metal plate can be used.

Dawdermanî Nan: (Bread spices)

Bread spices which consist of fennel, coriander, poppy seeds, fenugreek, and all ground and mixed together can be added to bread, according to taste. Usually one teaspoon is added.

Nanî Tîrî: (Flat thin bread)

For a small quantity

500 g / 1 lb of plain flour (wheat, barley or a mix of the two)

350 ml / 9 fl oz water approx (**depends on the flour**)
1tsp salt (**more if liked**)
2 tsp yeast
½ tsp baking soda (**optional**)
½ tsp sugar if the yeast is not a quick one
Sesame and black sesame seeds if desired
Pinch of bread spice if desired

Prepare the yeast by mixing it with the sugar and water and leave in a warm place for 10 minutes until it foams. Add the prepared yeast and salt and baking soda to the flour, mix together and knead to make soft dough. Alternatively use dried quick yeast and add it to the flour then add the water a little at a time until the dough is soft



and kneadable. Divide the dough into 10-12 portions, or more to make smaller pieces of bread. Roll every portion into a ball in your hands. Roll every ball with a rolling pin on a well-floured board until paper-thin. Put the flattened bread over a *sac*, hot plate or into a *tenûr* or on to a flat baking tray in the oven.

Remove from the heat when it is light golden in colour. This bread is dry and crispy. It can be kept and stored for a long time, a month or more, in a cool place and covered with a cotton cloth. It can also be frozen. This bread has to be sprinkled with water to soften it.

Serve **crispy** with soup or stews. **Softened bread** is used for making **parû**, for kebabs, rice, **kifte**, **şifte** or **yaprax**.

Lewaş:

Lewaş is made from the same dough as Nani Tîrî. However the dough is left to rise for 3-4 hours. In the same way as with Nani Tîrî, balls of the dough are taken and rolled out flat. However they are rolled out thicker and smaller than Nani Tîrî. They are about 20-



30 cm in diameter. Before baking butter or oil is sprinkled on the top and sesame and black sesame seeds are sprinkled on the top sticking to the oil, then the bread is decorated with a knife or with one's fingers, marking lines both horizontal and vertical on top of the bread. The bread is then cooked in a tenûr or sac. When the top is slightly brown more oil can be sprinkled on top. When cooked the bread is put in a cloth and wrapped to keep it from going soft.

Lewaş comes in many sizes. It can even have more yeast added to make it rise more quickly.

Nanî Hewramî:

This uses the same ingredients as nanî tîrî. However this bread is not for keeping and should be eaten fresh as it lasts for only a couple of days.

The dough is much softer than that for nanî tîrî. When the balls are made they are put on a floured tray and covered. **(Traditionally the balls are laid out on a floured animal skin).**

Take one ball in well-floured hands and pat it with your hands, then on a wooden board, flatten into a round, flat bread until it is about 30-40 cm in diameter. Lift with both hands and stretch it, rather like making a pizza. Traditionally the bread is then laid over a hard round cotton cushion (**maye or made**) so that the bread can be further stretched and then taken to the tenûr or the sac on this cushion.

Cook the bread on one side and remove to a flat plate. Traditionally a special bread container is used and the bread covered with a cotton sheet. Cook a second piece of bread on one side then put the first one back on top of the second, raw side down. After about 30 seconds remove the top one which should now be cooked through. Leave the second one for a further few seconds and remove that one. Continue cooking all the balls of dough in pairs in this way. The bread should be covered with a cloth to keep it soft.

This bread should really only be eaten fresh although it can be frozen successfully.

Kełane: (Bread stuffed with spring onions)

500 g / 1 lb flour (**wheat**)

350 ml / 9 fl oz water (**approx**)

Salt

Yeast

Honey or grape syrup or gezo syrup or sugar syrup

2 large bunches spring onions

Ghee or butter (**melted**)

Make a firm dough from the flour, water, yeast and salt. Leave for 30-40 minutes. Divide the dough into 6-8 portions. Roll each portion between your palms to make balls. Flatten each ball with a rolling pin to a 3mm thick circular bread, 35-40 cm across.

Put a handful of the shredded spring onions on one side of the circular bread, fold the other side over the top to make a half circle. Press the ends together to close them and press the top gently.

Bake the bread over a medium heated hot plate (**sac**) for 2-3 minutes or until it is baked, then turn it to the other side and bake for 2-3 minutes. You can bake this bread in the oven.

When it is baked cut each piece of bread into 4-6 pieces or leave it whole. Put the pieces on a flat dish or a tray and sprinkle with ghee then with syrup. Serve hot.

Şilkêne:

This is a very soft bread that is made from dough which is thinned down with lukewarm water to a pancake consistency.

Take the ready dough (**nanî tîrî**) and put in a big bowl. Add an equal amount of lukewarm water and mix with your hands until a light batter is formed. Remove any lumps that have not dissolved. Some people add one egg at this point and mix it in well. Then heat up a sac or a griddle, oil it very slightly and then take a ladle of the batter and spread the batter over the hot plate with a wooden spoon to get an even, thin, pancake-like bread. Cook on one side until it is light brown. Turn over and cook the other side also.

Remove from the heat and cut into several pieces. Dip in hot ghee or oil or sprinkle it with the oil and then put on a dish and sprinkle with

honey or grape syrup or gezo or any other fruit syrup. Chopped walnuts can also be sprinkled over the top.

Serve hot as a pastry with tea or with a main meal. This is often made at the same time as Kélane (**onion-stuffed bread**).

Kulêre be Qîme: (Minced meat bread)

500 g / 1 lb minced lamb

100 g / 3 oz chopped parsley or celery leaves (**medium bunch**)

300 g / 10 oz wheat flour, white or brown

1 medium onion, finely chopped

1 egg

Salt

Pepper or ground chili

2 tsp dried yeast (**or easy yeast can also be used**) or 6gm

Pinch of sugar

100 ml / 4 fl oz lukewarm water if using dry yeast

Put the dry yeast and the sugar into the lukewarm water for 10 minutes until it froths. Or use easy yeast and leave out the water. Mix the flour in a bowl with the yeast mix, add the egg and the salt to make a stiff dough. Add the mincemeat, parsley and the seasoning to the dough. If it's too dry add a little water or if too soft, a little flour. Knead well until the pastry is soft.

Make into small round pieces of bread $\frac{1}{2}$ cm thick. The size of the bread depends on what it is for. It can be between 5 and 20 cm wide. The small ones are used for visitors and the large for a family meal.

Arrange the pieces of bread on a greased oven tray and leave at room temperature, covered with a cotton cloth for at least 20-30 minutes until the bread rises.

Put in a hot oven (**200C / 400F / Gas Mark 6**) for 15 minutes or until they have a light brown colour. Remove from the oven and brush with oil or butter or leave unoled.

This is usually served warm as a snack with tea or one of a number of dishes for a main meal. Keep the bread well wrapped so that it remains moist, and warm before eating, either in a microwave or in the oven or in a toaster, but watch out that it does not get hard.

Bread with çizlîk: Kulêre çizlîk

When the soft fat (**dûg**) from sheep is melted, it is used for making qawurme and for frying. Then what remains after the fat is removed is called çizlîk. This is used for making special bread called kulêre çizlîk. This bread can be made at any time.

To make çizlîk take the sheep's fat, chop it up and put it in a saucepan over a low heat for about an hour, until the oil has separated. Pour off the oil and what remains is the çizlîk. This is then ground into a kind of paste, and then mixed with salt. It is pink in colour.

Prepare ordinary bread dough from 500 g / 1 lb wheat flour, 250 ml / 9 fl oz water, yeast and salt. Leave it for 30 minutes.

200 g / 7 oz of çizlîk, chopped
1 medium onion (**cut finely**) optional

Mix the dough, çizlîk and the onion and combine well. Make 6-8 balls from this mixture. Flatten the balls either with your hand or with a rolling pin into round flat shapes 1cm thick. Bake in the oven, normally a clay tenûr oven is used.

Kumanc/Kulêre be Hengwîne: (Honey bread)

1 kg / 2 lb flour
300 g / 9 oz honey
250 ml / 8 fl oz lukewarm water (**more or less as necessary**) or milk
Pinch of sugar
1-2 egg yolks
1 tsp salt
2 Tbsp oil / butter

Heat the milk until warm and then add the honey and mix well. Add the salt. Then add this to the flour. Oil your hands and then knead the dough well until soft. Keep oiling your hands it makes it easier to work the sticky dough. Roll out the dough about 1cm thick and then rub with the egg yolk, place on an oiled baking tray and decorate by denting the pastry with your four fingers all over. Put in the oven and bake for 10 minutes, or until the top is a light brown colour.

This is served hot with tea.

Coarsely ground walnuts or any other nuts can be mixed with the dough along with the other ingredients. Or the nuts can be scattered on top of the bread just before baking. Alternatively poppy seeds, sunflower seeds or sesame seeds can also be used.

Kulère be Mast: (Yoghurt bread)

1½ kg / 3 lb wheat flour

250 ml / 9 fl oz natural yoghurt

Salt

2 tsp dried yeast or use easy yeast

Pinch of sugar

600 ml / 25 fl oz of lukewarm water (**more or less depending on flour**)

1 Tbsp poppy seed

1 Tbsp sesame seeds mixed into a paste with a little yoghurt and with the poppy seed or black sesame seeds

1 Tbsp ground coriander (**optional**)

1 Tbsp ground fennel (**optional**)

Mix the yeast and the sugar with a little water and leave at room temperature for 10 minutes until it froths. Or use easy yeast.

Mix the yoghurt, flour, yeast mixture, salt and ground fennel and coriander. Knead to make a soft, smooth dough. Divide the dough into 6-8 balls, put them well spaced on a greased baking tray and cover them. Leave at room temperature for about 1 hour.

Flatten the balls into 1½ cm thick pieces of bread and then on top of each ball brush on the sesame or poppy seed yoghurt paste. You can put the seeds on using your fingers as you flatten the balls, leaving dents in the bread which when the bread rises leave an interesting pattern. Put the tray in a hot oven, 200C / 400F / Gas Mark 6, and leave until a light brown colour, approximately 20 minutes.

Serve hot with tea. This bread should be kept in the refrigerator or freezer, as it can dry out rather quickly.

Just the sesame seeds can be used for flavouring leaving out the coriander and fennel.

Sermusak: (Stuffed bread)

A loaf of white bread
White rice
Fried minced meat
Nuts

Neske Nan be Spenag: (Spinach bread from Diyarbekir)

500 g / 1 lb spinach
2-3 medium onions
100 g finely chopped parsley (**medium bunch**)
250 g / 8 oz white cheese (**like feta**)
150 ml / 5 fl oz yoghurt or milk
750 g / 1½ lb wheat flour (**white**)
100 ml / 4 fl oz oil
½ tsp yeast
¼ tsp sugar
100 ml / 4 fl oz water (**approx, should be added slowly**)

Ready-made filo pastry can be used instead of the pastry described below.

Put the yeast in a little water with a little sugar in a small bowl. Leave in a warm place for 10 minutes to froth.

Meanwhile prepare the filling. Chop the spinach very finely and the parsley, onion and cheese. Mix together. This mixture should be lightly heated to reduce the spinach a little and soften the onions. Put to one side.

Once the yeast is ready, add the oil to the flour. Mix well in a bowl. Add the frothing yeast to the flour and knead well to make a soft dough, adding water as necessary. Prepare 6 equal portions of the dough to make 6 balls. Using a rolling pin, roll out the dough as thin as possible into six sheets. Three should be a little smaller than the others about 2-3 cm shorter and narrower, these are used for the top. Or if using the ready made sheets three can be cut later to make the top layer.

Place one of the larger rolled out pastry layers on an oiled baking tray. Each piece of filo should be bigger than the tray. Brush it well

with yoghurt, then put on another larger layer, brush with yoghurt again, put on one more layer and brush again. There should be three layers in total. After three layers add the spinach/cheese mix and spread it all over, leaving a 3 cm / 2 in band all round.

Then put on the three smaller layers of pastry, brushing each with yoghurt and brushing the top with yoghurt as well. Sesame seeds can be mixed into the final spoonfuls of yoghurt that is spread on top. Then bring the bottom layer of pastry that is overlapping all around, folding it over the top of the mix and top layers. You can use a wet finger to press down the edge to make sure that it sticks well. Cut the pastry with a sharp knife into 5 cm squares or diamonds. **(They can be bigger)**. Put in a hot oven 200C / 400F / Gas Mark 6 for 15 minutes or until the sides of the pastry turn light brown. Then cut again to finally separate the pieces. Milk or oil can be used instead of yoghurt.

Cut into large squares or diamonds, and serve hot or cold with tea or yoghurt. Often eaten for breakfast it is eaten with tea as a snack or a light meal, or as part of a meal with kebabs or kiftes.

Kulêre be rûn:

(This is often made when a large quantity of dough for the flat bread Nanî Tîrî is made. Some dough is put to one side to rise slowly while the Nan is made).

For a small quantity of Kulêre be rûn
500 g / 1 lb of plain flour (**wheat, barley or a mix of the two**)
350 ml / 10 fl oz water, approximately (**depends on the flour**)
1 tsp salt (**more if desired**)
2 tsp yeast or use easy yeast
½ tsp sugar if the yeast is not a quick one
½ Tbsp ground fennel seeds or a mixture of bread spice if ready prepared
½ Tbsp ground coriander
1 Tbsp sesame and black sesame seeds
Bread spice can be used instead of all the separate spices.

Mix the yeast with half of the water and the sugar. Leave it to froth. Put the flour and the fennel and coriander (**or bread spice**) with the yeast mixture and add the water slowly making a stiff dough. Divide the dough into 4 balls. Flatten each ball until it is about 1 cm or ½ in thick. Cover with a wet cloth and leave in a warm place for one hour.

Place on an oiled baking tray. Sprinkle with sesame seeds and oil.
Put in a tenûr or hot oven, 200C / 400F / Gas Mark 6, and bake for about 15 minutes or until the top is brown.

Take out of the oven and brush some oil or butter on top of each piece. Cover with a cotton cloth to keep them soft until served. Any that are left over can be kept covered to keep them soft. They should be covered immediately and stored in a box or container or in the refrigerator.

This kind of bread is used as a biscuit, eaten with tea or yoghurt or with honey as a light meal, sometimes for breakfast. It should be eaten in 2-3 days or it will get too hard. Otherwise, store in a freezer.

Yoghurt can be used instead of yeast, or together with the yeast as in the yoghurt bread. Yoghurt mixed with sesame seeds, instead of butter, can be used as a glaze at the end.

Naw Sacî: (Special kind of fried bread)

This is special bread for Ramadan, and is sent to poor people or to friends in commemoration of those who have died. It can, of course, be made at other times too.

For a small quantity of Naw Sacî:

500 g / 1 lb of plain flour (**wheat, barley or a mix of the two**)

270-300 ml / 9 fl oz water approx (**depends on the flour**)

1 tsp salt (**more if liked**)

2 tsp yeast

½ tsp sugar if the yeast is not a quick one

½ Tbsp ground fennel seeds

½ Tbsp ground fenugreek

½ Tbsp ground coriander

1 Tbsp sesame and black sesame seeds

Oil (**or rûn dûg**) for frying

Mix the yeast with half of the water and the sugar. Leave it to froth. Put the flour and the fennel and coriander and sesame seeds with the yeast mixture and add the water slowly making a stiff dough. Cover with a wet cloth and leave in a warm place for one hour.

Divide the dough into 12 balls. Flatten each ball until it is about 1 cm or ½ in thick. Heat some oil in a deep fryer and fry each ball turning them over half way, until they are golden. Remove from the pan and put in deep container with a tight lid so that they remain soft. Serve hot, **(reheat if cold)** and eat with honey, syrup or jam and black tea. These also will not keep for more than a couple of days unless frozen.

Naw sacî is sometimes fried in Ran Dûg **(lamb fat)** which gives it a special flavour.

Kulêre Sawar: (Bulgur bread)

500 g / 1 lb very fine bulgur
250 g / 8 oz wheat flour **(white or brown)**
1 egg
4 medium onions
12 g **(2 packets)** yeast
1 tsp turmeric
1 tsp black pepper **(optional)**
Salt

Wash the bulgur and drain well. Finely chop the onions and mix with the flour and bulgur, yeast, egg and seasoning. Mix well and make a firm dough. Knead it well. It can be made in a food processor. Divide the dough into four portions and make it into four balls. Flatten the balls on a floured board into 1 cm thick oval pieces of bread. Cover with a cotton cloth and leave at room temperature for about 30 minutes.

Arrange them on an oiled oven tray and put into a hot oven **(200C / 400F / Gas Mark 6)** for 30 minutes, or until the surface is a light brown. Take the bread out of the oven and slightly oil the surface with oil or butter.

Serve with tea as a snack or for breakfast.

Neske Nan (From Howler)

300 g / 1 lb wheat flour
200 ml / 8 fl oz water
½ tsp salt
1 tsp dried yeast
Oil for the top of the bread

Add the dried yeast and the salt to the water. Mix well and add flour. Knead to make a soft dough adding more water if necessary. Make four balls from the dough and flatten each ball with a rolling pin until it is paper thin. Keep it round in shape and very thin. Oil the surface of each using a brush with melted butter or olive oil or any other oil.

Fold over in half to make a half circle and then brush again with oil and fold again. The bread is now four layers thick. Oil top and bottom and put onto an oven tray. Leave for 10 minutes. Put in a preheated medium oven (150C / 300F / Gas Mark 2) to bake for 15 minutes until the bread is light brown in colour. It's very good eaten hot, and often eaten with tea or for breakfast

In Sulemani Neske Nan is made differently. I remember at home a woman baker would come to the house and make the bread for us. A large ball of dough is flattened into a huge flat, thin circle, well buttered on the top, and then a hole is made in the centre. The dough is then rolled from the centre to the outside in all directions, stretching the dough so that it remains intact, ending up with a huge circular roll of dough. This is then cut into 5-6 sections, which are then made into balls again. Then flattened again into squares and either baked in the oven or cooked over a hot plate (sac) turning it over half way through. I remember this bread was always made with butter and was extremely soft and tasty.

½ Tbsp coriander, fennel, black or white sesame seeds can be mixed in with the dough to flavour it.

Kulêre Qerebagî (Mahabad)

Bread

100 g / 4 oz flour

100 g / 4 oz sugar

1 egg

2 Tbsp corn flour or corn starch

1 tsp baking powder or 1 Tbsp dried yeast

1 Tbsp milk or water

1 tsp black and white sesame mixed

Yoghurt or butter

Stuffing

40 g / 1½ oz walnuts or almonds or mixed, finely chopped or ground
1½ Tbsp sugar
½ tsp cardamom
½ tsp cinnamon

In a large mixing bowl mix together all the bread ingredients (**not stuffing**) and make medium soft dough. Divide the dough into six balls. Flatten each on a board floured with flour or corn flour. Roll each ball into as thin a circle as possible.

Oil a baking tray and then lay one of the circles of dough on it. Brush over some yoghurt then put on another 2 layers putting yoghurt between them but not on the top. Mix the ground walnuts, sugar and cardamom and cinnamon together and spread this on to of the third layer then put a fourth layer of dough, brush with yoghurt. Do two more in the same way. The top layer should be brushed with yoghurt and spread the sesame seeds on top. Leave for 5-10 minutes. Heat the oven to 150C / 300F / Gas Mark 2. Then place the kulêre in the heated oven. Bake for 20 minutes or until the top starts to change to a dark brown.

Take out and cut into small squares or diamonds and serve with tea.

Kulêre be Gwêz: (Walnut bread)

500 g / 1 lb white flour
300 ml / ½ pint lukewarm water
12 g / ½ oz dried yeast 2 packets
150 g / 5 oz walnuts, finely chopped
1 tsp black sesame seeds
2 Tbsp butter soft
Pinch of salt

In a bowl mix the flour, salt, water and yeast and knead until it becomes soft dough. Then add the walnuts and mix and knead them in. Make 2-3 balls and flatten them with a rolling pin until 1 cm thick. Oil a baking tray and put the bread on it. Spread some butter on top of each bread and sprinkle with the sesame seeds. Leave for 40 minutes at room temperature covered with a towel which should not touch or stick to the bread. Heat the oven to 200C / 400F / Gas Mark 6. Bake until the surface is light brown in colour. Remove from

the oven; spread some of the remaining butter on top of the bread and serve hot or cold with sweet syrup, honey or sweet tea. Some people eat this bread as a meal.

Kulîçe:

(Kulîçe can be stuffed with walnuts and sugar, dates, or cheese or fruit jams or fried vegetables. Special wooden moulds are sometimes used to make different shapes).

Pastry

500 g / 1 lb wheat flour (**white**)

250 ml / 10 fl oz oil, butter or margarine

250 ml / 10 fl oz water (**more if necessary**)

Salt

1 egg beaten well or saffron water

1 tsp each of ground coriander or fennel can be added to the flour

Mix the salt and flour; add the butter or oil, which should be rubbed in so that it looks like breadcrumbs. Add the water and knead to make firm soft dough. Cut the dough into 4 pieces and make each into a ball. Cover with a wet cloth and leave for 10 minutes.

Roll out each ball into a ½ cm thick disc. Using a pastry cutter or a small glass cut out 2-3 cm diameter rounds. Decorate each biscuit with four or more using a fork or knife making small cuts on the surface. Brush the top with beaten egg or saffron water and lay out on a well oiled oven tray and put them in a hot oven. Leave for 15 minutes or until golden.

Walnut Kulîçe:

125 g / 4 oz finely chopped walnuts

100 g / 4 oz sugar

1 tsp cinnamon

1 tsp cardamom

Mix all the stuffing ingredients together. Take an uncooked pastry round (**these can be 4-6 cm diameter if preferred**) and with your thumb squeeze the middle a little to create a space for the filling. Put a teaspoon of the filling in the middle and fold over to make a half

circle. Squeeze the edges to close the pastry and gently fold the edge over and up for a decorative effect. This can also be decorated with a fork or knife making small incisions in the top. Brush with beaten egg or some saffron water and place on an oiled oven tray. Bake in a hot oven until golden for about 15 minutes. All kinds of stuffing can be used in the same way.

Serve hot or cold with tea.

Borek:

300 g / 10 oz flour

2 eggs

30 g / 2 oz butter

Salt

2-3 Tbsp to make dough

150 g / 5 oz white feta cheese, finely grated or in small pieces

1 Tbsp of fresh mint or celery leaves or parsley

Make the cheese mixture by mixing the grated cheese with the chopped herbs. Mix the flour, butter, eggs and salt with water and make a soft dough. Cover and leave it for 15 minutes. Make six balls and roll out each ball until paper-thin. Cut each of these into four quarter circles.

Put 2 tsp cheese mixture along the wide edge; pull up each side to close the end and keep the cheese from falling out. Roll the borek carefully with your fingers until the pastry is rolled up wetting the last edge to stick the end down. It should be cigar shaped.

The borek can then be fried in a little hot oil until slightly coloured. Alternatively place the borek on an oiled baking tray and bake in a very hot oven until light brown. Fried mincemeat mixed with herbs can also be used.

PARÛ

A **parû** is the Kurdish equivalent of a sandwich. It is usually a piece of *lewas* rolled around a filling of some kind; however other thin breads are used. Parû are a very important part of everyday life and everyone eats them as snacks, at home returning from work, dropping in on friends or bought from a street vendor or in a shop. In the villages any cooked food will be wrapped up in bread and eaten. The *peshmerga* (**the freedom fighters living in the mountains**) will always carry some bread and then wrap it around anything they can find to eat. Often they may go six months without meat and exist just on vegetables, herbs, berries and anything smuggled to them from villages.

If there is nothing to put in the bread, it is eaten just with tea and that is called parû Nan (**bread sandwich**).

If the bread is dry a little water is sprinkled on it to soften it up.

Ingredients that can be used for parû are:

- Any fresh herbs
- Parsley, mint, onion and celery
- Tomatoes with sumac
- Tomatoes, cucumber and onion, salt and sumac, herbs added as desired
- Boiled broad beans with mint
- Any grilled meat, liver, kidneys and other offal with chopped onions and an herb such as parsley or tarragon
- Boiled potatoes, with chopped tomatoes and any pickle
- Left over rice or boiled meat or cooked vegetables like chard and spinach with chopped spring onions added
- Fried minced meat (**When I used to make kifite, my sons would come in the kitchen and make a small parû with the stuffing**).
- Fried eggplant (**eggplant**) or fried zucchini with fried tomatoes
- White cheese, hard cheese
- Soft white cheese with fresh mint or olive oil or tomatoes
- Cheese with fresh mint and olives
- Pickles, especially cucumber pickle with a sprinkle of sumac
- Yoghurt as a dip
- Yoghurt with syrup

-Fried or boiled eggs with fresh or fried tomatoes and or with pickles, especially pickled cucumber or other spicy pickles

-Fried eggs sprinkled with honey

-Eggs scrambled with dates

A parû can be rolled up and eaten with tea or with *mastaw*, or with *do* (another peshmerga food).

Eaten with tea –parû with:

Butter

Butter with sugar

Butter with honey

Butter with grape syrup

Butter with *gezo*

Gezo

Nuts

Nuts with syrup, especially walnuts (I like bread and walnuts for breakfast).

In the shops in town, kebabs, finely chopped onions, tomatoes and fresh herbs and some *sumac* is put in the parû. Boiled and mashed spiced chickpeas with chopped green onions, wrapped in bread would often be sold outside schools for the children at lunch times.

All syrups, honey and *gezo* can be eaten with crispy bread, dipped into them, particularly at breakfast. Soft *lewaş* can be spread thinly with *qîme* or tomato sauce. It is then baked in the oven and, while still soft, rolled up and eaten. While parû are most often eaten with tea they are good with other cold drinks too.

Street Food

There are a lot of simple foods that are cooked by street vendors and sold as snacks, often to children. These are either wrapped in bread (*lewaş*) or sold on small plates.

Leblebî or Qendiley nok or Qenêle (**chickpeas**) are boiled with pepper cumin and turmeric and then mashed. They are served cold with green onions and made into parû with a piece of warm *lewaş*.

Other foods sold in the street will be:

- Boiled broad beans
- Boiled turnips, small ones or pieces of bigger ones, sprinkled with salt (**The turnips are boiled with dates or with grape syrup to give a slight sweetness and are served on small plates. See the recipe in the Vegetable section**).
- Boiled beetroot
- Boiled green beans are served hot
- Lamb or chicken pieces on skewers barbecued over coals, served in a parû with pieces of green peppers, onions or herbs
- Pomegranate seeds, 2-3 tablespoons served on a small plate, sprinkled with salt
- Çorek**, a small soft bread served hot or cold
- Çaqale** wild almonds, black in colour are boiled in salty water and served in a paper cone or bag, often with **qezwan**
- Popcorn
- Puddings such as **mihalebî** made with milk, sugar, corn flour and rose water are served in small bowls, sprinkled with cinnamon and served cold
- **Dallama**, a very soft cheese still really the consistency of yoghurt, sold in small bowls and sprinkled with grape syrup
- **Şerbetî Mehweş** made from dried fruit, served cold in summer time
- Many juices, made from a large variety of fresh fruit

DRINKS



Cold Drinks

There are still many kinds of drinks made locally but inevitably many have come in from outside, notably Coca Cola appears everywhere, and a variety of canned juices and soft drinks. The most popular are still the drinks made from local fruits and yoghurt. For example, made from fruit juice are *Şerbetî Mewij* (raisin drink), *Xoşaw* (mixed fruit drink) and *Şerbetî henar* (pomegranate drink). Every fruit is used to make a drink. Fresh fruit juice is commonly used. A sweet drink must be served to visitors, those returning from Haj or at weddings or any other special events. At a wedding many şerbets will be served.

Rich people make *şerbet* from fruits whereas poorer people traditionally drink a *şerbetî* which is a mixture of water, sugar, rose water and colouring which traditionally has been red wine vinegar for a red colour and for yellow, saffron or, nowadays artificial food colouring. 200 ml water is boiled with 2 Tbsp sugar to make a syrup. When cold, 2 Tbsp of vinegar are added and 1 Tbsp rose water.

Eskencemîn is made from vinegar, sugar, water and rosewater and no colouring is added.

Wine

Christians are the most likely to have been wine makers, although some Muslim families also did. This was always made at home and not really for commercial purposes, drunk mostly by men in the evenings or when visitors come to visit.

In her book The Women of Turkey and Their Folklore part 3. (The Muslim Women, Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4 - Kurdish Women. 1891), Lucy M.J Garmett describes the homes of the Kurdish people that she visited. There were commonly two rooms, one for sitting and one for storage, full of clay pots full of grains and also some Greek amphora style pots containing a kind of beer called *boze* and an alcoholic drink called *nardenk* made from pomegranate juice. The oldest mention is in the Avabadls of Xenophon (or the retreat of the 10,000) where the author mentions that the Karduh drank wine which they made in clay amphora.

Hot drinks

Various herbs or spices are used commonly, camomile, ginger and cinnamon, *qezwan*, mint, fennel (**often used for relaxation or to fight against the cold**). Dried limes are also used to make hot drinks and are considered good for stress. A few drops of rose water are put into hot water. This is considered good after meals.

Soft, green *qezwan* can also be used as a pleasant sourish tea.

Tea:

Tea is the most popular drink. Black, very sweet and very strong it is drunk at breakfast, after lunch and dinner, between meals and at night. A large samawar of boiling water (or just a large pot) bubbles away in every house with a pot (*qorî*) of very concentrated black tea placed on top, keeping warm in the steam.

The tea is made by putting two tablespoons of tea leaves into some cold water (sometimes even hot water) and then very slowly bringing it to a point just before boiling. The leaves gradually rise to the top; at that point the pot is taken off the heat and put over the hot water in a samovar. The tea continues to cook over the steam and gradually the leaves settle down again. When all the leaves have settled, the tea is ready.

Some say it should not be left for a long time, others think that you can drink old tea possibly adding some fresh tea and that gives it a special flavour.

It is served in a small glass on a saucer (*piyale*).

A few drops of rose water or some fresh mint leaves or cardamom are added to the pot at the beginning.

Çay Şîrîn:

First the sugar (often 2 or 3 cubes or spoons) are put in a glass, then some concentrated tea, topped up with hot water. *Çay şîrîn* is often drunk for breakfast in the morning. With bread this is called *Nanûça*.



I remember once when living in the mountains as we were escaping from the Iraqi Army into Iran, we were staying in a little village Shene. I woke up and saw through the window of a very poor house two small children no more than four years old, sitting on the floor with a pot of tea in front of them, and some pieces of bread. I saw the children put a piece of sugar in their mouths, take a sip of tea and eat the bread. They continued until it was all finished. Such tiny children, yet with the calm demeanour of a couple of old men eating their *nanûça*! They learn early! Their mother was out collecting wood and when she returned, she told me that she would always leave the tea out for them and they would help themselves. Their mother then tried to persuade me to take the children with me into exile, hoping for a better life for her children.

Dîşleme:

Put a cube of sugar (**usually boiled hard sugar**) in your mouth and then sip a glass of strong tea diluted with hot water. You keep the cube in your mouth and take successive sips of tea swallowing the sweetened tea but keeping the cube still in the mouth replacing it when it has finally dissolved. (**Avoid quick dissolving sugar, hard crystal sugar is best**).

Some times instead of sugar, dried dates or other dried fruits may be used for **Dîşleme**. Sweet tea often replaces a dessert.

"Child, what did you have for breakfast?"

"Nanûça"

I remember being in another village where tea was made for us, and a woman said I hope you do not mind but we do not have sugar only dates which my husband brought last year from Iran. In those days that seemed strange to me, but now having given up sugar, I consider dates a great delicacy and even would have one with my tea!

Some sayings about tea .

"Tal û şîrîn pêkewe, nemdîwe çak biye, ça nebiye." Bitter and sweet I have never seen together successfully except in the case of tea.

"Kesiye ça nebiye pe ça nebiye." A person who doesn't like to sit and drink tea cannot be a good person.

Coffee:

Coffee is bought green and then we roast it and grind it, sometimes adding a little cardamom to give it a slight scent.

Pour cold water in a coffee pot over the heat and add some coffee and cardamom and bring to boil, as the coffee rises, take it off the heat and tap

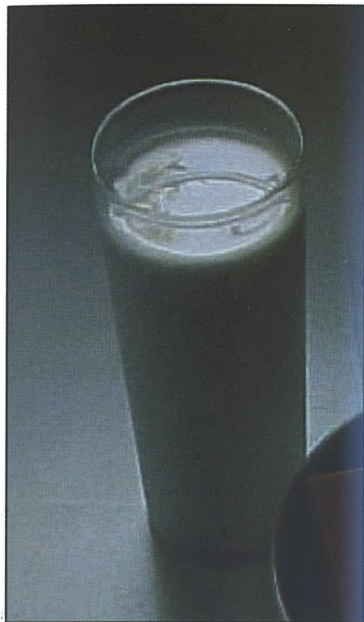
the pot slightly, and leave it to stand and then drink. If some coffee remains it is covered with a little water and left until the following day. The next day add a little fresh coffee and just heat it to boiling point but do not boil. When you leave it that way, the coffee becomes slightly sour and is considered a delicacy.

Coffee is drunk from time to time, when friends come and is served with pastries, sweets or chocolates. Sweet black coffee is drunk before a meal with pastries. Coffee is drunk from very small cups without handles. Sweet tea is served after meals but not coffee.

It is always black and without sugar during funeral ceremonies. When people are in sorrow, when a great man dies, or if some calamity befalls a community such as death, war, etc., then bitter, black coffee is drunk. Bitter coffee is also drunk at Islamic feasts such as Eid but sweets are served with the coffee unlike at funerals.

Sweet coffee is served in a cup with a handle whereas bitter coffee is drunk from a cup without a handle. The coffeepots are made of pottery, brass or silver.





Milk:

Sometimes hot milk is drunk in the morning, hot and sweet but not mixed with tea.

I remember when we went to the villages, the villagers would milk the cow or goat or sheep and bring the milk, hot, in a pot, just like a tea pot and we would drink it in small glasses. I remember that in Hewraman they always offered us goats' milk.

Normally sugar is added to the hot milk and sometimes an egg is beaten and mixed into the warm milk. This is considered good for colds and sore throats. Another cold remedy is milk boiled well with onions, which is said to be good for coughs.

Şerbet: (Fruit drink)

At the end of the season, when fruit becomes very ripe, plentiful and sweet it is often made into a drink. Apricots, peaches, plums and cherries can be mixed or made separately. 1 kg of fruit, to which sugar is added (500 g sugar, or less, to one kg of fruit, depending on the sweetness of the fruit), is put into a pan with a little water and then simmered until it becomes very soft. Then the fruit is sieved and bottled.

To serve: dilute with water, add ice, and drink with pleasure. Melon is usually not cooked and is just sieved or put in a juicer and drunk as it is. Sometimes other fruits, if very soft, can also be just juiced and drunk fresh.

Şerbetî Qeysî: (Apricot drink)

1 kg / 2 lb apricots very ripe

500 g sugar (more or less according to taste)

1 tsp lemon juice

400 ml / 1 pt water

Remove the stones either by cutting open the fruit or when really ripe just squeeze out the stones. Put the fruit in a large pan with a little water and cook slowly, stirring frequently until the fruit softens.

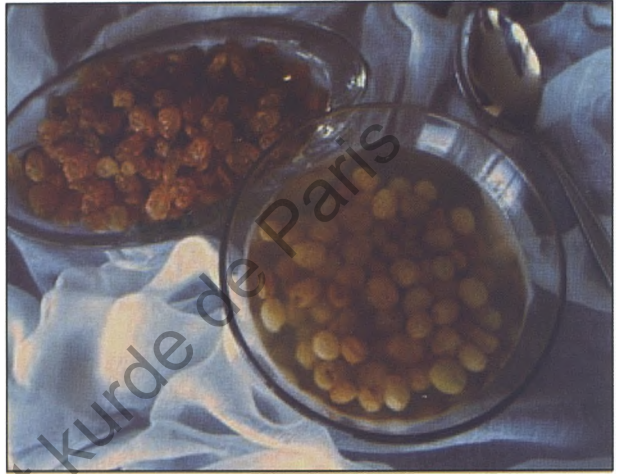
Add the sugar and the rest of the water and bring to boil until it begins to thicken. Then sieve and put the paste back into the pan; add some more water, about a small glass, and then bring to boil and sieve again. If it is thick enough (**syropy**), then store or else boil down until thicker. This syrup can then be added to cold water for a refreshing summer drink. A thick syrup will store better and longer.

Other fruits can be cooked in the same way to make a şerbet.

Şerbetî Mêwîj : (Raisin drink)

This is a very popular ruby coloured drink. It can also be bought in the market from a *Şerbetfroş* or a *dukani şerbet*, (a şerbet street seller or from a drink shop).

This şerbet could also be served by a wealthier family at a special event.



To prepare at home

Take 200 g / 7 oz of raisins. Wash the raisins and put them in a large clay bowl. Cover with cold water and leave for 2-3 days.

Squeeze the soft raisins with your hands or use a blender or food processor briefly so that pieces of raisin remain. It is better to use your hands as the blender will also grind up the pips. Squeeze the raisins well and separate from the juice using a sieve, pressing the mixture through with a spoon or with the palm of your hand.

Alternatively, put the mixture in a special sack (**cheesecloth**) and hang for some hours until all the clear juice has separated. Or let it stand in a bowl until the juice and the fruit has separated. A juicer can be used.

This kind of juice can be made in large amounts to sell.

Xoşaw: (Mixed fruit drink or single fruit drink)

This drink is made from three or more kinds of dried fruits. The most popular fruits used for this drink are pears, plums, apricots and raisins. It can be made from other fruits, especially dried fruits.

This is drunk during the Ramadan fast when it occurs in winter and for special visitors or special occasions. When people come to a house to congratulate the family on the 7th day after the birth of a child or after graduation this drink will be served.

Take 1 kg / 2 lb of dried fruit, wash the fruit and put it in a glass bowl. Cover with cold water and leave for 2 or more days, until the fruit is soft and swells up to look like fresh fruit. At this point a few drops of rose water can be put in the bowl to give the fruit more freshness.

The fruit is not squeezed but ladled into small bowls and eaten as a sweet or refreshing drink.

Şerbetî Rêwaz

Rhubarb grows wild in Kurdistan and is eaten raw and also used to make şerbet, adding plenty of sugar. Rhubarb juice is sometimes used as a substitute for sour grape juice or lemon juice.

Şerbetî Bersîle: (Unripe grape juice – verjuice)

This drink is very special, it is made from grapes before they become sweet and still have a sourish taste. Cooling in summer, refreshing in winter, a small glass of this şerbet will be served to visitors, immediately on arrival, before tea or anything else is served. Traditionally şerbet sellers had special earthenware or glass pots but nowadays plastic seems to be everywhere.

Wash the sour grapes, removing the stems and put in a pan. Cover with water and boil until they are very soft. Pass them through a sieve and then squeeze well, add more water if necessary and squeeze again through the sieve. Use a very fine sieve for this purpose.

Put the clear juice in a saucepan and put over a slow heat until it boils. Add sugar according to taste. This drink can be sweet and sour or sweet as preferred.

Boil the juice until it becomes a syrup then put it to one side until it is cold. Put in bottles or jars and store. It can be stored a long time.

Dilute a small amount in water to make a drink.



Şerbetî Naneqeyşî : (Apricot paper juice)

Take a square about 40 cm square. Cut it into small pieces and put in a bowl. Cover with water and leave overnight. Next day put everything in a blender it will become a thick sauce. Then you can add more water to make a drink as thin as you like.



Şerbetî Henar: (Pomegranate juice)



Made in the same way as Rubenar (in Ingredients section)

Şerbetî Henar

EGGS



Eggs are quite common especially in the villages. Mostly chicken but also duck and turkey and goose in season. They are boiled and fried simply but also mixed into more complex dishes. Not only are eggs eaten, but they are also used to wash hair.

Herre papa From (Koya)

3 eggs

1 Tbsp cornflour

Salt

Pepper

1 medium tomato, finely chopped

1 medium green pepper, finely chopped

1 medium onion, finely chopped

Oil for frying

Mix the eggs, cornflour, salt and pepper to make a soft batter. Oil a flat frying pan and put over the heat.

Pour the egg mixture into a hot frying pan; flatten with a wooden spoon until it is as thinly spread as possible. Cook over a low fire until it is set. Turn the herre papa over and cook the other side until it is lightly brown.

Put the chopped vegetables on one half of the eggs and fold the other half over it. Press the open end with the back of a spoon to seal it and hold the vegetables in.

Continue to cook slowly. Turn the whole half circle over again until well brown. Remove from the frying pan with two flat spoons to keep the pastry from breaking. Serve hot.

This is especially used for breakfast. The herre papa can be eaten without stuffing.

Kûkû (From Sine)

3-4 eggs lightly beaten

250 g / 8 oz young leeks (**kewer**) or spring onions and chives mixed

125 g / 4 oz spinach

125 g / 4 oz coriander leaves

125 g / 4 oz parsley or celery leaves

1 Tbsp wheat flour

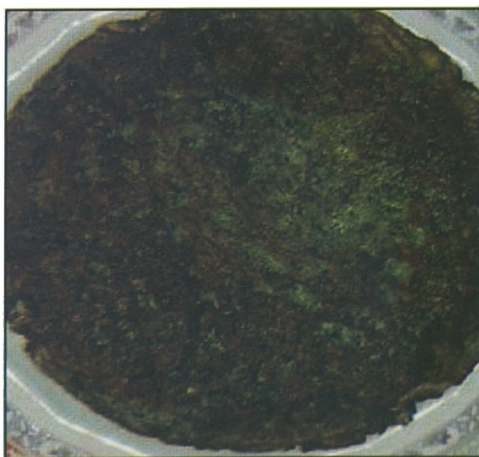
1 tsp pepper

1 tsp turmeric (**optional**) or ½ tsp saffron

Salt

Oil for frying

Put saffron (**optional**) in a tablespoon of hot water and leave over night. Chop the vegetables and herbs very finely all together. Mix the vegetables and herbs with the eggs and the saffron water or turmeric, pepper and salt and the flour. Heat the oil in a medium frying pan and pour on the egg mixture and flatten well. Cook over gentle heat and then turn over to cook the other side until lightly brown.



Turn the whole Kûkû out on a flat dish and cut like a pizza or cake into slices. It can be garnished with finely chopped parsley or other green herbs.

Kûkû with dill: (Eggs with dill from Sine; it is said that dill is good for high blood pressure)

- 1 large bunch of dill or 350 g
- 3-4 eggs
- 1 medium onion
- 1 Tbsp flour
- ½ Tbsp turmeric
- Salt
- Pepper
- 4 Tbsp oil

Chop the dill and the onion as finely as possible. It is important that it is very fine. Mix the dill and onions and the flour with the eggs in a bowl. Add the seasoning. Heat the oil in a frying pan and then pour the mixture into the pan and flatten well. Cook slowly with a cover on until the eggs have set, about 4-5 minutes. You may either cut it into slices with a sharp knife like a cake and turn the pieces over and cook on the other side, or turn the whole egg mixture over to cook on the other side and then cut into slices later.

This dish can be made with potatoes instead of dill.

Circir: (Noodles with egg from Duhok)

- 2 medium onions chopped in rings
- 50 g / 2 oz Kurdish noodles or any other fine noodles
- 2 Tbsp tomato puree, or 1 kg fresh tomatoes chopped very finely or made into juice
- Canned tomatoes **(or finely chopped fresh tomatoes, optional)**
- 2 Tbsp sumac juice, pomegranate juice/ syrup or lemon juice
- 1.2 L / 2 pt water
- 2 Tbsp oil or butter
- 1 green chili or green pepper if desired
- 4 eggs (whole)**
- Salt**

In a frying pan, heat the oil and on a medium heat, and quickly fry the noodles until they start to change colour. Then remove with a slotted spoon and put aside. Then put the onions in the oil and fry until they start to change colour. Add the tomatoes to the mixture and stir. After a few minutes add the water, salt and sumac or pomegranate juice and cook covered, over a low heat, for 15 minutes. Add the fried noodles and bring to a boil. Break each egg into the soup, one by one, taking care not to break the yolk. Do not stir. Leave the eggs to set or harden. Serve hot with bread.

Mizroke: (This dish can be prepared without meat or with qawurme, the hard preserved meat.)

500 g / 1 lb lamb shoulder, if possible all fat removed and cut into 6-8 pieces

6 eggs

6 medium onions

250 g / 8 oz fresh tomatoes

2 Tbsp oil for cooking

2 Tbsp tomato puree (or 250 g very fresh tomatoes)

1 Tbsp lemon juice (more according to taste) or sumac

salt

2 cups water or meat stock

Boil the meat until tender. Drain; keep the stock. Slice the onions into rings and coarsely chop the tomatoes. Heat the oil and add the onion rings. Fry until nearly soft. Add the cooked meat to the fried onions, stirring 2-3 times, then add the tomato puree and stir it in. Add the fresh chopped tomatoes. Stir frequently until the tomatoes are also soft. Add the meat stock to the water and salt and lemon juice, and bring to a boil.

Break two eggs into the mixture and stir quickly, breaking the egg up, thickening the sauce. Leave the sauce to cook for 2-3 minutes, and then add the other four eggs without stirring so that they keep their shape and poach in the sauce. Lower the heat and simmer for 10 minutes. When it is ready, put in a bowl and serve with crispy bread.

Mêxleme Silq: (Fried Swiss Chard from Diyarbekir)

1 kg / 2 lb chard leaves (or spinach)
2 medium onions, finely chopped
5-8 eggs (one for each person)
4 Tbsp oil for frying or butter (olive oil is sometimes used for this dish)

Salt

Pepper

1 Tbsp lemon juice

Wash the leaves and cut off the tough stems. Chop the leaves finely and put them in a pan. Cover with boiling water and boil for 5 minutes, then drain. Heat the oil in a frying pan and add the finely chopped onion and cook on a medium heat until the onions are soft. Add the boiled and chopped chard. Cook for 5 minutes, stirring from time to time until the leaves are nearly dry. Add the salt and pepper and add two eggs. Stir well to combine the mixture and leave for 2-3 minutes.

Transfer the mixture into an ovenproof dish and flatten it well. Then add 3-5 eggs, (depending on the number of people eating) on top of the mixture. You can make a small well with the back of a spoon in the mixture for each egg to go into. Sprinkle lemon juice over the eggs and mixture and salt and pepper to taste. Cover and then put in the oven for about 5 minutes, or put under a moderate grill until the eggs are set. The whole second step can be done in the same frying pan and everything cooked on the cooker.

Serve hot with fresh herbs and spring onions and bread.

This is often made into parû or sandwiches, when the egg mixture and some herbs and onions are rolled in thin pieces of bread.

Asparagus (**marmişik**), mallow, cardoon (**kinger**) or green beans can be used instead of the chard.

Mêxleme: (Eggs with minced meat)

500 g / 1 lb minced meat

4 eggs

1 medium onion (finely chopped)

Lemon juice

Salt

Pepper

4 Tbsp oil for frying

Heat the oil in a frying pan and fry the chopped onion until it is soft. Add the minced meat and fry with the onion. Add salt and pepper and leave until the meat juice is absorbed.

Flatten the fried mixture in an ovenproof dish or tray, then make small wells in the meat and break an egg carefully into each well. Alternatively the eggs can be broken into a bowl and mixed well then poured over the meat. Put this in a medium oven or under a medium grill to set the egg.

Then remove from the heat and sprinkle with lemon juice. More eggs can be used if desired.

Hêlke be tirş: (Egg in a sour sauce)

4 eggs
2 Tbsp wheat flour
2 Tbsp tomato puree or juice from fresh tomatoes
2 Tbsp lemon juice
500 ml / 1 pt water
Salt
Pepper
2 Tbsp chopped parsley
Oil for frying

Break the eggs into a bowl and beat them lightly and then mix them with the flour to make a soft batter. Add salt and pepper. Heat the oil in a frying pan. Pour in the egg mixture. Fry it until it is set and a little coloured. Turn it over so that both sides are cooked, then cut into 4-8 pieces.

Put 1 Tbsp of oil in a saucepan and add the tomato puree, stirring it well, then add the water and lemon juice and salt. Bring to a boil. Add the pieces of egg to the sauce, and leave it to simmer over a low heat for about 10 minutes or until the sauce thickens.

Put in a deep serving dish and garnish with the chopped parsley.

Serve hot with salad or with fresh herbs.

Hêlke Be letke: (Eggs with yellow split peas)

4 eggs
1 medium onion finely sliced
2 Tbsp oil
3 Tbsp yellow split peas

2 medium potatoes
500 ml / 1 pt water
½ tsp turmeric
½ tsp pepper
½ tsp mixed spices
½ tsp oregano
Salt

Heat the oil in a frying pan and add the onions, cook until it starts to change colour. Add the water and bring to a boil. Wash the split peas, add to the boiling water and leave over the heat until nearly soft. Cut the potatoes into small pieces (**half walnut size**) and add to the sauce. Add the herbs and spices and bring to a boil. Then add the eggs one by one breaking each gently into the boiling liquid, keep them apart. Do not stir; allow it all to cook over a low heat for 10-15 minutes.

Serve hot.

Şorbayî Hêlke: (Egg soup)

2-4 eggs
1 Medium onion chopped finely sliced into rings
1 Tbsp wheat flour
500 ml / 1 pt water
1 Tbsp oregano
1 Tbsp turmeric
2 Tbsp oil
Pepper

Heat the oil in a medium sized saucepan and add the sliced onion. Fry gently until soft, then add the flour, stirring well until the colour changes. Add the water, salt and oregano. Leave to come to a boil. Add the eggs, one by one, breaking each one into the mixture, keeping them apart. Cook over a low heat until the eggs are set. Do not stir the mixture.



Hêlke be kewer: (Eggs with leeks or chives)

4 eggs

500 g / 1 lb small young leeks or spring onions or chives or a mixture of these

500 g / 1 lb spinach, coriander and parsley (**equal quantities**)

1 Tbsp flour

½ tsp saffron (**or turmeric**)

Salt

2-3 Tbsp oil for frying

Put the saffron into a cup with 2 Tbsp hot water and leave **(overnight if possible)**. Finely chop all the vegetables. Mix them in a bowl with the eggs, flour, pepper, saffron and salt.

Heat the oil in a large frying pan, keep the heat low and add the mixture and flatten in the pan with a spoon. Cover and cook for about 5 minutes until the eggs are set, but not too long, and then turn it over to cook the other side. Remove from the heat, place onto a large plate and **serve hot**.

Mizraw hêlke: (Egg soup)

2 medium onions

2 Tbsp oil

1 Tbsp each of chopped mint, chives, tarragon, thyme

50 g / 2 oz Kurdish noodles

4 eggs

500 ml / 1 pt water

3 Tbsp sumac juice (**put 1 Tbsp sumac in 3-4 Tbsp cold water, leave for one hour, then drain and use only the water**) or 2 Tbsp lemon juice or sour grape juice

1 tsp turmeric

Salt

Put the noodles in cold water to moisten them and then drain. Slice the onion into thin rings. Heat the oil in a saucepan and fry until the onions just start changing colour. Then add the water, bring to a boil. Add salt, turmeric and chopped herbs.

Bring back to a boil and add sumac juice and the drained noodles. Bring to a boil and mix well. When it comes to a boil, add the eggs one by one, being careful not to break them and keeping them apart. Cook the eggs until soft or hard according to taste. Serve placing one egg in each person's bowl. Serve with flat bread.

Çewen be spenag: (Spinach with egg)

1 kg / 2 lb spinach, finely chopped
3 Tbsp olive oil
6 eggs (**usually one egg per person**)
1 large onion or 2 medium onions
Salt
Pepper

Wash the spinach and chop finely. Chop the onion and fry in the oil in a large frying pan until lightly brown. Add the spinach to the onion and mix and then cover and cook on a low heat for 5 minutes or until the spinach has shrunk. Oil a round oven dish and spread the spinach in the dish. Flatten with the back of a spoon and make six holes in the spinach. Break one egg into each hole.

Sprinkle each egg with salt and pepper. Put the dish in a moderate oven and leave until the eggs are set.

Serve hot with salad, fresh herbs and bread.

Bayîncan be Hêlke: (Eggplants/eggplant with eggs)

500 g / 1 lb eggplants
4-5 eggs
Oil for frying
Salt
Pepper

Chop the eggplants into 2 cm squares, sprinkle with some salt. Leave for 10 minutes. Heat some oil in a frying pan, add the eggplants and fry until light brown and then drain away the oil. Put the eggplants back in the frying pan. Mix the eggs with salt and pepper and beat lightly. Pour over the eggplants and cook gently over a low heat for five minutes until the eggs set well. Cut into pieces as desired and serve hot with bread, herbs and salad.

Chopped parsley can be added to the egg mixture before it is cooked. Potatoes can be used instead of eggplants.

Fresh tomatoes lightly fried can garnish this dish.

KEBABS & OTHER DRY COOKED MEATS



Kebabs are very much a staple in Kurdish food. If meat is not available mushrooms are sometimes used as a replacement, or if someone arrives with fresh mushrooms from the mountains. These mushrooms can be up to a kilo in weight and lend themselves well to being cut up for kebabs.

Kebab Qıme: (Minced meat kebabs)

500 g / 1 lb minced lamb with fat (**düğ** is used traditionally if it is available)

1-2 Tbsp flour

2 medium onions

Salt

Mix all the ingredients together very well. Make into balls; each should be a small handful in size. Squeeze the ball well and then take a large skewer and place on top of the ball. Press / wrap the meat around the skewer. The kebab should be about 15 cm long, although the length does not really matter. The kebab is cooked over very hot flaming charcoal. Keep turning the kebab until it is firm (**otherwise it could drop off**). Once firm the kebab can be cooked first on one side and then on the other.

To take the kebab off the skewer, wrap a piece of lewaş bread around the kebab and pull it off onto a piece of bread lying on a plate.

This is eaten with very finely chopped onion and parsley and powdered sumac and grilled tomatoes. The kebabs are piled in the middle of a dish on bread and the other garnishes are places around them, finally more bread is laid over the kebabs.



Various spices or herbs can be added to the meat mixture. Pepper can be added, or cumin or cinnamon or extra onions or tarragon, mint or parsley.

Goştî Birjaw: (Charcoal grilled meat)

500 g / 1 lb lamb meat with some fat, shoulder or leg or chops without bones

8 very small onions (optional)

Salt

8 small hard cherry tomatoes

1 green pepper cut into pieces (optional)

Cut the meat into 3 cm / 2 in cubes also cut some of the fat into small pieces. Thread the meat onto a skewer with a piece of fat and if using, a small onion after every two pieces of meat. Sprinkle with salt.

Place the skewers over charcoal and barbecue until they are cooked, turning frequently.



Thread the tomatoes on a separate skewer and grill.

Put the grilled meat on one side and the tomatoes on the other side of a serving tray. Cover with hot bread. Serve hot with finely chopped parsley and onion in two piles. The onions can be grilled separately like the tomatoes if you want. A pile of sumac is also placed on the tray. Alternatively the grilled tomatoes and chopped herbs can be placed around the meat on the serving plate.

Pickles are served with the kebabs; mastaw is the most common drink.

Lamb chops can be used instead of lamb cubes. Kidneys and liver are grilled in the same way as in basturme (stomach).

Chicken pieces can also be grilled. The chicken can be brushed with yoghurt or oil before cooking.

Şamî Kebab: (Minced meat and split pea kebab)

500 g / 1 lb minced lamb
1 large onion, finely chopped
1 cup yellow split peas
1 large egg
1 tsp turmeric
1 tsp pepper (**according to taste**)
1 tsp mixed spice
1 tsp salt

Put the yellow split pea into a pan and cover with cold water. Bring to boil and simmer uncovered for about 30 minutes or until soft, then drain well. Put the peas in a bowl and add all the other ingredients and mix well, kneading a little to make a solid dough. Break the mixture into about 12 portions. Then make these into balls and flatten them into 1 cm thick hamburgers. Fry them one by one in a little oil.

Serve hot on a flat dish with fried potatoes sliced into rounds and fried sliced tomatoes and eggplants. Little finely chopped spring onions, parsley, chives, tarragon and mint can be sprinkled over the kebabs or served separately in bowls.

Serve with salads, pickles and bread.

Qorme piyaz: (Fried meat with onions)

6 medium onions
500 g / 1 lb lean lamb cut into small pieces
Salt
4 Tbsp unripe grape juice or lemon juice

Put the meat and salt in a saucepan, add a little water and bring to a boil. Cook until soft and there is a little thick stock left. Slice the onions into rings and fry them until they start to change colour, then drain. Add the onions to the meat stir well, add the grape juice or lemon juice and cook over a low heat for 10 minutes. Serve hot with salad and herbs.

Seng Sîr with bread: (Meat with garlic, yoghurt and bread)

500 g / 1 lb of lean lamb, mutton, chicken or beef, cut into 2-3 cm cubes

1 piece of lewaş bread or 2-3 pieces of pita bread

250 g / 8 oz yoghurt (or more if desired)

Garlic, finely chopped

Turmeric

Salt

Put the meat in a saucepan and cover with boiling water; cook until soft. A little salt can be added. Remove from the liquid, keeping the liquid on one side.

Fry the meat pieces until slightly brown. Lightly toast the bread and then cut it into 2-3 cm squares and place on a flat dish. Pour a little of the meat stock over the bread to soak it. Add the finely chopped garlic to the yoghurt and cover the bread with the yoghurt mix. Put the fried meat in the middle of the bread in a pile. Mix the turmeric with the remaining oil in which the meat was fried and, using a spoon, trickle this oil over the meat and yoghurt as a decoration.

Serve hot. Fried eggplants and potatoes can be added to the meat at the end.

KIFTES & STUFFED MEATS

There are many different kinds of Kifte. Both the shells and the fillings can vary. Shells can be made from rice, or bulgur or cracked wheat, or a mixture of these or from meat mixed with flour or rice. The fillings can be minced meat mixed with a variety of herbs (**parsley, tarragon, mint**), spices, raisins, onions, nuts, or with dried meat - qawurme (**qali**) with fried onions or egg fried with onions. Some people do not use spices only herbs.



Şifte: (Fried minced meat fingers)

250 g / 8 oz minced lamb or beef

100 g / 3 oz plain flour

2-3 Tbsp chopped parsley (**half a small bunch**) or celery leaves, tarragon or mint are also sometimes used

1 large onion, finely chopped

1-2 clove garlic (**optional**)

250 g / 8 oz fresh tomatoes, finely chopped

Salt

Oil for frying

Mix all the ingredients together, knead well, or combine in a food processor. Divide the mixture into small balls about 1 Tbsp of mixture for each one, shape each one into small fingers in the palm of your hand. Then flatten each finger into a small flat oblong 'burger'. These should be about 7 cm / 3-4 in long, but can be smaller or bigger according to taste.

Heat the oil and shallow fry the şifte on both sides until brown.

Serve hot with fresh herbs, onion salad and thin flat bread. It can also be served with sun-dried tomatoes, which are lightly fried in oil. If the sun dried tomatoes are dry they should first be washed in water to soften them a little.

Şifte Sewzî: (Vegetable şifte)

This kind of şifte is generally made from zucchinis. Other vegetables can be used, such as eggplants, spinach, beet leaves, or lettuce.

500 g / 1 lb zucchinis

1 large onion

2 Tbsp parsley or mint or tarragon

1 tsp pepper or mixed spices or cinnamon

100 gm / 3 oz flour

2 medium fresh tomatoes

1 egg

Salt

Oil for frying

Put the zucchinis through a grinder or food processor and then the onion and the tomatoes. Mix with the other ingredients and make soft dough. Divide into equal amounts, about 1 Tbsp each, and make fingers, which are flattened in the palms of your hands. Do not worry if the mixture is very soft, it will be softer than the meat mix. Fry the fingers until nearly brown. Take them out of the oil carefully so as not to break them up and drain on kitchen paper. Put the fingers on an oval or round flat dish. Decorate with sliced tomatoes.

Serve hot with bread or cooked rice.

Kifte Urfayî: (Originally from Urfa, known as Halab amongst the Arabs)

I learned this from my aunt who lived in Urfa where her brother was a general. Then they had to flee the fighting and came home to live with us with stories of the many different kinds of kifte to be found there.

Shells

250 g / 8 oz white long grain rice (**short grain can be used**)

Salt

Turmeric

Cumin (**optional**)

1½ pt water (**approx**)

Stuffing

150 g / 5 oz minced meat

2 g / 1 oz almond flakes

25 g / 1 oz raisins

25 g / 1 oz chopped parsley

salt

pepper

1 tsp cinnamon

1 tsp cumin

1 tsp (**or less**) cardamom (**optional**)

1 Tbsp oil or more for frying

To make the stuffing:

Fry the mincemeat, add the almonds and the raisins and mix well; fry for a few minutes. Add the spices and herbs to the minced meat, take off the heat and put to one side.

To make the shells:

Wash the rice and drain. Put the water into a saucepan and place over a medium heat. Add the rice and salt and leave to boil until slightly soft. Drain and leave to cool.

Add the turmeric, combine well and knead with your hand to make a smooth dough. A little spice can be used at this point.

(A food processor can be used).

Form the rice dough into 2-3 inch (**or smaller**) egg shapes and put one in the palm of one hand. Make a hole in the egg shape with a

finger of the other hand. Work your finger around the hole until it looks like the empty shell of an egg, thin and smooth.

Fill each shell with the stuffing, pinch the end of the hole to close it neatly and make an egg like kifte. You will have about 15 kiftes.

Heat the oil in a large frying pan until it is hot but not smoking, and fry the kiftes. Do not stir until 1 to 2 minutes after dropping the kiftes into the oil. Shake the pan gently to move them but not with a spoon as this could break them up in the beginning when they are still soft. Remove the kiftes from the oil when they are hard to the touch and still yellow.

Serve hot with salads and fresh herbs.

Doqlû be Kifte or Kutilk Dew: (Kifte from rice, wheat and bulgur)

Shells

300 g / 11 oz cracked wheat (**washed and drained and left for 2 hours**)

200 g / 7 oz rice (**wash and leave in water for 2-3 hours**)

200 g / 7 oz bulgur (**bulgur is boiled cracked wheat**)

Salt

1 tsp pepper

2 tsp cumin

Pepper and salt (**according to taste**)

Stuffing

250 g / 8 oz of minced lamb

2 medium onions (**can use more up to four**)

50 g / 2 oz almonds

50 g / 2 oz raisins

1 tsp cumin (**optional**)

1 tsp cinnamon (**sometimes a teaspoon of turmeric or cloves or cardamom is used in addition to the basic three**)

Oil for frying



Sauce

1 kg / ½ lb fresh yoghurt or Keşik sauce

1½ pt water (**boiling**), more can be added to thin the sauce

100 g / 4 oz rice

1 tsp cornflour or one well beaten egg or both

1 Tbsp dried mint (**fresh can be used**)

To make the shells:

Drain the rice and the cracked wheat and then mix together with the washed bulgur. Add the salt and spices and knead well to make firm dough. Divide into 10-15 balls. Make shells by putting

the ball in the palm of your hand and with the finger of your other hand make an indentation in the ball and then press it out until a thin cupped hollow shell is made.

To make the stuffing:

Chop the onions finely. Put some oil in a frying pan and lightly fry the onions until they soften. Add the almonds and the minced meat; mix well and fry until the meat changes colour then add the raisins. Stir well and remove from heat. Add the salt and spices and mix well.

Then fill these shells with the stuffing. Close the open side of the ball and squeeze into an oval shape, flatten slightly or leave as a ball.

Boil up a large saucepan of water big enough to take all the balls at once. Add some salt, and then add the kiftes, placing them in gently and bring to a boil. As soon as the kiftes swim to the top (**about 10 minutes**) remove them one by one with a slotted spoon and place in a large sieve to drain until they are dry. Alternatively you can place them on kitchen paper or on a rack. Keep the remaining water which will then be used for the sauce.

To make the sauce:

Add the yoghurt the water and mix in the cornflour (**and the egg if used**). Add the salt. Bring to a boil stirring all the time. Add the rice and the kiftes one by one, carefully, and simmer on medium heat for about 10 minutes or until the rice is soft.

Put the kiftes and the yoghurt in a large bowl and decorate with dried or chopped fresh mint leaves.

Kifte Birwêş: (Cracked wheat kiftes)

300 g / 11oz cracked wheat (**cover with water, mix it well, leave for 5 minutes and then drain off any excess water. If the wheat is still very hard, leave for a few more minutes. Then leave 2 hours to swell up and soften**)

Salt

1 tsp pepper

1 tsp cumin

1 tsp salt

(Turmeric, mixed spices or other spices are used in addition)

Stuffing

125 g / 4 oz minced lean lamb

1 medium onion

25 g / 1 oz almonds, pine nuts or walnuts can be used

25 g / 1 oz raisins
1 tsp cinnamon
1 tsp pepper
Salt
2 Tbsp oil for frying (**approx**).

Spinach sauce:

250 g / 8 oz spinach or Swiss chard
100 g / 4 oz yellow split peas soaked in cold water
1 medium onion
2 Tbsp oil
2 Tbsp tomato puree or 500 g / 1 lb finely chopped fresh tomatoes
2 Tbsp sumac juice or sour grape or lemon juice
1-2 tsp sugar or honey or grape syrup
500 ml / 1 pt water
Salt

Stuffing

Finely chop the onion and fry in a frying pan. Add the mincemeat and almonds. When the mixture has changed colour add the raisins and spices, mix well and remove from heat. Make sure the raisins do not burn.

Shells

Add the spices and salt to the cracked wheat and knead well until you have smooth dough. A food processor can be used, as thorough kneading is important. Divide the dough into 14 small balls. Flatten a ball in the palm of your hand to make a thin shell. Then stuff it with the fried mince mixture. Close the open side and shape into a round, oval or flat shape. Repeat until all the balls are stuffed and shaped.

Half fill a large saucepan with water, add a little salt and bring to boil; put the kiftes in a few at a time. Shake the pan to keep them from sticking, but do not use a spoon. Bring them to boil and simmer for 15 minutes or until they rise to the top. Take them out, drain them in a sieve and put some more kiftes in the water; repeat until all are cooked. Leave to cool.

These kiftes can now be fried, be served hot as they are with salad or herbs, or put into a number of different sauces.

Spinach sauce Or (Swiss chard if available)

Chop the onion and fry in some oil. Chop the spinach finely and add to the onions. Add the tomatoes, stirring well, then add the split peas, water, salt and sumac or lemon juice and the sugar or syrup. Simmer until the ingredients are cooked then add the boiled kiftes. Leave to simmer in the sauce for 5-10 minutes.

Serve hot with bread and herbs.

Tomato sauce:

One large onion, finely chopped
1 kg / 2 lb finely chopped fresh tomatoes that have had their skins and seeds removed

1 small green chili

2 Tbsp sour grape juice or lemon juice (or more if you like it sour)

300 ml / ½ pt water

50 g / 2 oz finely chopped parsley or celery leaves

2 Tbsp oil for frying

Salt



Fry the onion, add the tomatoes and green chili and, when they are soft, add the water, lemon juice and salt. When it is cooked, add the kifte gently and then sprinkle with the chopped parsley.

Yoghurt sauce:

These kiftes can be deep fried and served with salad.

They can also be added to a lentil stew and other soups and sauces.

Stuffed with eggs

Fry two finely chopped large onions, break four eggs over this, mix well as if scrambling and add 1 tsp pepper and salt and some chopped parsley. When completely cooked, this mixture can be used to stuff the kifte shells. Any of the above sauces can be served with these.

Other herbs sometimes used are tarragon, mint, celery, or other spices such as cumin, mixed spices.

Kifte Sawar be Bayıncan:

Shells

250 g / 8 oz of fine ground bulgur.

50 g / 2 oz fine cracked wheat (**cover with water, drain off excess and leave to soak for 2 hours**)

125 g / 4 oz minced beef without fat

Stuffing

125 g / 4 oz minced lamb

25 g / 1 oz almond flakes

25 g / 1 oz sultanas or raisins

1 medium onion, finely chopped

Salt

½ tsp cumin

½ tsp allspice

Sauce

1 large onion finely sliced

3-4 medium eggplants (**approx. 1 kg / 2 lb**)

250 g / 8 oz fresh tomatoes in medium slices

2 Tbsp fresh tomato puree in a cup of water

1 large green pepper cut into rings

2 Tbsp lemon juice or any sour juice

25 g / 1 oz celery leaves, finely chopped

50 g / 2 oz finely chopped parsley

Oil

Salt

1 tsp black pepper

Stuffing

Heat 1-2 Tbsp of oil in a frying pan, add the chopped onion and fry until it softens. Add the minced lamb. Fry the meat until the colour changes, add the almonds and mix well. At the end add the sultanas and spices and the chopped parsley and remove from heat.

Shells

Wash the bulgur, drain and squeeze. Add the soaked cracked wheat. Add the minced beef and the spices and salt, and then knead well to

make soft dough. A food processor can be used and will probably make better dough.

Make 10-12 portions about the size of a golf ball, from the dough, mould into thin shells and fill with the fried meat mixture. Close the open side of the shells then flatten the ball to make a round burger shape about 2 cm thick. Put these into boiling salted water for about 30 minutes and remove with a slotted spoon and drain. Then fry in a little oil until cooked through and golden.

Sauce

Cut the eggplant lengthways, sprinkle with salt and leave for 10 minutes then wash well, drain and shallow fry until soft. Fry the finely sliced onion.

In a saucepan put a layer of half the sliced tomatoes, top with the fried onion rings, cover with the fried eggplants, then the kifte. Cover with the green pepper, celery and the rest of the tomatoes, salt pepper and the dissolved tomato puree and the sour juice.

Cover the saucepan with a lid and leave over a low heat for 30-40 minutes or put in a moderate oven for about 50-60 minutes.

Adjust the seasoning, salt or sour or spices to taste.

Serve hot with bread, salad and fresh herbs.

These kiftes can be served just with salad without placing in the eggplant stew. This kifte can be put into a yoghurt or tomato sauce instead of eggplant stew.

Kifte Şorba: (Stuffed meat and rice balls in yellow sauce)

These kiftes are very traditional in the Sulemani region. This dish takes a lot of time and work and so is served on special occasions.

Stuffing

500 g / 1 lb minced lamb

3-4 medium onions, finely chopped

50 g / 2 oz raisins

50 g / 2 oz almond flakes (**walnuts or pine nuts can be used instead**)

1 Tbsp mixed spices (**finely ground - cloves, cumin, cinnamon, cardamom**)

Salt and pepper

50 g / 2 oz finely chopped parsley or celery leaves or tarragon
Oil for frying

Fry the chopped onions until soft. Add the almonds and continue to fry until they start to change colour. Add the mince meat and mix well, fry until soft. Add the raisins and spices and herbs and seasoning. Mix well then remove from the heat and divide into 8 portions and put on one side until the shells are ready for stuffing.

Shells

500 g / 1 lb minced beef (**fat removed**)
1 kg / 2 lb rice (**short or long grain**)
2 tsp ground turmeric
2 tsp salt
1 tsp ground cumin

Wash the rice and leave in cold water for at least 2-3 hours (**overnight is best**) then drain it. Add the salt to the minced beef and mix well, then add the seasoning and add to the rice. Knead well to make a good dough. (**Use a food processor; otherwise, you may need a pestle and mortar**). Divide the dough into 8 portions and make into large balls.

Wet the palms of your hands and, making a ball, put it into the palm of one hand, which should be cupped a little. Flatten it with the other hand until it is about 50 mm / ¼ inch thick. Put one portion of the stuffing into the middle of the flattened dough then fold the dough over folding it over the stuffing, closing it on all sides and press it down. Roll it in your hands gently to make a large, firm, well-shaped ball. Continue until the 6-8 balls are prepared.

Put them on a flat dish or tray until the sauce is ready.

Sauce

500 g / 1 lb lamb (**with bones**) chopped into medium pieces
300 g / 6 oz dried chick peas (**soaked over night and cooked in water until very soft**) or 1-2 cans of boiled chick peas
(400 g each)

2-3 medium onions
2 Tbsp oil
3 l / 6 pt water (**more if necessary**)

- 1 tsp turmeric (or more)
- 2 tsp ground cumin, cloves, pepper
- 1 small tomato, finely chopped (optional)
- 1 Tbsp chopped parsley (optional)

Chop the onions and put in a large saucepan. Add the oil and fry the onions until they are soft but have not changed colour. Add the water and bring to a boil then add the chopped meat and bring back to a boil.

Add the 8 kiftes to the sauce one by one waiting each time for the sauce to return to boil. Make sure that the water completely covers the kiftes. Lower the heat and simmer for about 2 hours or until the kiftes rise to the top. Add more boiling water if necessary to keep the kiftes covered.

Mash half of the cooked chick peas and add to those which are still whole. Add the whole lot to the sauce and kiftes. Add the seasoning and then cook for 10 minutes. Then add the tomato and parsley and after a few moments turn off the heat and leave to stand for about 5-10 minutes.

Serve hot in a deep bowl with salad, bread, and fresh herbs.

The shell mixture can be used to wrap around a stuffed chicken. (See below). These kiftes can be made into smaller balls and different sauces can be used, for example a chard sauce.

Kifte Şorba be Mirîşk: (Stuffed chicken kifte)

- 1 small chicken
- 150 g / 4 oz minced lean lamb
- 1 hard boiled egg
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 1 Tbsp raisins
- 1 Tbsp flaked almonds
- 1 tsp cumin
- ½ tsp ground pepper
- ½ tsp powdered cloves
- ½ tsp powdered cardamom
- Other mixed spices (optional)
- Salt
- 1 Tbsp oil for frying

Stuffing

Fry the onion in oil until soft and then add the minced meat. Stir well and cook for 2-3 minutes. Add the almonds, fry for 1-2 minutes and then add the raisins, spices and salt. Combine together and remove from the heat and allow to cool. Pour off any excess oil as the mixture should be dry.

Wash the chicken and make sure the inside is well cleaned. Then debone the whole chicken. You can get your butcher to do it, or we do it this way. Turn the chicken over, breast side down on a board, with the wings towards you. Make a slit in the skin down the middle, from the wings end to the centre of the chicken. Insert your fingers under the skin slowly detaching it from the meat and move towards the wing. Then remove the first wing bone. A small knife can be used to cut the bone off at the joint. Do not cut the skin. Move your finger along towards the leg and remove the leg bone also. This is quite easy on a small bird; however, a small knife can be used. Repeat on the other side. Then you can remove the breast bone and the base bone.

Another way is to cut the chicken along the bottom and debone it by opening it right out.

Wash it and pat dry with some kitchen paper. Then stuff with the minced meat putting the peeled egg in the middle. If the chicken is larger two eggs can be used. Fill completely and then sew it up using cotton thread and a large needle.

Put the chicken in a saucepan and sprinkle with a little salt; place on a low heat. When the excess juices start to run after 2-3 minutes, turn the heat off. Remove the chicken, draining off the liquid.

Take the shell dough and spread it out flat, on a piece of cling film (**saran wrap**) and press it out until it is big enough to cover the chicken. Place the chicken in the middle of the dough. Lifting the cling film, bring the dough over and around the chicken until it is well covered. Remove the cling film and press the dough all over the chicken making sure there are no gaps and the whole thing is a solid looking ball or oval.

The same yellow sauce as for Kifte Şorba should be boiling on the heat, place the chicken in the sauce. The cling film is useful to help to lower the ball into the liquid, whereupon it can be removed. Make sure the sauce completely covers the ball. Bring it to boil and then

simmer, from time to time. Using a spatula make sure it is not sticking to the bottom of the pan.

It will take about 2 hours to cook.

When it is ready, transfer some of the sauce into a serving bowl and then remove the chicken using two spatulas or large flat spoons, lift it out onto a serving plate. It will be quite heavy. Alternatively clean rubber gloves can be used. Pour the rest of sauce into the bowl and serve beside the chicken.

Cut the ball down the middle and then across again. Serve a piece to each person and then pour some sauce over it. Or serve the sauce in a separate small bowl and eat it like soup, dipping bread into it.

Bread, herbs and pickles are served with this.

Usually the oldest family member or most honoured guest cuts open the kifte.

In Duhok, a variation called Qelî is common. In winter minced qawürme and fried onions can be used instead of fresh meat for the kifte stuffing.

Biryanî Mirîşk: (Stuffed chicken)

1 medium chicken (1½ kg / 3 lb)

250 g / 8 oz minced lamb

200 g / 7 oz long grain rice

75 g / 3 oz almond flakes

100 g / 4 oz raisins

½ tsp ground cloves

½ tsp ground pepper

½ tsp ground cinnamon

½ tsp ground cardamom

½ tsp ground cumin (**more spices can be added to taste**)

Salt

Oil or butter

Wash the rice and put in a saucepan. Cook until almost soft and then drain. Fry the almonds, minced meat and add the raisins. Add half of the spices and salt and mix well, then add to the rice. Wash the inside and outside of the chicken well and dry. Butter the inside of the chicken and rub with the remaining spices. Stuff the chicken



with the rice mixture. Sew up the openings with cotton or use toothpicks or small skewers.

Brush the chicken with butter and put in a roasting pan. Cover with foil and place in a moderate oven (180C / 350F / Gas Mark 4) for about 80 minutes.

Alternatively the chicken can be placed in a saucepan with 1 cup of boiling water, covered with a tight lid and gently simmered for an hour, turning the chicken over once. It can also be fried gently in a lot of oil.

Serve hot with salad.

A small young lamb, a turkey or goose can be cooked in the same way. In southwest Kurdistan, the lamb is stuffed not with rice but with Qerexerman (**Frîk**) and the sultanas (**Raisins**) are optional.

Biryanî be Firîk: (Qerexerman – Lamb stuffed with green wheat)

One baby lamb

1 kg / 2 lb frîk

500 g fine noodles

2 tsp black pepper

Salt

100-150 g / 3 oz almond pieces flakes, pine nuts or walnuts or a mix of all three

Oil for frying

Wash the lamb, drain and dry well. Oil it very well with ghee on the inside and rub with salt and pepper.

Wash the frîk soaking it for 5 minutes in cold water and then drain. Place the frîk in a sauce pan, cover with boiling water, add a little salt, bring back to a boil and simmer until nearly soft (**5-10 minutes**). All the water will be absorbed.

Fry the noodles lightly in oil for a few minutes and remove from the oil. Fry the nuts slightly. Mix the noodles and nuts into the frîk adding salt and pepper.

Fill the lamb with this mixture and close the opening by sewing or using sticks. Oil well on the outside and place in a baking tray. Cover with foil and put in a preheated medium oven for 2 hours or for 3 hours without foil. Alternatively fry in hot ghee for 30 minutes on low heat, turning occasionally.

Kifte Silqaw: (Kifte in Chard sauce)

100 g / 2 oz rice

500 g / 1 lb Swiss chard

2 medium onions, finely chopped

50 g / 1 lb chopped mutton (**into about 6 pieces**)

500 g / 1 lb boiled chick peas (1 can)
500 g / 1 lb fresh tomatoes
1-2 Tbsp tomato puree
Juice of 2 lemons
3 1 / 6 pt water (more if necessary)
Oil

Fry the chopped onion until soft, add the chopped tomatoes and the puree; stir well and add the salt and lemon juice. Cook, stirring well, for 2-3 minutes. Add the water and the meat, bringing them to a boil.

Add the kiftes, one by one and leave to boil until they are cooked. Add the chickpeas and the chopped chard. The chard can be fried first then added to the sauce. Simmer over a low heat for about 30 minutes. Adjust the seasoning. Serve hot in a large bowl, with bread.

This sauce can be used for all other kiftes that are in sauces as well.

Kiftey Goşt be Nane: (Kifte with mint from Sine)

1 kg / ½ lb minced lamb or mutton
1 kg / ½ lb fresh tomatoes
175 g / 6 oz rice long or short grain
50 g / 2 oz parsley, finely chopped
50 g / 2 oz mint, finely chopped
2 medium onions
1 clove garlic, finely chopped
Salt and pepper
1 egg
1 Tbsp oil
1½ pt water

Wash the rice and leave to soak in cold water for at least 2-3 hours then drain. Chop one onion and fry until soft in a little oil. Finely chop the tomatoes and add to the fried onion and cook until it starts to dry. Add the water; bring to



a boil and leave to simmer. Mix the minced meat and the rice and the finely chopped second onion, the mint, parsley and garlic, salt, pepper and egg. Mix well. Make into small balls.

Bring the sauce to a boil and add the meat balls, bring back to boil and simmer on a low heat for about one hour. Add a little more water if necessary. Put in a bowl and serve with bread and fresh herbs.

Keylûk: (Cracked wheat kifte in a sauce, very traditional in Duhok)

Stuffing

125 g / 4 oz minced lamb

1 medium onion

25 g / 1 oz almond flakes

25 g / 1 oz raisins

Oil for frying

Salt

Pepper

25 g / 1 oz finely chopped parsley (**optional**)

Fry the chopped onion and the minced meat. Add the other ingredients.

Shells

100 g / 4 oz cracked wheat (**unboiled**)

50 g / 2 oz rice

1 small onion

Salt

1 tsp pepper

Soak the rice in cold water over night. Sprinkle the cracked wheat with a little water 2-3 hours before using. (**The wheat should not be too wet**). Drain the rice and the wheat and mix together. Finely chop the onion and add with the salt to the rice and wheat mix. Knead into a dough. Divide the mixture into 10-12 small balls and make shells as in the recipe for Kifte Birwêş page

Stuff the shells with the stuffing and seal as before; put to one side.

Sauce

750 ml / 1½ pt water

100 g / 4 oz chickpeas soaked overnight and then cooked (or canned)
1 medium onion finely sliced
1 red pepper
250 g / 8 oz chopped lamb meat boiled until soft.
25 g / 1 oz rice
25 g / 1 oz cracked wheat.

In a saucepan fry the onion until soft, add the meat, add the water and the chick peas, the rice and cracked wheat, salt and pepper. Bring to a boil and then add the kiftes one by one. Simmer for about 15 minutes until the rice and kiftes are soft.

Serve in a large bowl with chopped green peppers, chopped spring onions, herbs and flat thin bread.

Tirşek: (Kiftes in tomato sauce)

This can be any kifte in a sauce made from fresh tomatoes or from tomato puree.

Kutilk Dow
Small rice kifte in
Keşik sauce

Sauces:

We use many sauces in Kurdistan: red sauces from tomatoes are common in Sulemani or beetroots; yellow sauces from saffron or turmeric are found a lot in Eastern Kurdistan; white sauces using yoghurt or Keşik in green from Swiss chard are used a lot in Erbil. All these sauces are used with different kiftes, meats, vegetables, stuffed vegetables and legumes.



Keşkaw: (Green sauce with kiftes)

This sauce can be used with meatballs, kiftes, stuffed vegetables, and fried onions.

Sauce

1 kg / 2 lb Swiss chard

1-2 Tbsp wheat flour

1 green pepper, finely chopped

1 medium onion, finely chopped

1 Tbsp oil or ghee

Salt

500 g / 1 lb of chopped lamb on the bone simmered in water until soft **(optional)**.

2 Tbsp lemon juice or other sour juice **(optional)**.

First chop up the Swiss chard leaves cutting out the white stems. Put the stems to one side and use the rest of the leaves to make the juice. You can use a juicer and just extract the juice or use a liquidiser and then strain out the juice through a sieve. Some water **(or the juice from the cooked lamb)** can be poured on top of the leaves and pressed and squeezed through the sieve to extract more colour and juice. Continue this process until there are approximately 1½ l / 3 pt of juice. Keep the remaining pulp on one side. At this point add the pieces of meat if desired.

Kifte Shells:

250 g / 8 oz fine cracked wheat (birwêş whole wheat crushed before boiling, not to be confused with bulgur which is boiled then crushed)

1-2 Tbsp semolina or breadcrumbs

1 tsp cumin or other spices as desired

Salt

150-200 ml / 5 fl oz water **(enough just to moisten the cracked wheat)**

Put the cracked wheat in a bowl; add the water and leave to soak for 2 hours. Then add the semolina, spices and the remaining drained pulp of the Swiss chard. Mix well to make a firm dough and divide into 10-15 balls. Put a ball in the palm of your hand and then using two finger of the other hand, make a dent in the ball and press it out into a shell shape that will take the qîme filling.

Stuffing

200 g / 7 oz minced lamb
1 medium onion, finely chopped
25 g / 1 oz raisins
25 g / 1 oz flaked almonds or walnuts
25 g / 1 oz chopped parsley
1 tsp cumin or mixed spices as desired
1 tsp black pepper
1 Tbsp oil

Heat the oil in a saucepan and add the finely chopped onion. Fry for about three minutes or until the onions start to change colour. Add the meat, almonds and salt. Cook over a medium heat until the meat is nearly dry. Add the spices, parsley and raisins and mix together.

Fill every shell with a little q̄me drawing the shell together making balls or flattened discs or egg shapes making sure that the shell is firm and sealed.

In a saucepan heat the oil and add the chopped onions. Fry the onion for 2-3 minutes and then add the green liquid and the chopped pepper and a few of the chard stems chopped up into pieces. Bring to a boil and add the kiftes one by one. Bring to a boil and then lower the heat and boil for 30 minutes.

Serve hot with bread. In this dish any kind of kifte or stuffed vegetable can be used, or chopped and fried vegetables can be added to this sauce. Small sausages, poultry or meat can be used also.

Beetroot leaves can be used instead of Swiss chard.

STUFFED VEGETABLES AND OTHERS



Yapraxî Gelâmêw: (Stuffed vine leaves Kurdish style)

250 g / 8 oz of fresh or preserved vine leaves

1 medium bunch of dill or 2 Tbsp dried dill

1 large bunch of spring onions (**green salad onions**)

100 ml / 4 fl oz cooking oil or butter

250 g / 8 oz minced lamb (**to include some fat**)

500 g / 1 lb short grain rice

2-3 cloves of garlic (**optional**)

250 g / 8 oz natural yoghurt

1 Tbsp lemon juice (**optional**)

Salt

Pepper (**optional**)

1 kg / 2 lb of lambs breast in slices to cover the bottom of the saucepan (**optional**)

Wash the rice; soak in cold water for 10 mins then drain. Shred the dill weed and green onions, add them to the rice. Finely chop the garlic (**if used**), add to the yoghurt and then add this to the rice mixture.

Add the minced lamb and the lemon juice. Mix together, and adjust the seasoning.

Place the shiny side of the vine leaf on the palm of your hand then place a teaspoon full of the rice mixture in the middle of the leaf. Fold the ends of the leaf over the stuffing to make round or square shape stuffed vine leaves. (**The process gets easier once you have folded a few**).

Put the breast of lamb slices in boiling water for 20 minutes then take out and put on the bottom of a large saucepan. Arrange the stuffed vine leaves tightly over the top of the meat. Cover with a heavy plate turned upside down to keep them in place. Cover the stuffed vine leaves with boiling water or meat stock. Put the saucepan on a medium heat until the liquid comes to a boil. Lower the heat and

leave for 30 minutes or until the liquid is absorbed, then leave for a further 10 minutes.

Turn the saucepan upside down over a flat plate or a tray and serve hot.

Alternatives

-The yaprax can be made without meat in which case a little more oil or butter can be put in the mixture (**approximately 1 Tbsp**).

-The breast of lamb can be left out in which case the bottom of the pan is lined with a little oil or butter.

-Garlic and lemon juice are also optional depending on taste.

Yapraxî Kelem: (Cabbage Dolmas stuffed with turkey)

This kind of dolma is made from cabbage leaves and turkey. It is a sweet and sour dolma, and prepared for special occasions, for honoured visitors and celebrations.

One large white cabbage, with thin leaves (**about 1 kg / 2 lb**)

250 g / 8 oz minced turkey

250 g / 8 oz of turkey cut into large pieces, about 4-5 cm square and boiled until soft

500 g / 1 lb white rice (**short or long grain**)

2 medium onions (**finally chopped**)

100 g / 3½ oz raisins

3 Tbsp tomato puree

3 Tbsp syrup made from grapes, or dates or honey if others not available

2 Tbsp lemon juice

150 ml / 4 fl oz ghee or oil

1 Tbsp cinnamon

1 tsp ground allspice (**optional**)

Salt

Water to cover

Remove the leaves one by one. Put the leaves in boiling water for a few seconds to blanch them. Then remove and drain. Flatten the hard central vein where necessary or slice part of it off. Cut the large leaves into half or even smaller.

Wash the rice in a large bowl and drain. Add the mince meat, oil, raisins syrup, chopped onion, lemon juice, salt, cinnamon and allspice; combine well.

Take a piece of cabbage leaf, put it in the flat palm of your hand and put a tablespoon of the mixture in the middle of the leaf. Fold the left and right sides over and then top and bottom to make a firm roll or package. Stuff all the leaves with the mixture. Put a layer of the stuffed leaves tightly packed in the bottom of a large heavy saucepan putting pieces of turkey meat between the rolls or on top of the yaprax.

Then arrange another layer with the meat, continue layering until all the yaprax are finished. Cover the cabbage rolls with a flat plate, face down to keep them in place. Pour the remaining liquid from the mixture over the top and add enough water to cover the leaves completely.

Place the pan over a medium heat until it starts boiling. Reduce the heat. Let it simmer for one hour. Add more water if necessary. Turn off the heat. Remove the plate and leave for 10-20 minutes to settle. Some heated butter or ghee (2-3 Tbsp) can be poured over the cabbage rolls for additional flavour.

To serve place a large round serving plate or tray, face down, over the saucepan and then quickly turn the sauce pan over onto the tray. Remove the saucepan carefully so that the cabbage rolls remain together in a moulded shape.

Serve hot with thin bread and fresh herbs, such as parsley, spring onions, mint tarragon or serve with a green salad or an onion salad.

Lamb can be used instead of turkey. Also this dish can be prepared without meat in which case add butter to the rice mixture. When it is made in large amounts, thick pieces of turkey including skin (**especially fatty parts**) are put on the bottom of the pan, covering it, and the cabbage rolls are arranged over the turkey meat.

Yaprax Kuleke: (Stuffed zucchinis from Mardin)

200 g / 7 oz rice

8 small onions, finely chopped

2 kg / 4 lb zucchini

2 Tbsp tomato puree

500 g / 1 lb fresh tomatoes chopped finely

100 g / 4 oz almond flakes or pine nuts

400 ml / ½ pt olive oil

100 g / 4 oz raisins

1 small bunch (50 g) finely chopped fresh mint **(2 Tbsp dried mint can be used instead)**

1 Tbsp sugar

Salt

Pepper

1 Tbsp cumin **(mixed spices can be used instead)**

Put the rice into a bowl and cover with boiling water and leave standing on the side.

Cut the tops off the zucchinis, peel and cut each one across the middle and then scoop out the pulp in each piece. Take care not to go through to the end. Fry slightly on each side. **(This stage can be omitted)**

Fry the chopped onions in the olive oil, add the almonds or pine nuts and fry together with the onions. Add the salt and pepper and cumin and combine together.

Drain the rice and then wash it and drain again. Add the rice to the onion mixture and stir well. Cook on a medium heat for ten minutes. Add the finely chopped tomatoes and the raisins, sugar and mint and one cup of water to the rice. Mix well and cook for ten minutes on a low heat with a tight cover. Remove from the heat.

Stuff the scooped out zucchinis with the rice mixture and lay them side by side on a baking tray or oven proof dish. Cover them with water or thin tomato sauce **(or you can use fresh tomato juice or tomato puree and water)**. Simmer gently for 30 minutes and remove from the heat. Let it cool and then serve cold.

This stuffing can be used for other vegetables and leaves, for instance tomatoes, eggplants, onions, vine leaves or spinach.

Têkme: (Stuffed zucchinis from Rwandûz)

1 kg / 2 lbs zucchinis (6-8 pieces) (zucchini)
100 g / 4 oz rice
250 g / 8 oz minced lamb
50 g / 2 oz chopped parsley or celery or lovage
2 Tbsp tomato puree
2 Tbsp oil
2 Tbsp lemon juice or sumac and water
Salt
250 ml / ½ pt water

Cut the top off the zucchinis cut in half across the middle and scoop out the centre gently.

Wash the rice and then mix it with the minced meat, parsley or celery and salt. Stuff the zucchinis and arrange them in a deep dish or a saucepan. Put a little oil in a small frying pan add the tomato puree and cook until it starts to dry then add the tomato puree to the water. Mix well and then pour over the zucchinis. The water must just cover the zucchinis completely. If more water is needed to achieve this add a little more. Cover the saucepan with a lid and cook over a low heat for 30-40 minutes.

Serve hot.

If the zucchinis are large, they can be cut along one side instead of across the middle, the pulp removed carefully and the stuffing put in down that one side.

Alternative method:

Cut the zucchinis in half lengthwise. Clean and scoop out the seeds from the zucchinis. Fry the zucchinis lightly in a little oil for a few minutes. Wash the rice and put into a saucepan of boiling water and then drain. Fry the mince meat and mix in the rice and parsley then add the seasoning. Fill the zucchinis with the rice mixture and arrange them tightly next to one another like yaprax in a small saucepan. Cook the tomato puree in a little oil until it starts to dry then add 500 ml / 1 pt of water or meat stock. Add the lemon juice or sumac water. Pour the tomato sauce over the zucchinis. Cover the saucepan and cook over a low heat for about 40 minutes or until the

sauce is thick or nearly dry. Turn off the heat and leave the zucchinis to stand for 5-10 minutes.

Then the stuffed zucchinis can be cut into 2-3 pieces or left whole and served on a dish, or they can be cooked in an ovenproof dish and served straight from the cooker.

Serve hot with salad.

Some mixed spices or pepper or cumin can be put in the mixture; this varies according to the habit of different families.

Yaprax: (Stuffed vegetables)

This dish is popular all over Kurdistan. It varies from place to place but is central to many a Kurdish feast. . The basic ingredients are rice, meat, onions and herbs and a variety of vegetables used to make the shells.

Many vegetable leaves and varieties of different vegetables are used to make the shells, such as tomatoes, onions, eggplants, zucchinis, green or coloured peppers, potatoes, cucumbers, turnips, even fruits like apples. All these vegetables can be made alone or many vegetables used together for preparing one yaprax dish.

Yaprax Têkelî: (Mixed vegetable yaprax)

General ingredients

500 g / 1 lb of breast of lamb in two pieces .

This is used to line the pan in which the yaprax are cooked

First make the



Shells

500 g / 1 lb Swiss chard, or beet leaves, or spinach or vine leaves

2 green peppers (**medium**) or other colours

2 medium eggplants (**eggplant**)

2 zucchinis (**zucchini**)

3 medium onions

2-3 medium fresh tomatoes

Choose leaves that are fresh, not torn or split, flat and not curling, this will make the stuffing easier. Cut the stem out of the chard, wash and if the chard leaves are hard, put the leaves in boiling water until they become tender; otherwise, use them as they are.

Remove the outer skins of the onion and slice off the top. Then make a cut lengthwise, in the onion down one side, the cut reaching through to the middle of the onion, but no further. Put in boiling water and leave in the water, which should be removed from the heat. Leave the onion in the water for about 5- 10 minutes. Take the onion out of the water and drain. Peel off each layer of the onion carefully and put to one side.

Wash the tomatoes and peppers and cut a thin slice off the top of each one. Scoop out the pulp and put it aside.

Wash the eggplants and zucchinis, cut off the tops and stems, and scoop out the pulp to make good shells. If the vegetables are big or long they can be cut in half across the middle so that two shells can be made of each vegetable. Put the pulp and the shells to one side in separate dishes.

Now all the shells are ready for stuffing.

Stuffing

400 g / 14 oz short grain rice (**long can be used**)

250 g / 8 oz minced lamb

2 medium onions, finely chopped

1 small bunch (**about 50 g / 2 oz**) of fresh finely chopped dill or 2

Tbsp dried dill

50 g / 2 oz chopped parsley or celery leaves

4 Tbsp oil

½ tsp black pepper

2 tsp ground cumin (**optional**)

3 Tbsp tomato puree fresh or canned tomatoes (**This is used to give the rice a red colour; the tomato puree should be lightly fried for 2 minutes in a little oil before using as this enhances the colour.**)

Chopped discarded chard stems and the pulp from the eggplants and tomatoes and zucchinis and any other vegetables used

2 Tbsp lemon juice or other sour ingredients, such as sour grapes, pomegranates, sumac, citric acid or tamarind.

Salt

Wash the rice and drain it. Fry the chopped pulp and stems in a little oil for 4-5 minutes to soften, add the tomato puree or tomatoes. Mix well and then add the minced meat and the chopped onion mix well and then add the herbs and seasoning. Take off the heat. Mix again and then add the mixture to the rice.

Assembling

Take a large saucepan, about 10 in / 25 cm in diameter, and place the pieces of meat to line the bottom of the pan.

Then stuff all the vegetables. First the onions, loosely, and pull one side of the onion over the other edge to close it. Arrange the onions on

top of the meat, packing them quite tightly so that they will not lose shape when cooking. Then stuff the leaves and the other vegetable shells loosely, to allow the rice room to expand. Then arrange the vegetables in layers over the stuffed onions. The stuffed leaves should be placed on top of the layers. Make sure the vegetables are packed closely to each other so that the stuffing does not fall out.

With your hand gently press down the stuffed vegetables to make sure they are wedged well, and then place a flat plate upside down over the vegetables. Traditionally a large flat stone would have been used or 2-3 small stones. This keeps the vegetables tightly packed. Put enough water in the pan to cover the vegetables, adding the lemon juice or other sour juice. Put the saucepan over a medium heat and bring to a boil. Then lower the heat and simmer for one hour or more if necessary, until the vegetables are cooked well. Remove the plate and cover the saucepan with a lid and leave over a very low heat for another 30 minutes. Turn off the heat and leave for a few minutes so that the yaprax makes a firm cake shape.

Then take a large flat serving dish and place it over the saucepan face down. Turn the two over together so that the 'cake' turns out onto the plate. The meat pieces will now be on top of the dish.

Serve hot with warm soft bread and fresh herbs and spring onions.

Yapraxî Elemi: (Stuffed Turnips)

1 kg / 2 lb turnips (6-8 turnips)
500 g / 1 lb fresh tomatoes or 2 Tbsp tomato puree
2 Tbsp oil
500 g / 1 lb minced lamb
100 g / 2 oz white long or short rice
100 g / 2 oz parsley and mint chopped together.
Salt and pepper

Skin the turnips (if wanted). Cut a hole in the top and scoop out the inside. Put it into some cold, salty water for about 10 minutes. Mix the minced meat with the herbs and salt and pepper. Take out of the water and allow to drain. Fill each turnip with the mixture and then place them side by side in a large pan, preferably in a single layer. Then chop the tomatoes and place in a sieve over a bowl to separate out the juice, or dilute the tomato puree in some water. Then pour the

tomato over the turnips. Then cover, bring to boil and then turn down to a slow heat and cook for about 30 minutes until the sauce thickens and the turnips soften.

Yaprax Cûleke: (Stuffed Zucchini)

1 kg / 2 lb zucchini
2-3 medium onions
50 g / 20 z white long grain rice
150 g / 5 oz olive oil
1 kg / 2 lb fresh tomatoes (3 Tbsp tomato puree can be used)
2 Tbsp almonds or pine kernels
2 Tbsp raisins
½ bunch fresh mint (1 Tbsp dried mint can be used)
1 Tbsp cumin
Salt
Pepper
1 or 2 tsp mixed spices (optional)
1 Tbsp sugar
200 g oil for frying
125 ml / ¼ pt boiling water

Put the rice in a bowl, cover with boiling water to wash it and leave it to cool. Chop the onions and fry them in oil. Add the pine kernels and fry with the onions. Add the cumin, salt, pepper and mixed spices and stir well. Drain the rice, wash it and drain again. Put the rice into the onion mixture, stir well and cook over a low heat for 10 minutes. Then finely chop the tomatoes and mix with the raisins, mint and sugar. Mix well with the rice and



then add the boiling water (125 ml / ¼ pt), cover the pan and cook slowly for about 10 minutes. Allow to cool.

Cut the zucchinis lengthwise into two and scoop out the pulp. Wash them and then fill each one with the rice mixture. Arrange the zucchinis on the bottom of a large flat pan in layers. If some of the water remains from cooking the rice and tomatoes pour this over the zucchinis. If there is no juice remaining, or not enough to cover then make a little sauce by mixing tomato puree with a little water to make a thin sauce. Cover with a lid and put over a low heat for 30 minutes. Leave to cool and serve cold.

Doklû be Kudû: (Yoghurt with stuffed zucchinis)

6 medium zucchinis (**zucchini**)
500 g / 1 lb minced lamb
1 medium onion, finely chopped
50 g almond flakes
1½ pt yoghurt
1½ pt water
Salt
Oil for frying
Mint (**optional**)

Wash and cut off one end of the zucchini. Using a very thin knife, very carefully scoop out the pulp, leaving the walls as thin as possible, but retaining a good shape and not punctured. Put the pulp aside. In a frying pan gently fry the shells on all sides for a couple of minutes and remove from the pan. Fry the chopped onion and the minced meat and the almond flakes together and add the seasoning. Fill the zucchinis with the fried mixture and arrange the zucchinis in a saucepan putting pulp, chopped, up around and between the zucchinis.

Add the water to the yoghurt to thin it and add a little salt and the mint if desired. Put in a saucepan and heat, stirring all the time until it comes to boil. Pour over the zucchinis. Cover the pan and put over a low heat for about 40 minutes.

Serve hot on a dish. A rich tomato sauce can be used instead of yoghurt.

Meat Dishes

Qawurme



There are many ways of preserving food in Kurdistan for the harsh winters and meat, like other foods, also has had to be preserved. Nowadays this has become for the most part a memory of times gone by although it is still done in more remote villages. In winter, preserved meat is used instead of fresh meat.

Basically the meat is fried well and then stored. The making of this fried meat, Qawurme, is a big event for the people as many other foods have to be made on the 3 or 4 days following the day of preparing Qawurme. We will come to those dishes linked to Qawurme, one by one. When a family decides to make Qawurme, they have to buy (**especially richer people**) 3-4 sheep at the beginning of summer and look after and feed them for 3-4 months until they become very big and fat. When the weather starts to get cold, they get ready for the celebration, preparing the things that they need, such as large copper pans and wood for fuel and the people needed to do the work. First of all the butcher is called to slaughter the sheep. He comes in the early morning on the appointed day, kills the sheep, one by one, and separates the meat and the offal from the bones and skin. The fat is also separated. Kurdish sheep are fat tailed and the large round lump of fat (dûg) can weigh 5 kg / 10 lb or more.

The meat is cut into small pieces, 3-4 in square. The fat is cut into small pieces and put in a large pan. Then it is put over heat. All the fat is melted and separated from the remaining stuff (it must be sieved). The meat pieces are washed and drained and salt is added. A lot of salt is added as qawurme is very salty in order to preserve the meat.

The melted fat from the sheep must be put in a large pan and put over the heat. The meat pieces should be added when it is hot enough.

The meat is fried well until quite hard. Some of the meat, which is to be eaten straight away or in the first months, is cooked for a shorter time and it is not so hard.

The inside of a piece of meat must be tested to find out if it is cooked through. Then the qawurme is removed from the heat and put aside to cool. While it is cooling, another job can be done, that of cleaning all the offal. The feet, head and stomach are cleaned well and made ready for the dish to be made the following day. Liver, lungs, kidneys and the throat are cleaned and prepared for barbecuing or for making into a special soup called tirsî (**different name in other regions**) which is made the same day as the qawurme. When the qawurme is quite cold, it is put in clay or glass jars, covered with melted fat (dûg), then the jar is sealed well and the qawurme is stored in a cold place to keep it for winter. When pieces of qawurme are taken from the jar during the winter, it must be resealed again.

Then come a number of dishes that are traditionally made after the qawurme is finished.

The first of these is a dish called gîpe. Usually members of the family, friends and neighbours come together to work on the remaining parts of the sheep.

The head must be cleaned well by using boiling water and a sharp knife to remove the hair. Then the head must be banged several times to remove the dirt from the nasal cavities and washed again.

The hair must also be cleaned from the feet by using boiling water and a sharp knife or by singeing the hair over the fire.

The stomach (**tripe**) also has to be cleaned thoroughly, using boiling water and a sharp knife. The tripe needs to be washed until it looks white, and then cut into small pieces of about 6 in. squares. Each piece of tripe is folded over and sewn up on two sides to make a small sack, stuffed with rice, minced meat and spices and then sewn shut. These are called gîpe. The gîpe, together with the feet and heads are put in a large copper saucepan, covered with boiling water and put on a slow heat. They are left to cook overnight, although they do need to be watched and stirred from time to time.

In the morning the dish is ready and is sent to relatives, friends and neighbours to share in the celebration.

Gîpe:

To make a small amount:

1 large tripe from sheep or lamb

500 g / 1 lb minced lamb meat

500 g / 1 lb rice

75 g / 3 oz raisins

50 g / 2 oz almond flakes

1 tsp cumin

½ tsp each cinnamon, cardamom, cloves, black pepper and turmeric
(the spices are optional and should be used according to taste, for example in the north spices are not used, except for cinnamon)

Salt

1 lamb or sheep head already cleaned (**optional**)

4 or more lamb or sheep feet (**ready cleaned in hot water and scraped**)

Put the head, tongue and the feet in a large saucepan on the heat and leave to boil until tender.

Cut the cleaned tripe into 6-8 in square pieces and sew up each piece to make a small sack. There should be about 6 sacks in total, although there can be fewer or more depending on what size is preferred.

Fry the minced meat, almonds and raisins, then, when ready, add half of the seasoning.

Wash the rice and drain it. Mix the rice with the fried ingredients.

Stuff the sacks loosely with the rice mixture; prick each sack with a fork in several places to enable rice to cook. The sack should be about half full leaving room for the rice to expand.

Put the stock from the boiled feet, tongue and head in a saucepan. Heat the stock and the ready-stuffed sacks in the boiling stock. Leave to cook gently for 2-3 hours. Then add the cooked head, feet and tongue to the gıpe, add the remaining seasoning and leave to simmer for another hour on a low heat.

Put in a large dish. Serve hot with crispy bread, salad and fresh herbs.

Keşkek:

Continuing the celebrations, another dish has to be prepared (**Keşk**), from the bones of the sheep and some skinned wheat, which has been soaking over night in cold water. The bones and the wheat are put in a large copper saucepan and covered with water and put on a heat to cook. After one hour the heat is reduced to very low. A lid put on and the dish is left to cook over night. It needs to be stirred slowly from time to time to prevent sticking. It becomes a very smooth, creamy sauce or sup. Then salt is added, the heat turned off and the saucepan is left, covered, for about an hour to settle. In the early morning, this dish is also sent to friends, relatives and neighbours.

The important thing is making these dishes at night. The people who help or watch the cooking or do the stirring have a party, dancing, singing, nibbling from the early evening until the food is ready in the morning.

How to make a small amount of Keşkek:

500 g / 1 lb skinned wheat or barley
500 g / 1 lb meat with bones, cut into 6 pieces
Salt

Wash the wheat and soak in cold water overnight.

Put the meat and the wheat together in a saucepan. Cover with boiling water and cook for approximately 2 hours, until the wheat and the meat are soft. Add more water if necessary. Add salt. Stir several times until it becomes smooth and creamy. Lower the heat to simmer for another 30 minutes.

Serve hot or cold.

In some regions people make another dish at the end of the celebrations using vegetables. The most popular is silqaw or keşkaw, made from spinach or Swiss chard. This dish is prepared for the family only.

(See the THICK SOUP section).

Fried Liver:

500 g / 1 lb lamb or beef liver
2 medium onions
Salt
Oil for frying

Chop the liver into small cubes, or slice finely. Slice the onion into rings. Fry the onion until just soft. Add the chopped liver to the fried onion and cook stirring occasionally over a medium heat. Sprinkle with salt, lower the heat and leave the mixture to cook until almost dry, but still juicy (**no longer than 5 minutes, otherwise the liver gets very dry and rubbery**). Chopped parsley or celery can be added to this dish while it is cooking.

Serve with salads, chopped onions, pickles, fresh herbs and mastaw (yoghurt drink).

Kidneys and lungs can be fried in the same way. Lamb meat or poultry can be cut into small pieces and fried in the same way.

Basturme: (Spicy sausages)

Basturme is a way that meat is stored in a dry form for a long time in winter particularly in central and northern Kurdistan.

There is a very old town in central Kurdistan near Duhok called Basturme which seems to have given its name to a spicy sausage known all over the Middle East. Certainly it is true that Basturme is made all over that region with many varieties.

1 kg / 2 lb minced mutton

8 cloves or one medium head of garlic crushed

Salt

2 tsp pepper

2 tsp cumin or other spices as desired **(each family has its own preference)**

Lamb intestines for the sausage skin

Mix the minced meat with the crushed garlic, salt and pepper and spices. Wash the intestines well in salty water if not already cleaned.

Fill the clean intestines with the minced meat mixture, pushing small amounts of the meat in with your finger bit by bit until it starts to come out the other end. Close the ends well, either tying them with string or with the end of the intestine itself.

Twist the intestines at regular intervals to make separate sausages.

Hang them in a cool and dry place until they dry. Usually about 7 days. Store in a cool place like a larder **(pantry)**.

It is sliced and cut into small pieces and then it is cooked. Then it is used for preparing different kinds of Kurdish dishes. It can be sliced and baked like a kebab. It is used with rice or bread. It can be served with salad and fresh herbs. The most popular way of serving basturme is to fry it with eggs and eat it with bread.

Hewlêr Basturme: (Veal basturme from Hewlêr)

This is a way of storing meat so the quantity depends on how much you want to make. You can use one kilo or ten kilos. This is a good way of storing meat through a cold winter, when all is covered with snow. The spicy meat is very warming and comforting.

Cut the meat into 4-8 in pieces and wash well and put in a sieve to drain to make sure all the juice leaves the meat. In Kurdistan, a straw sieve is used. The meat is seasoned with fenugreek and garlic. For one kilo, use 1 Tbsp of ground fenugreek seeds, a head of chopped garlic and 2 Tbsp of coarse salt. Mix the garlic and fenugreek together and then place each piece of meat in this mixture to coat it on all sides.

Again place in a sieve to extract more juices from the meat, for a couple of hours. Then shake the meat to remove the salt. Then salt and spice again and put in an earthenware container and put a heavy lid on it. Store in a cool and dark place. This basturme is used instead of fresh meat in the winter. In this way meat is preserved for a long time.

One piece of this meat is taken out, chopped into small pieces and fried with eggs for breakfast. It can be fried with onions, potatoes or vegetables as a winter dish.

Ranî Berx be Mast: (Leg of lamb in yoghurt)

1½ kg / 3 lb small leg of lamb

3 Tbsp yoghurt

1 Tbsp wheat flour

1 Tbsp tomato puree

Garlic bulb (or less or none if preferred)

Salt

Pepper

Fresh herbs, parsley, mint, spring onions, tarragon

Preheat oven to 200C / 400F / Gas Mark 6.

Clean the cloves of garlic. Make deep holes with a knife all over the leg of the lamb and insert the cloves of garlic into the holes and put the leg into a casserole dish. Mix the tomato puree, yoghurt, salt and pepper together and pour over the lamb; cover it all over. Leave the lamb to marinate for 3-5 hours in the refrigerator.

Cover the dish with foil or a tight fitting lid and put into a preheated oven for 40 minutes. Then turn the leg over, cover again and cook for another 40 minutes. Test with a knife to check that the meat is tender and no blood runs.

Serve hot on a dish with pickles, fresh herbs as a garnish or with fresh green.

An optional variation is to add 2 Tbsp of sour grape or lemon juice or pomegranate juice to the marinade.

FISH DISHES



Fish has never been very popular in most parts of Kurdistan, only amongst those who live near rivers or lakes. Around Sulemani fish has rarely been eaten. The creation of two artificial lakes (also one near Duhok) some forty years ago has resulted in fish appearing in the market. Various freshwater fish such as hatûne (trout), panke (flatfish), zerdemasî also keştene (carp sometimes known as yellow fish) and sûremasî (red fish, red mullet) and cat fish (smêle), eel (marmasî) and gold fish (rangîn) are known. The fish is baked on large trays outside restaurants attracting people with delicious smells. Fish is also fried and stewed with various vegetables.

Şiley Masî: (Fish stew)

Fish in Kurdistan is freshwater fish found in the many rivers and lakes in the mountains. Fish is not eaten very often. Mostly it is fried, but there are some simple stews.

1 kg / 2 lb of white fish, descaled, cleaned and cut into 5-6 cm pieces

1 large onion finely sliced

500 g / 8 oz fresh tomatoes sliced finely

150 ml / 6 fl oz water

Cumin

Pepper

Salt

1 Tbsp sumac powder dissolved in 2 Tbsp water or the juice of one lemon

Oil for frying



Heat the oil and fry the onions for a few minutes then add the fish pieces, and fry them for 5 minutes. Add the tomato slices, stirring gently; add the seasoning, lemon juice and water and cover. Cook over a very low heat for 15-20 minutes.

Serve hot with cooked rice or with thin flat bread.

Fried Fish:

1 kg / 2 lb white fish or local fish

Whole tirs or sumac berries

Salt

Clean the fish. If they are small leave whole; otherwise, cut into pieces. Cover the fish with sumac berries and sprinkle with salt. The fish is then put

on straw trays or into a colander and covered with a piece of kitchen paper or a cotton towel. Put a heavy weight, on top of the fish, either a board or some other heavy object. Leave over night or for several hours. The next day remove all of the sumac by lifting up each piece of fish and shaking off the berries. Then the fish is deep fried until slightly brown.



The fish picks up the taste of the sumac over night and is quite delicious.

Serve hot with salad or spring onions.

Instead of being deep fried, the fish can instead be grilled over charcoal. In this case it can first be brushed with oil.

Lemon juice can be used instead of sumac, but it is not the same.

Baked Fish:

A large whole fish can be baked in the oven. In this case it would be placed in a baking dish and covered with sliced tomatoes and onion rings and sprinkled with salt. Then cover with tin foil and cook in a moderate oven for about 1 hour, then remove the foil and cook for another 15-20 minutes until the top of the fish becomes golden or dried. If not using an oven, the fish would be put on a metal tray over low heat, and then covered with another tray and charcoal place on top. Check from time to time to see if it is cooked.

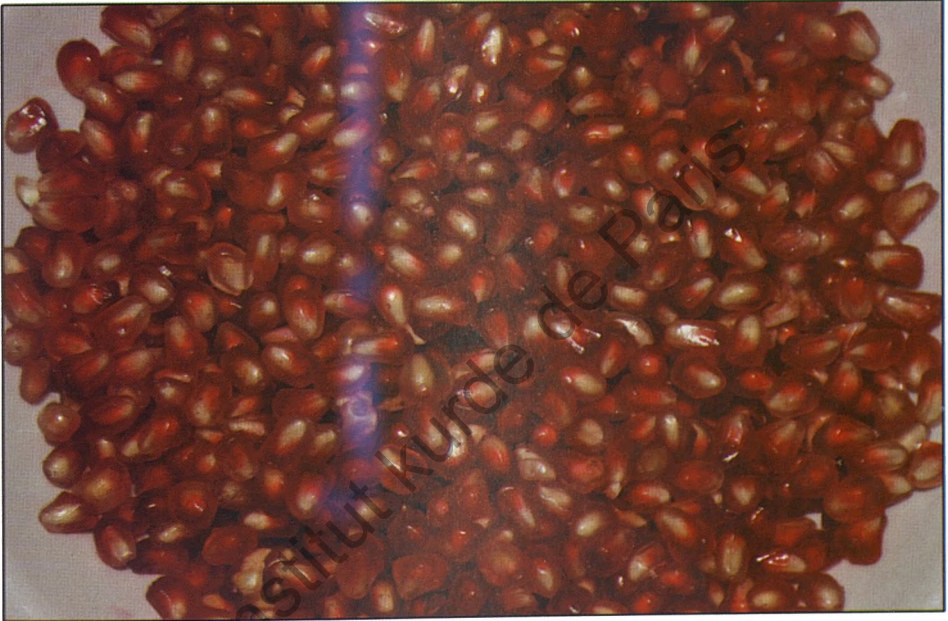


Serve with soft bread, herbs and salad.

Fish Şifte:

Make the şifte exactly like meat şifte except use the same amount of deboned white fish. Again as with meat şiftes these can be baked or fried.

MEZZE



The word means tasty things. Nowadays this food is most popular amongst the Kurds and is served with alcoholic drinks or soft drinks. Traditionally alcoholic drinks were made from pomegranate juice and kept in a large stone or concrete container inside the house. Beer (**bûze**) was also made.

This is served before a main meal. Mezze are either cold as appetizers or snacks, but none of these words give exact explanation of mezza. The varieties of cooked and uncooked foods are served like starters with drinks.

In one sitting a large variety of dishes are served: yoghurt, cheese, nuts, small pastries, grilled and cooked meats and poultry, liver, chick peas and beans, many different fresh and cooked vegetable dishes, salads, fruits or stuffed vine leaves and many other different kinds of foods. These are served on small dishes in small amounts.

About one hour or more before the meal, people start to nibble on these delicious foods. This meal is now a very important one. Serving this meal for special occasions is different from place to place and from village to town and has seasonal variations. Among all the different kinds of mezze, the pickles, vegetables and salads are the most popular. Pickles are widely prepared in the region which are made from various fruits and vegetables in black grape vinegar.



PICKLES



In Kurdistan pickling is one of the best ways to preserve vegetables and some kinds of fruits for the long winter months when there are few fresh vegetables and fruits available. Many recipes are standard but every family has its own particular recipes and they are considered very special.

These pickles are used instead of salads in the winter and many kinds of vegetables can be pickled including eggplants, cabbage, cauliflower, cucumber, green beans, French beans, green tomatoes, chillies, green peppers and others. They are simple to make.

Wash the vegetables, dry and clean, cutting off any stems, and either leave whole or slice and put into clean, sterilized jars. Then cover with salty water that has been boiled and left to cool.

Most vegetables are left in the brine for at least a week, sometimes up to three weeks. Then drain the water off. Remove the vegetables from the jar, and put in another clean jar and cover with vinegar made from grapes (**wine vinegar, mostly red, is used**). Keep in a cool place (**such as outside in the yard during winter, out of the sun**).

Another way to prepare the vegetables is to put them in salty vinegar that must be boiled and cooled before covering the vegetables. The vinegar must always cover the vegetables. The jar is sealed and the pickle left for 2-3 weeks before it can be used. Cauliflower and cabbage should always be cut into small pieces.

Some fruits are used in making pickles, for example, small hard pears and unripe, sour plums and very small watermelons (**3-4 cm in diameter**). Garlic, wild garlic, onions and olives are also used to make pickles. They are always put into salty water for at least two weeks, before being put in vinegar. The salty solution is made from half a pound of salt and 8 pints of water. The vegetables are put in this salty solution, left for at least two weeks, then drained and put in the vinegar. The vegetables are left in the vinegar for two weeks before they are used. Normally the vinegar is made from black grape juice, although white grapes are also used. The grapes are put in a large jar and left in a warm place for six to eight weeks until they change to vinegar. Then the grapes are squeezed through a sieve and the juice is put on a heat and brought to a boil and then cooled.

Make sure that all tools, spoons, bowls, jars and hands are clean and dried well.

The amount of salt can be varied according to taste; more can be added than the recipe if a very salty pickle is preferred.

Şêlim be Tirş: (Turnip pickle)

Autumn is the usual time for making this pickle before the winter sets in.

1 kg / 2 lb turnips
500 g / 1 lb red beetroots or dark red carrots
250 g / 8 oz carrots (**optional**)
1½ l / 3 pt water, more if necessary
100-150 g / 4-5 oz salt

Peel and wash the vegetables, slice them into pieces of 3 cm x 1 cm (bigger or smaller according to preference). Place slices in a clean sterilized jar. Dissolve the salt in water and bring to a boil. Leave to cool. Pour the water over the vegetable jar, making sure that the vegetables are completely covered. Do not overfill the jar, there should be 3-4 cm left at the top. Put on a clean lid. Store for at least two weeks at room temperature . A white film will appear on top of the pickle; this is a natural bacterial reaction, part of the pickling process. Don't use the pickle until this film disappears, as this is the sign that it is ready.

This pickle is often used for meze (**appetizers**) or with starters or meals.

Tirşiyatî Xeyar: (Cucumber pickle)

1 kg / 2 lb small cucumbers (8-10 cm max)

75 g / 3 oz salt

1 l / 2 pt water

Red wine vinegar to cover

Dissolve the salt in water; bring to a boil and leave to cool. Wash the cucumbers and dry them. Put them in a jar and add the cold, salty water, cover and leave for 1-2 weeks. Drain the water from the jar and cover the cucumbers with the vinegar and leave for about two weeks. Then serve whole or cut lengthways into four pieces or slice.



Serve along side salads or just with rice or kebabs.

Tirşiyatî Piyaz: (Onion pickle)

1 kg / 2 lb small onions

100 g / 4 oz salt

1 l / 2 pt water, more if necessary

White wine vinegar

Peel the onion. Add the salt to the water in a saucepan and bring to a boil. Remove from the heat. While it is coming to a boil, put the onions either in a large clay jar or in separate glass jars. When the water boils, turn off the heat. After a few minutes pour over the onions and cover immediately. They are ready to eat after a few days. They are eaten with other pickles or are mixed with other pickles to get a vinegary taste.

Alternatively the onions can be taken out of the water after a few days and put into a jar and covered with vinegar or a vinegar and sugar solution. (**200 g sugar to 1 litre water**). Cover and store.

White garlic cloves can be done in the same way.

Tirşiyatî Zeytûn: (Pickled olive)

1 kg / 2 lb olives

150 g / 7 oz salt

1½ l / 3 pt water

White or red vinegar

Prepare the brine as above. Make a small slit in each olive and put them in cold water for 2-3 weeks until the bitterness has gone. The water must be changed every day. If the cut is not made, it will take much longer for the bitterness to leave.

Then remove from the water and put in the prepared brine. Cover and keep for a week. Then drain off the water and cover with vinegar. These olives are often mixed with other pickles at this stage.

Tirşiyatî Kernebît: (Cauliflower pickle)

1 medium cauliflower

Salt

Red or white wine vinegar

Cut the cauliflower into florets, wash them in salty water and drain them. Put the florets in a bowl, sprinkle with salt (**150 g / 5 oz**) and leave for 2-3 hours. Then drain the cauliflower, put in a sterilized jar and cover with vinegar. Leave for at least two weeks at a room temperature.

Tirşiyatî Hermê: (Pickled pears)

This pickle requires hard pears (**Hermê Naske**), with a hard texture but sweet. Usually wild ones have a lovely sweet, salty flavour.

1 kg / 2 lb pears
100 g / 4 oz salt
1½ l / 3 pt vinegar

Wash and dry the pears. Heat the salt with the vinegar and cool. Then put the pears in a jar and cover completely with the vinegar. Leave for at least 3-4 weeks. Slice before serving.

Tirşiyatî Bayîncan: (Eggplant / eggplant pickle)

1 kg / 2 lb of baby eggplants (3-6 cm)
200 g / 7 oz mix of chopped garlic, parsley, pepper or chilis, or mixed spices
1½ l / 3 pt wine vinegar
150 g / 7 oz salt

Remove the stems of the eggplants and make a lengthways cut down one side. Don't push the knife through to the other side. Place the eggplants into boiling water for 1-2 minutes. Drain them.

Make a small hole through the crack with your finger and press inside the eggplant to make a space. Fill the hole with the garlic mixture. Close the hole and tie with a thin parsley stem or a thread, making sure it is tightly closed. Boil the vinegar with salt and cool it. Put the stuffed eggplants in a jar, then add the salty vinegar until the eggplants are completely covered. Put for 2-3 months in a cool place.

Take care not to use wet hands or a wet spoon when taking the pickles out of the jar.

The other method is to use salty water for a week and then drain and cover with plain vinegar. This is good for large quantities as it can be kept for a long time.

Tirşiyatî Xeyar 2: (Stuffed Cucumber Pickle)

The same method can be used for making stuffed cucumbers as for eggplants.

Xeyarî Wirdkiraw or Trît Xeyar: (Chopped Cucumber Pickles)

- 2 medium cucumbers
- 1 medium head of celery with leaves
- 1 head of garlic **(optional)**
- 50 g / 2 oz of unripe qezwan nuts **(when still soft and sour, they are like small green berries) (optional)**
- 1½ l / 3 pt red wine vinegar to cover **(1 medium beetroot can be used to colour the pickle if red vinegar is not available)**
- 100 g / 4 oz salt

Cut the cucumbers lengthways and remove the seeds and then chop into small pieces, 1 cm cubes. Chop the celery into the same size as the cucumber cubes. Finely chop the celery leaves. Chop the garlic and the beetroot if used; wash the qezwan if available. Mix all the ingredients in a bowl. Pour boiling water onto it to wash them and then drain off. Put the mixture in a glass jar. Boil the vinegar with salt. Leave to cool and then cover the vegetables completely with the vinegar. Cover the jar and leave for two weeks before using.

Normally this pickle has a red colour so if using white wine vinegar, the beetroot is cut and added to the vegetables, covered with the vinegar and salt mix.

Tirşîyatî Têkel: (Mixed pickle)

- Small green tomatoes
- Green beans, young, small and fresh
- Cauliflower cut into florets
- Cabbage, coarse, shredded or chopped
- Small cucumbers
- Small green peppers
- Chilis
- Green unripe plums

Make salty water **(1 cup salt to 8 cups water)** and put in a pan; boil and cool it. Put each of the ingredients in a separate bowl, cover with the salty water and leave for about seven days.

Then drain off the salty water and put all the vegetables in a large glass or clay container and pour the cooled red vinegar over the vegetables. Cover the container. After three days it is ready to eat.



Tirşîyatî sîr Ecem: (Wild garlic pickle)

Clean and wash the garlic. Place in water for 3-4 days. After 3 days, drain off the water and wash the garlic. Drain and place in a container with salty water. After 3-4 days, drain again and put in a container. Cover with vinegar that has been boiled and cooled.

RICE & BULGUR DISHES



Qubûlî:

This dish is the most common way of cooking rice and is used daily especially in Sulemani Province.

500 g / 1 lb white rice (long, medium or short grain)

500 ml / 1 pt water (or meat or chicken stock), more if necessary

1 small onion
150 ml / 5 fl oz cooking oil or 100 g / 3 oz butter (**can be reduced according to taste**)
50 g / 2 oz yellow split peas

Mix together the rice and the split peas in a bowl. Wash gently and leave in cold water to soak for 10 - 15 minutes. (**Italian short grain rice does not need soaking**).

Heat the oil, add the finely chopped onion, and fry until just changing colour. Pour in the water or stock, add salt, and bring to a boil. Pour the rice and peas into the boiling liquid over a medium heat, stirring once or twice and leave to boil until the water is nearly absorbed and the rice is nearly cooked.

Put on the lid, lower the heat and simmer gently for 15 minutes.

Pile the cooked rice on a flat dish or tray. Serve with fried or boiled meat or poultry or with Kurdish stews. This rice is often eaten with thin bread which can be used instead of a spoon or fork.

Pilau:

500 g / 1 lb long grain rice
100-200 g / 4-7 oz ghee (**some people like it rather oily**)
50 g / 2 oz flaked almonds
50 g / 2 oz raisins
½ Tbsp ground cumin (**optional**)

A piece of thin bread or pita bread or thinly sliced potatoes

Wash the rice in cold water and leave to soak for at least 15 minutes, several hours is better or even overnight. It is said that the better the quality, the longer it should be soaked as this improves the flavour.

Boil a large saucepan of water and throw the rice into the boiling water. A little salt should be added. Boil for between 3-5 minutes or until a grain of rice can be squeezed between your fingers and it is a little soft. Drain the rice immediately and add the cumin (**optional**) to the rice in the sieve.



Oil the bottom of the saucepan and cover with the flat bread or sliced potato. Pile the rice carefully into the pan leaving the edges free, make four holes in the rice to let out the steam. Heat the remaining oil until it smokes and pour the hot oil over the rice carefully and slowly to oil all the sides of the rice. Cover with a piece of kitchen paper or towel and put on a lid. Cook over a very low heat for 20-40 minutes.

There is a tried and tested way of knowing when the rice is ready. Wet your index finger and touch the side of the saucepan (**about an inch from the bottom**) very quickly and lightly. If you hear a psst sound, the rice is ready if there is no sound, then the rice still needs a few minutes and you can do the finger test again and again until it is ready. Then fry the almonds and add the raisins into the oil. Do this quickly as they can burn easily. Put to one side.

Pile the rice into a serving dish or turn the pan over to keep the rice in a mound. The bread or potatoes come out in one piece, either with the rice or with gentle persuasion. It is considered a sign of well cooked rice if it comes out in one piece. Put the bread or potatoes over the top of the rice or to one side. It should be nice and crispy. Garnish with the almonds and raisins.

Serve hot with stews and meat dishes. Some people like to use more oil, some less, not putting any on top of the rice.

Perde Pilau: (Rice covered with bread or pastry - 4 persons)

Traditionally a special cone or helmet shaped metal dish is used to cook the rice in; however, a non-stick pan can be used. All that will be different is the shape in the end.

Thin bread or ready-made filo pastry can be used. If making the pastry use this recipe:

Pastry

200 g / 7 oz plain flour

1 egg

1 Tbsp oil

A little water

Aalt

Mix all the ingredients together and knead well until the dough is stiff, adding water to soften if necessary. Leave for 10 minutes.

Roll the dough in a large round shape, it should be as thin as paper.



Oil well a suitable saucepan, lift the pastry gently and put in the saucepan. Cover the bottom and the sides of the saucepan, leaving the edges draped over the saucepan like a piece of cloth and put to one side until the rice is ready.

Rice

500 g / 1 lb rice (**long grain**)

Cooking oil or butter (**for oiling the saucepan**)

250 g / 8 oz minced meat (**lamb**)

½ cup almond flakes and sultanas or raisins

1 Tbsp mixed ground spice (**cumin, cinnamon, cardamom, cloves, pepper; this mixture can vary according to taste**)

1 Tbsp wheat flour

Salt

Wash the rice and leave in cold water for about 10 minutes. Cook the rice in lightly salted water until slightly softened on the outside but firm inside, about 3-5 minutes. Drain it in a sieve and run cold water through it to stop the cooking process.

Mix the minced meat with the flour and salt and combine well. (For extra flavour, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp of ground cumin can be added to the mixture). Make 12-15 small balls from the meat mixture and fry them in a little oil. Remove from the oil and keep to one side

Fry the almonds and sultanas in the same oil and mix with the meatballs and spices.

Oil the bottom and sides of the saucepan making sure that it is fully covered. Line the saucepan with the pastry making sure there is plenty hanging over the edge. Then add the rice and meatball mixture in alternating layers. Bring the edges of the pastry together over the top of the rice. Seal the edges. Make a few small holes (5) on the top of the pastry.

Heat the rest of the oil and pour over the pastry. Put a lid on and cook in a moderate oven for about 40 minutes or until the bread is golden. Remove from the oven and leave for 5-10 minutes.

Tip the pan upside down on a flat dish and serve hot with Kurdish stews *şile (tirşî)*.

Qubûlî be Tirş: (Rice cooked with pomegranate puree)

5g / 1 lb rice (long or short grain, although normally short is used)

500 ml / 1 pt of water or meat stock (more water if necessary, but this dish uses less water than others because juice is used instead)

1 Tbsp tomato puree

2 Tbsp pomegranate syrup (it must be sour)

2-3 Tbsp oil or butter (although some people like this very oily and use more oil)

Salt

75 g / 3 oz coarsely chopped walnuts

100 g / 4 oz raisins

Oil for frying the walnuts and raisins



Wash the rice gently and leave in cold water for about 10 minutes. Heat the oil, add the tomato puree and stir 2-3 times. Pour in the meat stock and bring to a boil. Add the pomegranate puree. **(If it is not sour, add some sumac or tamarind juice or lemon juice to the pomegranate solution)**. Add salt and bring to a boil.

Pour the rice into the sauce, stirring 2-3 times gently to make sure it does not stick; leave to cook on medium heat until the water is absorbed.

Put the lid on, lower the heat and simmer gently 15-20 minutes or until soft. Check that the rice is not burning which might need a little gentle stirring.

Fry the walnuts until lightly coloured, add the raisins, mix together and remove from the heat.

Put the rice on a large flat dish and garnish with the mixture **(walnut and raisins)** Serve hot with cooked or fried meat or poultry or with special Kurdish stews *şile (tirşî)*.

Pilau Paql: (Rice with broad beans)

500 g / 1 lb rice (long grain, basmati is best)

200 g / 7 oz shelled broad beans (fresh or dried and soaked over night)

50 g / 2 oz chopped fresh dill
or one small bunch (2 Tbsp dried can be used instead)

2-4 Tbsp oil (corn or sunflower) or ghee / butter
(the amount depends on how rich a taste you like)

Salt

1 tsp saffron which has been soaked in 2 Tbsp boiling water for at least half an hour, but if left for several hours the colour will be better

1 piece of thin bread, like pita



Remove the skin from the broad beans and split them. This is time consuming but the colour is fantastic. Canned ones can also be used, and, in some Iranian shops, ready skinned frozen ones can be found.

Heat the oil and add the broad beans and the chopped dill. Stir for several minutes and remove from the heat.

Wash the rice and put in a large pan full of fast boiling water sufficient to well cover the rice. Add a little salt, cook until slightly soft to the touch about 4-5 minutes and then drain in a colander. Run some cold water over the rice in the colander.

Heat 2 Tbsp of oil in a medium saucepan for a minute and cover the bottom with a layer of the thin bread. (If the bread is thick a little more oil might be necessary, or a layer of thinly sliced raw potatoes can also be used). Sprinkle with a thin layer of the rice then a thin layer of the broad beans and dill mix and then the rice again, alternating until there is a final layer of rice on the top.



The rice and bean mix can be gently mixed in a bowl before hand and then put over the bread. Make sure the rice does not stick to the edge of the pan and is heaped in the middle. Make four or five holes through the mound of rice to help the steam escape.

Sprinkle drops of the saffron water over the rice, and then cover the rice with a tight lid, which can be wrapped in a tea towel to catch the steam. Leave over a very low heat for 20-30 minutes. Take off the lid and gently spoon the rice onto a serving dish. The bread or potatoes will be fried in a solid piece, which can be lifted off the bottom of the pan and served separately or put over the rice. A non-stick pan is helpful.

The dish can be decorated with some small pieces of fried chicken or lamb or some meatballs.

Qubûlî Sûr: (Red Rice)

This dish is a favourite in the Halabja region and is eaten with fried meat or other stews.

500 g / 1 lb short grain rice

500 ml / 1 pt water or meat stock **(use more if necessary, less if tomato juice is used)**

1 small onion, finely chopped **(optional)**

2 Tbsp tomato puree or 1 teacup fresh tomato juice

3 Tbsp oil or ghee

Salt

Wash the rice and leave to soak in cold water for 10-15 minutes. Heat the oil and add the finely chopped onion and fry until it changes in colour. Add the tomato puree or tomato juice stirring for 1-2 minutes and then add the salt and the water. Bring to a boil and pour the rice into the pan and mix well. Leave to simmer over a medium heat until the water is nearly absorbed. Cover with a tightly fitted lid and leave over a very low heat for 10 minutes or until the rice is soft.

Pile the cooked rice on a serving dish and garnish with fried poultry or lamb or serve with stews.

Sawar, Bulgur, Pilau Sawar: (Bulgur Pilau)

500 g / 1 lb coarse bulgur

2 Tbsp of fine noodles (**herište in Kurdish, optional**)

1½ pt meat stock (**lamb or chicken**)

3 Tbsp oil

500 g / 1 lb lamb or any other meat in large cubes

Salt

Put the meat in a saucepan, add hot water and salt and boil until soft. Drain the meat and fry it lightly if desired. Put the meat stock in a saucepan and put over a medium heat adding a little water to bring up to 1½ pt. Bring to a boil.

Meanwhile wash the bulgur and drain, then pour it into the boiling stock. Leave to boil over a medium heat until the water is nearly absorbed. Cover the saucepan, lower the heat, and leave to simmer for about 30 minutes. Heat the oil until it smokes and pour over the bulgur.

Put the bulgur on a flat serving dish. Garnish with the pieces of fried onions or fried meat. This dish can be served with stew, fried meats, kebabs or vegetables or just onion and served with pickles and salad also, without any meat.

A spoonful of tomato puree can be fried with the meat if wanted.



Sawar Birinc Pilau: (Pilau made of rice and bulgur)

200 g / 7 oz bulgur

200 g / 7 oz long grain rice

50 g / 2 oz yellow split peas

2 Tbsp raisins

50 g / 2 oz oil or butter (**or more if desired**)

25 g / 1 oz noodles

A piece of thin bread or a finely sliced potato

Salt

570 ml / 1 pt water or meat stock, (**might need more**)

Wash the rice and leave in cold water for 15 minutes then drain.

Meanwhile wash the bulgur and drain. Put the bulgur in a saucepan and add half of the water and some salt and bring to a boil. Lower the heat and leave to absorb the water. Cover to simmer for 10 minutes. Add more water if necessary as some bulgur can be very hard.

Put the split peas in a saucepan, cover with some water and bring to boil, cook until soft and then drain.

Put the remaining half of the measured water in a saucepan, add the rice (**drained**) and split peas and the noodles and raisins. Mix together and bring to a boil. Lower the heat and cook until all the water is absorbed. Cover the saucepan and leave to simmer for 10-15 minutes. Put half of the oil in another medium sized saucepan, cover the bottom with the thin bread, then sprinkle the rice mixture in and cover with the bulgur. Alternatively the rice and bulgur are mixed together before sprinkling into the saucepan.

Heat the remaining oil until it begins to smoke and pour on top of the pilau. Cover and simmer on a very low heat for 10-15 minutes.

Remove from the heat and turn upside down over a flat dish, the crispy bread should come out in one piece, and it might need coaxing out. Place the bread on top of the rice.

Pilau Genime Kutraw: (Pilau made of skinned wheat or pearl barley)

This is a traditional dish in which wheat is substituted for rice. Nowadays some people use pearl barley if wheat is not available. Traditionally the wheat has its skin removed in a wooden pestle and mortar. The wheat is wet when this is done. Then when it dries the skin can be thrown away easily.

500 g / 1 lb skinned wheat washed and soaked for 2 hours

500 g / 1 lb stewing lamb cut into cubes 3-4 cm

4 Tbsp oil or ghee

Salt

1 l / 1½ pt meat stock (**more or less depending on the wheat**)

Place the meat in a saucepan, add the water, put over the heat and add the salt. Leave to boil until the meat is soft. Drain the meat. Put the meat stock on the heat.

Drain the wheat and add it to the boiling stock. The stock must cover the grain well, by about 3 in. Add water if necessary. Boil for 5 minutes then reduce the heat and simmer gently, preferably putting the pan over a heat diffuser to make sure that the grain do not burn.

Cover the saucepan and leave for about an hour on the lowest heat. Or until the grain is soft, stirring occasionally to prevent sticking.

Fry the cooked meat and remove from the oil. Add the remaining hot oil to the cooked grain.

Pile the cooked grain in a serving dish and garnish with the fried meat. Serve hot with stew or just with the fried meat. **(In Hewlêr there is a tradition of serving this dish with boiled, grilled or fried sparrows).**

Qubûlî Sawar:

500 g / 1 lb bulgur (coarse)

1 l / 1½ pt meat stock or water

1 medium onion or a large one, finely chopped (optional)

4 Tbsp oil

2 Tbsp tomato puree (optional)

Salt

Heat the oil in a medium sized saucepan and add the chopped onion and fry until slightly brown. Add the tomato puree if using it and stir in and cook for 1 minute, then add the water and bring to a boil. Meanwhile wash the bulgur, then drain it and add it to the boiling water. Leave to boil on a moderate heat until the juice is nearly absorbed. Cover the saucepan and leave to simmer for 20 minutes over a low heat. If possible use a defuser between the pan and the heat to avoid sticking and burning.

Pile the Qubûlî on a serving plate. It can be garnished with fried onion rings and fried meat. Serve hot with fried tomatoes and salad, with pickles, with onion salad or thinly sliced onion. Another way is to serve it with yoghurt or fried dates or honey.

Qubûlî Qerexerman: (Toasted green wheat)

500 g / 1 lb of coarse grain green wheat (**frik**)
1 l / 1½ pint water or stock (**can be adjusted**)
2 Tbsp ghee or cooking oil (**more can be used**)
1 medium onion, finely chopped
Salt

Wash the green wheat well and drain it. Heat the ghee or oil, add the chopped onion and fry until it starts to change colour. Pour on the water and add the salt. Bring to boil and add the wheat and bring back to boil. Simmer on a medium heat, stirring occasionally, until the water is nearly absorbed. Lower the heat and add more water if necessary, that is if the wheat is still hard. Cover with a well-fitting lid and leave to cook slowly for 20-30 minutes.

When it is ready, pile on a tray or plate. It can be decorated with raisins or fried meat. Serve with stews, or fried meat or poultry or salad and always with fresh herbs parsley, mint, dill, tarragon, celery, lovage or spring onions.

Çin çin Pilau: (Layered Pilau)

1 kg / 2 lb long grain rice
4 egg yolks lightly beaten
500 ml / 1 pt thick yoghurt
1 tsp ground saffron
3 Tbsp oil or ghee
2 Tbsp butter
1 medium chicken
Salt

Cut the chicken into 8 pieces or more. Boil in lightly salted water. Cook for about 30 minutes and then drain and leave it to cool.

Put the saffron in a tablespoon of hot water in a small cup or dish. Mix the egg yolks with the yoghurt then add half the saffron and water. Put the chicken pieces in the yoghurt mixture and leave them for 2-3 hours.

Wash the rice and cook in lightly salted water until nearly soft and then drain it.

Remove the chicken from the yoghurt mixture and mix the remaining yoghurt with a quarter of the boiled rice. It will be thick.

Put the oil in a saucepan and heat well. Add the yoghurt and rice mixture to the hot oil flattening it on the bottom of the saucepan with a spoon. Arrange the boiled chicken on top of this. Mix the rest of the saffron with the remaining boiled rice and place it over the chicken.

Put a lid over the saucepan and put over a low heat. Cook for 20 minutes then scatter the butter in pieces over the rice, and then replace the lid and cook another 10 minutes on a low heat.

Turn the saucepan upside down onto a flat dish. The rice and chicken should come out in one piece with each layer showing.

Serve hot with salad and pickles. This dish can be made with lamb also or without any meat, in which case vegetables can be used such as spinach.

Çin çin Pilau be Bayîncan: (Rice with chicken and eggplants / eggplant from Derek in Syria)

- 1 medium chicken (1½ kg / 3 lb) or lamb
- 1 kg / 2 lb eggplants
- 500 g / 1 lb long grain rice
- 1 large green pepper chopped into largish (3 cm) pieces
- Oil for frying
- 1tsp salt (as desired)
- 1tsp black pepper
- Water or meat stock

Cut the meat into 8-10 small pieces. Peel some strips along the eggplants so that you have alternating strips of skin and flesh. Then chop the eggplant into discs or squares also about 3 cm wide.

Wash the rice and leave in cold water for 10-15 minutes.

In a frying pan fry the meat and eggplant and pepper in a little oil. Put the fried meat at the bottom of a thick pan and then cover with the fried eggplant, and then put the pepper on top. Drain the rice and mix with salt and black pepper and then place on top of the meat,

eggplants and pepper. Cover with water or stock, so that the water just covers the rice.

Put over a medium heat and bring to a boil and let it boil for 2-3 minutes. Then lower the heat and cover the pan and allow to simmer for 15 minutes. Do not stir. Test the rice to see that it is cooked and then remove the lid and cover the pan with a flat serving dish.

Turn the pan upside down carefully and remove the pan, the meat will be on top of the rice. Serve hot.

Birinc Kewer: (Rice with leeks and carrots from Diyarbekir, given by Aso)

This dish uses rather a lot of olive oil which is an intrinsic part of the flavour and good olive oil is delicious, however less can be used.

1½ kg / 3 lb leeks

300 ml / 10 fl oz olive oil **(less can be used although good olive oil adds to the flavour)**

2 medium carrots

200 g / 7 oz long grain rice **(washed)**

1 Tbsp sugar or honey or grape syrup, the latter being the most traditional

150 g / 4 oz tomato puree or 500 g / 1 lb fresh tomatoes

300 ml / 10 fl oz water

Salt

1 tsp pepper

2 Tbsp lemon juice

Chop the leeks into 4 cm long pieces and finely slice the carrots. Heat the olive oil in a saucepan, when hot add the carrots. Then add the leeks and fry them for 2-3 minutes. Add the tomato puree and the salt and pepper. Mix together. Press the mixture flat on the bottom of the pan with a spoon. Place the washed rice over the vegetables taking care not to mix them together. Mix the water with the sugar and lemon and pour over the rice carefully.

Leave over a low heat for about one hour. Leave to cool then turn upside down.

Decorate with pomegranate seeds or lemon pieces. Serve cold.

Birinc be qarg / qarçik: (Rice with mushrooms)

500 g / 1 lb mushrooms (field mushrooms or wild mushrooms)

2 medium onions, finely chopped

100 g / 4 oz chopped chives or leeks

2-3 Tbsp oil / ghee

500 g / 1 lb short grain rice

Salt

1 tsp saffron threads soaked in hot water.

Wash the rice and soak for 15 minutes. Put in a saucepan and cover with water. Add a little salt. Then bring to boil and cook for 3-4 minutes until the rice starts to soften. Then drain the rice.

Put 2 tablespoons ghee in a frying pan and add the onions; fry until soft. Then add the chives and the mushrooms and cook for 5 minutes. Take off the heat.



Put the remaining 1 Tbsp of oil or butter in a saucepan and spread half of the half-cooked rice on the bottom. Then cover with the mushrooms and then the rest of the rice.

Sprinkle with saffron water and cover with a lid. Cook over a very low heat for 10-15 minutes. Then turn upside down on a flat dish the top will be crispy which can be taken off and served along side.

Qubûlî Birinc be Nîsk: (Rice with lentils)

500 g / 1 lb rice (short grain is normally used)

570 ml / 1 pt water or meat stock

200 g / 7 oz whole green or brown lentils

2 medium onions chopped and fried until lightly brown

3 Tbsp oil or butter or ghee

Salt

½ tsp pepper or green chili pepper

Wash the lentils and put in a large saucepan. Cover with water and cook until soft then drain. Wash the rice and leave to soak in cold water for 15 minutes.

Heat the oil in a saucepan and fry the chopped onions until soft. Add the water and salt. Bring to a boil and add the drained rice and cook over a medium heat until the water is nearly all absorbed. Then add the cooked, drained lentils and mix with the rice. Add the chopped green pepper, cover and simmer for 10-15 minutes or until well cooked.

Serve with the fried onions scattered over the top and served with yoghurt and pieces of fried meat. Fresh herbs and salad can also be served.

Qubûlî Zerd: (Yellow rice)

This is eaten with tripe on the side. If one does not want to stuff the tripe (**gîpe**) with this, then pile onto a serving dish , and serve with other meats.



500 g / 1 lb long grain rice

2 Tbsp oil

250 g / 8 oz minced lean lamb or finely chopped lean lamb

25 g / 1 oz almond flakes

25 g / 1 oz raisins

1 tsp mixed spices, cumin, cinnamon, cardamom, pepper, and cloves
(more if desired; the spices can be added to the cooking of the meat or later when cooking the rice)

1 tsp turmeric

570 ml / 1 pt stock made from cooking lamb tripe, or any meat stock can be used

Salt

Wash the rice and leave to soak in cold water for 10-15 minutes. Drain. Heat the oil in a saucepan and add the minced meat until it colours then add the almonds and raisins. Put mixture to one side.

Add some more oil or ghee to the pan, heat it and then add the stock and salt and spices. Bring to boil and then add the rice, stirring occasionally, until the liquid is nearly absorbed. Add the minced meat mixture and mix it in well. Cover with a tight lid and turn the heat right down leaving the rice to cook for 10-15 minutes until the rice is cooked.

Pile on to a large serving dish and serve with spicy lamb offal, feet, tongue, head etc. or cooked meat can be used instead.

SALADS

(Sulemani)



Selate Mixed Vegetable Salad:

250 g / 8 oz chopped cucumber ½ in size

250 g / 8 oz finely chopped tomatoes

250 g / 8 oz finely chopped celery or parsley

1 medium onion, finely chopped

Grape vinegar or lemon juice

Salt

Mix all the ingredients together. Combine well.

Serve with all meals

Doğreme or Cacık: (Yoghurt salad)

500 g / 1 lb thick yoghurt

250 g / 8 oz finely chopped cucumber

1 Tbsp chopped tarragon

1 clove garlic, finely chopped (if desired)

Salt

Olive oil (if desired)

Mix all the ingredients together in a salad bowl; combine well.

In summer, crushed ice is added sometimes just before serving to make it very cold.

Serve as a salad accompaniment to other dishes



Tirşu Piyaz: (Onion salad)

1 large onion

3 large tomatoes

1 Tbsp trish (sumac powder) (red or pink)

½ tsp salt

2 Tbsp finely chopped parsley or celery or tarragon or mint



Chop the onion into thin rings or half rings, sprinkle with salt and leave for ten minutes. Wash and drain.

Place the washed onion in a salad bowl and sprinkle with the tirs powder and salt. Chop the tomatoes coarsely and add to the onion rings. Add the parsley or other herbs to the mixture combine well and leave for about 10 minutes.

Serve as a side dish with a meal.

Bulgur Salad:



This is used as a breakfast food in the north, but others may use this as a side dish during a meal.

200 g / 4 oz bulgur (**not too fine or too coarse**)

500 ml / 1 pt yoghurt

Salt

Pepper

1 clove garlic (**optional**)

A few leaves of fresh mint (**optional**)

Soak the bulgur in cold water overnight. The next morning, drain and mix the yoghurt with the bulgur, adding the salt and pepper. Mix well. Leave to stand in a cool place for 30 minutes.

1 large green pepper, finely chopped, can be added at the end for flavour.

Selatî Sawar Bulgur Salad:

500 ml / 1 pt yoghurt

100 g / 3 oz bulgur (coarse)

1 medium green pepper, finely chopped

Salt and pepper

Put the bulgur in cold water overnight. Next day drain it and then mix with the green pepper and yoghurt and season with salt and pepper.

Broad Beans in Oil: (From Kamishly)

1½ kg / 3 lb green broad beans

250 g / 8 oz olive oil

3 bunches spring onions

3 bunches of dill

½ bunch fresh mint

1 Tbsp sugar or honey

2 Tbsp unripe grape juice or lemon juice

500 ml / 1 pt water

Wash the broad beans in their pods and cut into two or three pieces and put them in a serving bowl. Add the sour juice. Put half of this mixture in a saucepan, in a circle around the edge of the pan leaving the middle portion empty. Chop the mint and the dill finely and put into the middle of the pan. Chop the onions into fingers the same size as the beans and add this to the pan flattening them over the top of the other ingredients. Cover with the remaining beans.

Pour over the oil and the water and sprinkle on the sugar. Cover the pan with a lid and put over a slow heat for about one hour or until the beans are tender.

Leave to cool then empty carefully upside down onto a tray and serve.

Tirşaw: (Eggplant salad)

500 g / 1 lb eggplant

350 ml / 1 pt sour grape juice or pomegranate juice

2 medium onions, finely chopped

1 Tbsp sugar or honey

Pinch of salt

1 pita bread or lewaş cut into small pieces

Put the whole eggplant in a medium oven and bake until soft and the outside looks burned, about 30 minutes. **(Traditionally a tenûr would be used, the eggplant put in after the bread had been baked).** It can be put over a direct flame wrapped in foil.

Peel the eggplant and cut the eggplant into thin slices lengthwise. Put the slices into a bowl and cover with the sour juice. Add the sugar or honey, the finely cut onions and the pieces of bread. Either mix together or leave in layers. This is served most commonly at breakfast time or as a side salad at other times.

STEWs – ŐILEKAN



Stews - Őile (TirŐi):

Őilekan (called TirŐi in Hewlêr) are stews usually made from lamb or chicken and various different vegetables or fruit. They are nearly always served with plain rice (boiled or steamed) or more commonly with one of the many special rice dishes. Just a few Őile, such as Fronî Bayîncan, are eaten alone with bread. In wealthier families these stews are served everyday and at least 3-4 times a week in other families. On a special occasion two or three different Őile will be served with maybe some kebabs or roast lamb or cooked chicken or turkey and with rice and bread as an extra.

Seasonal vegetables are used during the year and in winter dried fruits and vegetables will be added from the vast store of dried foods that every traditional home has. Also, in winter fried meat may be used (**Qawurme**).

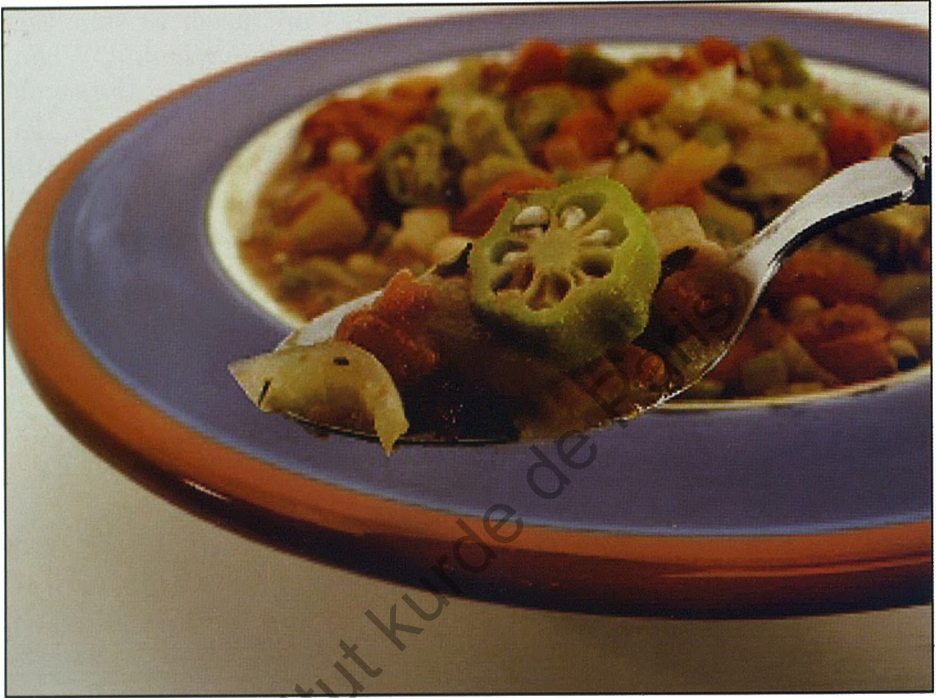
The quality of the ingredients, their freshness and taste is very important as few spices or other flavourings are used, so that the taste of the fresh vegetables, for instance, can be appreciated. When cooking meat with fresh vegetables it is common to put in the same amount of a vegetable as the meat or even double the amount. In some regions, for example Koye, people often prefer to leave out the meat and have just vegetable stews. Many of the stews can be cooked with or without meat, so some of the recipes have been written with meat and some without to illustrate this point.

The stews are always cooked on a very low heat to bring out the full flavour of the ingredients.

There is also a recipe for a stew in the fish section.

The amount of oil or butter may reflect the contemporary desire to remain slim.

Şiley Bamiye: (Lamb stew with okra)



- 500 g / 1 lb of okra
- 500 g / 1 lb fresh tomatoes
- 500 g / 1 lb stewing lamb with bone cut into 6-8 pieces
- 2 Tbsp tomato puree
- 500 ml / 1 pt of water or meat stock
- 1 medium onion
- 2 Tbsp cooking oil
- 2-3 cloves of garlic **(optional)**
- 2 Tbsp lemon juice or sumac juice
- Salt
- ½ tsp pepper **(optional)**
- 1 tsp sugar **(optional)**
- Cut the tops **(heads)** off the okra

Put the meat in a saucepan, covered with lightly salted water. Put on the heat and leave to boil until tender.

Put the oil in a saucepan and add the coarsely chopped onion, fry until soft. Add the tomato puree, stirring 2 -3 times then add the chopped tomatoes. **(Chop small tomatoes into 4 pieces and the large tomatoes into more pieces)** Stir until soft.

Add the okra, stirring 2-3 times, then add the garlic, boiled meat, lemon juice, pepper and sugar.

Lower the heat, cover slightly and leave to simmer for 30 minutes, or until soft. Adjust the taste.

Serve hot with cooked rice or crispy bread.

Dried okra is very popular and can be used for this stew. The okra is first washed in cold water and put over a low heat until it comes to a boil and then simmered for 5 minutes until it becomes soft. Drain and put in cold water again until it plumps up. Then use in the same way as the fresh okra.



Şiley Sêw: (Lamb with apples from Diyarbekir)



- 500 g / 1 lb small sour apples (or Bram leys) cut into 2-3 cm pieces; leave peel
- 500 g / 1 lb lean and young lamb cut into medium sized cubes
- 500 g / 1 lb fresh tomatoes
- $\frac{3}{8}$ cloves garlic (medium size; some people use up to a whole head of garlic)
- 1-2 Tbsp tomato puree (less makes the sauce thinner)
- Salt and pepper
- 1 Tbsp oil
- 500 ml / 1 pt water or meat stock

Wash the meat and put it on the bottom of an oiled ovenproof dish or casserole. Sprinkle with salt. Put the apples over the meat. Slice the tomatoes and put them over the apples. Then sprinkle the finely chopped garlic over the dish. Dilute the tomato puree in the water. Pour over the dish. Sprinkle with pepper and a little more salt. Cover with a tight fitting lid and put in the oven which should already be warm (**150C / 300F / Gas Mark 2**). Cook slowly until the meat is soft and the juice has nearly evaporated, which should be about 60-90 min. Serve hot with plain rice.

Spices are sometimes added to this dish. A cinnamon stick is the most popular although $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp of powdered cloves or cardamom is sometimes added 2 minutes before the end.

Frûnî Bayîncan: (Eggplant / eggplant and lamb stew)

2 large eggplants

500 g / 1 lb of lamb cut into eight pieces all fat removed (**3 cm**); shoulder is preferred

500 g / 1 lb fresh tomatoes

1 large green pepper

2 large onions

50 g celery leaves, finely chopped, or 50 g of chopped parsley

1 Tbsp tomato puree dissolved in 1 cup of water or meat stock

Salt

Pepper if desired

500 ml / 1 pt of water

In a saucepan, bring the water to a boil, adding a little salt, then put in the meat and simmer until soft.

Peel or partly peel the eggplant in lengthways strips, slice it into rounds (1 cm thick), sprinkle with salt and leave for 10-15 minutes and then wash.

Remove the seeds from the pepper and cut into round slices ($\frac{1}{2}$ cm thick). Peel and slice the onion into rings ($\frac{1}{2}$ cm thick). Slice the tomato. Finely chop the parsley or celery.

Cover the bottom of a medium size pan with a thin layer of oil, spread the onion rings evenly over the bottom (**the onions can be pre-fried for extra flavour**), then the meat, then the eggplants, then the

peppers, then the tomatoes, and finally sprinkle with the parsley or celery leaves and add salt. Pour the diluted tomato puree over the top. Cover tightly with a lid, then cook over a slow heat on a stovetop or put in a moderate oven and leave for an hour.

This dish can be cooked without meat. In this case the onions slices can be fried slightly the oil drained.

If dried eggplants are used for this stew, the eggplants have to be washed and put in a pan, covered with water and put over a slow heat for 10 minutes. They are then drained and washed with cold water and are ready to be used in the same way as the fresh eggplants.

Serve hot with cooked rice or thin bread. Typically the bread is used to pick up the meat and vegetables (**parû**) in small mouth sized pieces.

Misteqey Bayîncan: (Eggplant / eggplant with minced meat)

2-3 medium eggplants (500 g / 1 lb)

250 g / 8 oz minced meat (lamb or mutton)

1 medium onion

2 Tbsp tomato puree or 3-4 medium tomatoes, finely chopped

2 Tbsp almond flakes or pine nuts

2 Tbsp raisins

1 Tbsp lemon juice

2 Tbsp finely chopped parsley or lovage or celery leaves

250 ml / 8 fl oz water

Salt

Pepper

Cinnamon

Oil for frying

Cut the eggplant lengthways into 50 mm / ¼ in thick slices. Wash them with salt if bitter (**sprinkle salt over them, leave for 10 minutes and then wash**).

Fry the finely chopped onion in a little oil in a frying pan, then add the mince meat and fry them together. Add the almond flakes. When

they start to change colour add the raisins, mixing well. After a few minutes add the parsley or lovage, then drain away the excess oil.

In an ovenproof dish spread the minced meat mixture over the bottom and cover with a layer of the eggplants. Alternatively half the eggplants are placed on the bottom, then the meat finishing with the rest of the eggplants. Dissolve the tomato puree in the water and add the lemon juice and the salt. Pour over the eggplants and cover the dish with foil or a lid. Cook in a moderate oven for 30-40 minutes.

Serve hot with cooked rice or with salad and fresh herbs or with bread.

Şile Qawurme: (Lamb with apricots)

250 g / 9 oz dried apricots (best are the small ones which are slightly sour)

250 g / 9 oz lamb in medium sized pieces (2-3 cm square)

100 g / 4 oz raisins or sultanas

1 Tbsp tomato puree

1 Tbsp sugar or honey or apple jam or other fruit jam

750 ml / 1½ pt of water

Oil for frying

Pinch of salt

1 tsp ground cinnamon

Wash the apricots and place in a saucepan with the water. Bring to a boil and simmer over a low heat for about 40 minutes until they are very soft.

Fry the meat well in oil. Drain the meat and put in a saucepan and add the tomato puree, put over the heat stir for 2 or 3 minutes and add the cooked apricots and the water they have been cooked in and mix well. Add the raisins. Mix well; add the seasoning and more water if necessary to prevent sticking.

Lower the heat and simmer for about 30 minutes, take care because the apricots burn easily. Serve hot or cold with rice.

Şiley Taskebabî be Behye: (Lamb with quinces from Mahabad)

500 g / 1 lb lamb cut into 2-3 cm cubes
2 medium onions cut into fine rings
1 medium quince cut into 1 cm slices (**leaving the skin on**)
5-6 prunes
1 Tbsp tomato puree (**diluted in the water below**) or small can of chopped tomatoes or 3-4 fresh tomatoes
Salt
2-3 dried limes (**pierce a few holes to let the flavour out**)
200 ml / 8 fl oz water

Put the meat in a small heavy saucepan or casserole, add a layer of half of the onion rings then the quinces in a layer then add the prunes and the limes then the rest of the sliced onions. Cover with the tomato water to which salt has been added or the chopped tomatoes and the water and salt. Cover with a tightly fitting lid and place over a very low heat or in the oven on a low setting for at least one hour or until the meat is soft and the liquid almost absorbed. Don't remove the lid for the first hour at all.

The dish is served by turning the saucepan upside down over a serving dish so that the meat and fruit will remain in a moulded shape. Serve immediately.

Sometimes rice is placed around the meat and fruit mould. Or it can be served with thin bread.

Taskebabî: (Lamb with onions from Sulemani)

In olden times after the bread was cooked in the tenûr (**clay oven**) this dish was placed in the cooling oven and was ready by the next day. Nowadays this is cooked in the oven or even on a low heat on the stove. This dish is cooked both with and without tomatoes, and with or without water

500 g / 1 lb pickling size onions
500 g / 1 lb of lamb chopped into medium pieces ½ in or 3 cm square (leg is good for this)
500 ml / 1 pt fresh tomato juice or 500 g / 1 lb fresh tomatoes (**optional**)

2 dried limes, pierced several times with a fork to release flavour
1 Tbsp tomato puree (optional)
250 ml / ½ pt water or meat stock (if not using tomatoes or if a dry version is preferred this is also optional).
Salt
1 cinnamon stick

Peel the onions. Put the meat in a heavy bottomed saucepan with the onions, the tomato juice (if using), and the dried limes and cinnamon stick. Dilute the tomato puree in the water and add (optional). Put the saucepan on the heat and bring to a boil. Lower the heat and cover tightly. Cook over a slow heat for at least one hour keeping the lid on and not peeking in at all. After one hour check that the meat is well cooked; the sauce should be quite thick.

Serve hot with pilau rice.

Şiley Silq: (Minced meat with Swiss chard)

1 kg / 2 lb Swiss chard, finely chopped
500 g / 1 lb minced lamb or beef
500 g / 1 lb fresh tomatoes, finely chopped
2 medium sized onions, finely chopped
100 g / 4 oz yellow split peas
100 g / 4 oz raisins
2 Tbsp lemon juice
½-1 tsp cinnamon
½ tsp black pepper
1-2 Tbsp apple jam or golden syrup
2 Tbsp oil
250 ml / ½ pt water
Salt

Cut off the tough stems of the chard, wash the leaves and chop finely. Boil the chopped chard for 2-3 minutes and then drain.

Heat the oil in a saucepan, add the finely chopped onion and fry until soft. Add the minced meat, stir and fry until the meat has changed colour and is almost dry. Then add the drained Swiss chard and leave over the heat for about 5 minutes until it is soft stirring occasionally.

Add the chopped tomatoes, mixing well, then add the split peas, raisins, jam and seasoning; also add the lemon juice and water. **Mix well and bring to a boil.** Lower the heat and leave to simmer for 30 minutes.

Serve hot with plain rice. This dish can be made with chopped meat instead of minced and in that case usually just Swiss chard, onion and tomato juice are used, flavoured with salt and pepper.

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Şêx mûşî Bayîncan: (Stuffed eggplants / eggplant)



- 6 medium eggplants
- 250 g / 8 oz minced lamb
- 3-4 Tbsp finely chopped parsley or lovage
- 2 Tbsp almond flakes
- 2 Tbsp raisins
- 2 Tbsp tomato puree
- 1 Tbsp lemon juice
- 250 ml / 8 fl oz water
- Salt
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon or a stick
- Oil for frying

Fry the mince meat. When it has changed colour add the almond flakes and then the raisins. Stir well then add the parsley or lovage and the salt and cinnamon. Mix well then remove from the heat.

Cut off the tops of the eggplants, the stem part, and wash the eggplants cutting them once across the middle not down the length. Scoop out the seeds in the middle, and make shells. Wash them well

and drain. Fry the shells gently on all sides until slightly soft. Then take out of the oil and drain them on a plate on kitchen paper.

Fill the shells with the mince mixture; arrange the stuffed shells in a shallow baking dish. Dissolve the tomato puree in water and add lemon juice, salt and seasoning and pour over the arranged stuffed eggplants.

Cover the pan tightly with a lid or tin foil and place in a moderate oven for between 45 and 60 mins.

Serve hot with rice; Qubûli be Tirş (**pomegranate rice**) is a favourite. It is also eaten with bread.

Pepper can be added to make the dish a little more spicy.

Zucchinis (**squash**) can be used instead of eggplants. Baby eggplants (12) can be used, in which case the bottom is cut off and the eggplant is hollowed from the bottom and filled in the same way.

Bayincanî Pêçrawe: (Stuffed and rolled eggplants / eggplant)

500 g / 1 lb medium sized eggplants
250 g / 8 oz minced lamb
1 Tbsp flour
½ tsp black pepper
½ tsp cinnamon
Salt
Thin parsley stems or fine cotton thread

Sauce

2 Tbsp tomato puree
1 Tbsp lemon juice
½ tsp pepper (**if wanted**)
½ tsp cinnamon
Salt
250 ml / 8 fl oz water

Cut the eggplants lengthways into thin slices (**50 mm or less, the thinner the better**). Sprinkle them lightly with salt, and then fry them lightly until a light brown. Mix the meat, salt and flour together with the pepper and cinnamon and knead to make a soft stuffing mix.

Shape the meat into 3-4 cm long fingers. The meat fingers should be the same length as the width of each piece of eggplant. Place a finger on to the top end of one of the eggplant slices and roll the eggplant around the meat. Tie each roll with a thin parsley stalk or cotton thread.

Arrange the rolls in a flat oven proof dish. Dissolve the tomato puree in the water; add the lemon and the cinnamon and pepper and salt. Pour the sauce over the rolled eggplants. Cover the dish with a lid or with foil. Bake in a low to moderate oven for 20-30 minutes.

Serve hot with rice or with bread or just with salad and fresh herbs. Squash can be used instead as in most dishes made with eggplants.

Şiley Paqle: (Fresh broad bean stew)

500 g / 1 lb fresh broad beans (whole, in the pod)
1 medium onion, chopped
2-3 cloves of garlic (or fresh garlic stems) or more if desired, finely chopped
500 g / 1 lb fresh tomatoes, finely chopped
2 Tbsp oil
500 ml / 1 pt water
Salt
1 Tbsp lemon juice, if desired

Cut the whole bean pods width-wise into medium sized pieces about four pieces from each pod and wash them. Put the onion in a saucepan and add the oil. Put over a medium heat and fry until just changing colour. Add the beans to the onions and mix well. Cook until the beans start to change colour and become a little soft, stir occasionally.



In a separate pan fry the garlic. **(If using fresh garlic cloves add them with the beans)**. Add the tomatoes to the garlic and mix well; cook until the tomatoes are soft. Add lemon juice. Add the tomato mixture to the beans and mix well; add the water and salt. Simmer over a low heat for 30 minutes or until soft.

Serve hot with plain rice.

This dish can also be cooked with lamb or chicken or beef. 500 g / 1 lb of the meat chopped into 6-8 pieces should first be boiled and then fried with the onions.

Other beans can be cooked in the same way.

Şiley Petate: (Potato stew Diyarbekir)

500 g / 1 lb potatoes

500 g / 1 lb minced lamb meat or small pieces of meat

1 Tbsp oil

2-3 Tbsp finely chopped parsley

2 small green peppers or 4 long mild chili-styled peppers

2 medium sized fresh tomatoes sliced into rounds

250 ml / ½ pint water

½ tsp pepper

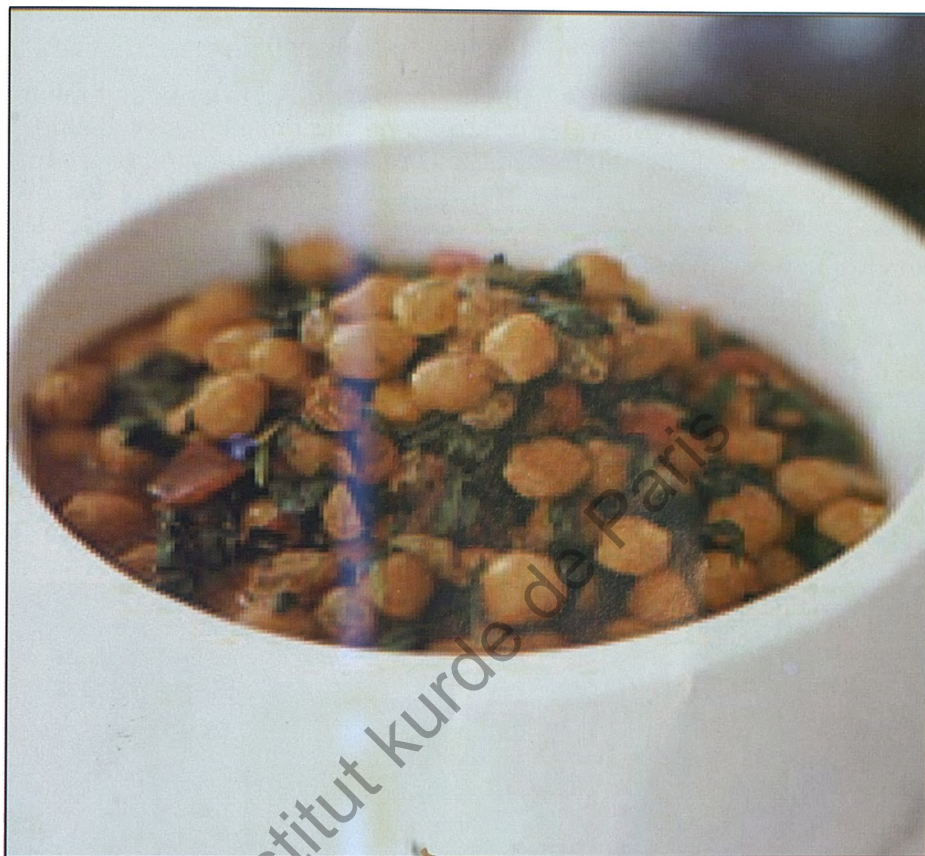
Peel the potatoes and cut them into 3 cm / 2 in squares. Small potatoes can be used whole. Mix the mince meat with the parsley, salt and pepper. Mix well and make into balls about the same size as the potatoes.

Arrange the potatoes and the shaped mince meat on the bottom of an ovenproof casserole type dish, alternating a piece of potato with a meatball until the bottom of the dish is covered. Then covered with a layer of sliced tomatoes.

Put the whole peppers on top of the tomatoes **(if chillies)**. If using large peppers, cut each pepper into 4 pieces lengthwise. Pour on the water, add salt and cover the dish well using a close fitting lid or foil. Cook in a moderate oven for 60 minutes or until everything is cooked well.

Serve hot with cooked bulgur whets or rice. Eggplants can be used instead of potatoes. They are also cut into cubes.

Yexnî Nok (Nokaw): (Chickpea stew)



200 g / 4 oz chick peas (soaked over night in cold water)

3 medium onions, finely chopped

500 g / 1 lb lean lamb cut into 4-6 pieces

1 tsp turmeric

½ tsp pepper

½ tsp of cinnamon or cumin can be used if desired

1 l / 1½ pt lamb stock or water

2 Tbsp oil

Salt

Drain the chickpeas from their soaking water and put them in a saucepan, cover with cold water and bring to a boil. Simmer to cook until soft, about 2 hours (this can vary a lot). When very soft drain them and keep to one side.

Put the meat in a saucepan and cover with boiling water; add a little salt and bring to boil and simmer until soft, about 20-30 min.

Take half of the chick peas, and mash them with a fork. Then add a little water and sieve the mixture to remove the skins.

Fry the onions in a pan in a little oil until soft. Add the boiled meat to the onions and add the water or stock and the mashed, sieved chick peas and the rest of the chick peas that are still whole. Bring to a boil, add the spices and salt, lower the heat and simmer slowly for 30 minutes.

Serve hot with plain rice or pilau, or eat it like thick soup with bread.

Canned chick peas can be used, and powdered chick peas or chick pea flour can be used instead of the mashed ones. But then the powder or flour should first be mixed with a little cold water until it becomes a thin paste. Fresh mashed chickpeas do however taste a lot better.

Şiley Fasûlya Spî:(Lamb with white beans)



250 g / 8 oz dried beans (**haricot or butter beans**)
500 g / 1 lb lamb or beef or chicken cut into six pieces
1 medium onion
2 Tbsp tomato puree
2 Tbsp oil
500 ml / 1 pt meat stock or water
Salt
5 whole cloves
½ tsp pepper

Soak the haricot beans in cold water over night. (Sometimes if they are very fresh they do not need such a long soaking). Drain the beans the next day.

Put the haricot beans in another pan, cover with water, bring to boil and simmer until soft. Butter beans should not be soaked or cooked, they should be washed and added later; otherwise, they break up and disintegrate into the sauce.

At the same time place the meat in a saucepan, cover with boiling water and a little salt and bring to boil. Simmer until soft. Then drain the stock into a bowl and keep on one side.

Put the meat in a pan; add the oil and the chopped onion. Put over medium heat and stir occasionally until the onion begins to soften. Add the tomato puree, stir and cook for 1-2 minutes and then add the meat stock and the water the beans were cooked in (**or boiled water**) making it up to 2 cups. Then add the beans (**haricot or butter**). Bring to a boil, add the cloves and leave to simmer for 15-20 minutes.

Serve hot with cooked rice.

Şiley Fasûlya Taze: Lamb with green beans (French)

500 g / 1 lb green beans
2 Tbsp tomato puree or 500 g / 1 lb fresh, finely chopped fresh tomatoes
2 Tbsp oil
1 medium onion, finely chopped
2 cups water
Salt and pepper
1 Tbsp lemon juice (**if desired**)

Top and tail the beans and string them if necessary. Slice down the centre of each bean lengthways (**not along the ridge side but in the**

middle of the fleshy part) and then cut in half across the middle, so each bean ends up in four pieces.

Place the finely chopped onion in a saucepan, add the oil and put over a medium heat; cook until the onion is soft. Add the beans and leave over a low heat for five minutes until they change their colour a little. Dilute the puree in the water and stir until it makes a light sauce; add a little salt, then add this to the beans.

The tomato puree can be fried lightly before mixing with water for a stronger flavour. If fresh tomatoes are used you can also fry them in a little oil before adding. Add the lemon juice if wanted. Leave to cook over a low heat for 30 minutes or until the beans are soft and the sauce is slightly thick. Adjust the seasoning before serving. Serve with plain cooked rice.

Meat can be used in this dish, in this case add 500 g / 1 lb of lean lamb cut into 6-8 pieces. The meat can be added to the onions before adding the beans.

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Şiley Lobyia: (String beans)



500 g / 1 lb fresh string beans
250 g / 8 oz chopped lean lamb meat (if using meat)
1 medium onion, finely chopped
2 Tbsp tomato puree
1 Tbsp oil
1 Tbsp lemon juice
500 ml / 1 pt water
Salt
Pepper, if desired

Chop the beans across ways into 1 cm lengths. Fry the onions in a little oil in a pan until they start to change colour. Add the meat to the onions and cook until all the juices have dried up. Add the beans, mix together, add the water and cook over a low heat until soft. Then add the tomato puree, salt, pepper and lemon juice. Cover and leave to simmer over a low heat for 20 minutes or until all the ingredients are soft and the sauce is thick. Serve hot with cooked rice.

This dish can be cooked without meat; the puree can be fried separately and then added to the beans. In most stews fried puree or fried tomatoes are preferred.

Şiley Spenağ: (Spinach stew)

500 g / 1 lb of lean lamb cut into 6-8 pieces.

1 kg / 2 lb spinach

2 Tbsp oil

2 Tbsp split yellow peas (soaked for ½ hour)

1 medium onion, finely chopped

2 Tbsp tomato puree or 500 g / 1 lb fresh tomatoes, finely chopped

2 Tbsp lemon juice

Salt

500 ml / 1 pt water or stock

1 tsp cinnamon

1 tsp pepper

Place the meat in a saucepan and cover with boiling water. Simmer until tender over a medium heat. Drain off the water and keep to one side. Put the meat and the onion in a saucepan, add the oil and put over a medium heat stirring until the onion is soft. Add the chopped spinach, stirring occasionally, and cook for 5 minutes. Add the tomato puree and mix well; add the split yellow peas. Stir well and add the meat stock or water, the lemon juice and the salt. Leave to simmer over a low heat for about 10 minutes. Serve hot with cooked rice.

This dish can be made without meat.

Cûce Quře: (Chicken stew)

Traditionally this dish was made using only chicken wings (**1 kg / 2 lb**), however these days the whole chicken is used.

1 medium chicken cut into 12-15 pieces
100 g / 2 oz split yellow peas
100 g / 2 oz raisins
3 medium onions. sliced into fine rings
3 Tbsp tomato puree
2 Tbsp oil
500 ml / 1 pt water or chicken stock
Salt
1 tsp cinnamon (**or more**)
½ tsp pepper or 1-2 small hot red chillies
1 Tbsp dried tarragon, or 50 g fresh tarragon to taste

Put the chicken pieces in a saucepan and cover with boiling water, bring to a boil and simmer until the chicken is half-cooked, about 15 minutes. Drain the chicken pieces, keeping the stock to one side. Heat the oil in a saucepan; when hot, add the onion rings and fry them until the colour just begins to change. Add the half-cooked chicken and stir well.

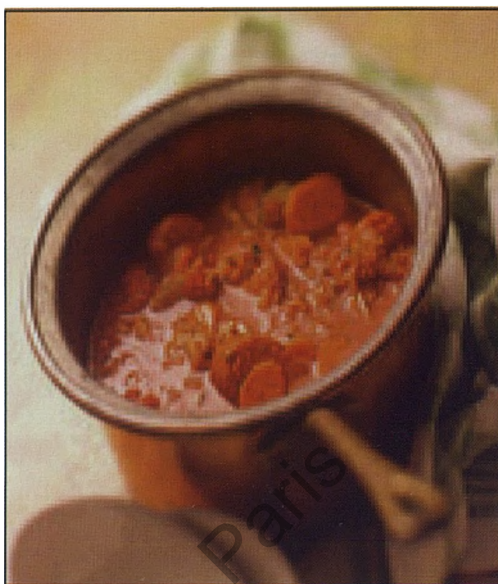
Cook for about 5 minutes, stirring from time to time, then add the tomato puree. Mix it in well and then add the split yellow peas and the raisins, then add the water or chicken stock and salt and leave to cook over a slow heat. Add the cinnamon, pepper and tarragon, simmer over a very low heat for 20 minutes or until the sauce has thickened a little.

Serve hot with plain rice or bulgur wheat

Şiley Temate: (Tomato stew)

500 g / 1 lb fresh tomatoes
250 g / 8 oz lamb, finely chopped
1 medium onion
1 Tbsp split yellow peas (**soaked for ½ hour**)
½ Tbsp tomato puree
200 ml / 10 fl oz water
2 Tbsp oil
Salt and pepper
2 Tbsp finely chopped parsley or celery (**if desired**)

Heat the oil in a saucepan and add the meat and cook until nearly brown. Add the finely chopped onion and cook until the onion softens. Add a little water to the meat and cook until it is tender and the water has been absorbed. Add the tomato puree, stirring for about 2 minutes, then add the chopped tomatoes and the drained split peas. Add salt and pepper and simmer over a slow heat for 30 minutes. Adjust the seasoning; the sauce should have thickened a little.



The finely chopped parsley or celery can be added at the end just before serving for taste and for decoration. Serve hot with cooked rice or with Kurdish bread (Nanî Terî).

Mirîşk be Bersîle: (Chicken with unripe or sour grape juice – verjuice from Diyarbekir)

1 medium chicken (can be left whole or cut into 8 pieces) (1½ kg / 3 lb)

2-3 Tbsp yoghurt

1 Tbsp wheat flour

1 Tbsp tomato puree

100 g / 4 oz dried, powdered, unripe grapes (bought from Iranian shops) combined with 750 ml / 30 fl oz water (or 250 ml / 10 fl oz sour grape juice combined with 500 ml / 20 fl oz water, depending on how sour the grapes are and how sour you like it; lemon juice can be used instead or added to the grapes if they are sweetish)

Oil for frying

1-2 tsp Black pepper

Salt

Mix the flour with the yoghurt and tomato puree. Add the seasoning. Then wash the chicken. Cover all over, inside and out, with the yoghurt sauce and leave to marinade for at least an hour.

Heat the oil in a pan and fry the chicken until it is golden on all sides. Mix the unripe grape powder with the water or use the juice. Put in a saucepan and bring to boil; add the fried chicken. Put over a low heat and simmer slowly until the sauce has reduced, turning the chicken over once during this process. Cook for about 30-40 minutes until the sauce has almost all evaporated.

Serve with plain rice or bulgur wheat.

Unripe grape powder is very popular but lemon juice or pomegranate juice can be used instead.

Lamb can also be used, cut into 2-3 cm pieces, but then garlic is added to the sauce. The lamb is marinated for 4-5 hours or overnight then fried the next morning and cooked in the same way as the chicken.

Serve hot with salad or fresh herbs.

Kifte Rez (Kifte Wezîrî): (Meatballs in tomato sauce)

500 g / 1 lb minced meat (either lamb or beef or goat)

1-2 Tbsp flour

Salt

Cumin

1 medium onion

2 Tbsp tomato puree or 4 large tomatoes chopped

2 Tbsp thick yoghurt

2-3 dried limes or 1 Tbsp of dried lime powder (or juice of 1 lemon or lime if dried limes are not available)

Oil for frying

Mix the minced meat, flour, salt and cumin together, kneading well to make a soft firm dough. Make small balls about 2 cm / 1 in diameter or even smaller. Fry them and put them to one side.

Chop the onion and fry in a small amount of oil until the colour changes. Add the tomatoes or tomato puree to the fried onion and cook for two minutes stirring well. Meanwhile whisk the yoghurt and add 500 ml / 1 pt cold water to it, mixing well. Add the yoghurt to the onion and tomato mixture and stir. Add the cumin, salt and dried limes, stir and then add the kiftes.

Simmer over a low heat for 30 minutes.

Serve hot with plain rice.

An alternative version is sometimes made leaving out the yoghurt and lime, just using the tomato puree and lemon juice

Qizatma: (Lamb in a tomato sauce)

500 g / 1 lb of lamb leg cut into 4 pieces or pieces of lamb fillet
3 Tbsp tomato puree
500 ml / 1 pt water
Oil for frying
½ Tbsp lemon juice or to taste
Salt
4 cloves
5-6 cardamom pods
Pinch of cinnamon

Fry the meat, drain and then put the meat in a saucepan. Add the tomato puree and cook over a slow heat, stirring for 2-3 minutes, add the water and lemon juice, bring to a boil and leave on a slow heat for 30 minutes or until the sauce is thick. Add the spices, cook for a further 5 minutes and then take off the heat.

Serve with plain rice and with salad.

Şiley Kernebît: (Cauliflower stew)

1 medium cauliflower cut into small florets.
500 g / 1 lb lamb, or poultry (**chicken or turkey**) cut into small pieces; minced lamb can also be used
120 ml / ¼ pt water
1 large onion, finely chopped
2 Tbsp tomato puree or 500 g / 1 lb finely chopped fresh tomatoes
2 Tbsp oil
Salt and pepper
Cinnamon, if desired
500 ml / 1 pt water

Place the oil in a saucepan and heat and add the chopped onion, which should be fried until it starts to change colour. Add the meat and fry until it is tender. Add the 120 ml water and cook the meat until the water dries out.

Add the tomato puree or fresh tomatoes, stirring occasionally for two to three minutes then add 500 ml / 1 pt water. Now add the cauliflower and the seasonings. Bring to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer very gently for about 20 minutes, until the florets are soft and the sauce a bit thick.

Serve hot with cooked rice. Cabbage can be used instead of cauliflower.

Berbesêl: (Lamb with yoghurt)

500 g / 1 lb lamb cut into 4-6 pieces or a chicken cut into pieces **(with bone)**

500 g / 1 lb yoghurt

1 egg

100 g / 4 oz coarsely cut chives or spring onions or baby leeks

Oil for frying

250 ml / 8 fl oz water

½ tsp turmeric **(optional)**

Put the meat into a medium saucepan cover with boiling water, bring to boil and simmer until the meat is soft and about ½ cup of juice remains in the saucepan.

Mix the yoghurt with the egg and the water in a small saucepan, making sure there are no lumps. Put the pan over a low heat stirring all the time. Bring the mixture to a boil. Add this yoghurt mixture to the meat and mix. Add a pinch of salt to taste and leave to simmer for about 10 minutes on a low heat.

Fry the chives or onions lightly. Put to one side. The chives can be added without first frying.

To serve, place the meat in a large bowl with the sauce and garnish with fried chives. Serve hot with cooked rice or bread.

Before cooking, ½ tsp turmeric can be added to the yoghurt and egg mixture. The fried chives can be mixed into the dish or just used as a garnish if preferred.

Bayîncan be Tenûr: (Eggplant / eggplant in oven)

1 kg / 2 lb eggplants
1 kg / 2 lb minced lamb meat
2 Tbsp chopped parsley or celery leaves (50 g / 2 oz)
4 long green peppers
½ kg / 1 lb fresh tomatoes, finely chopped
Salt and pepper
150 ml / 5 fl oz water

Chop the eggplants into 1 cm thick circles. Mix the meat with the salt, pepper and chopped parsley and make into round discs the same size as the eggplant slices. Lightly oil the bottom of an ovenproof dish and arrange the eggplant slices on the bottom of the pan. Then place a layer of the meat discs on the eggplant slices and then repeat with the eggplant slices, and then the meat, until all is used up.

Pour the finely chopped tomatoes over the top of the vegetables and meat and then place the four peppers on the top and pour the water over the top. Cover with foil or with a tight-fitting lid and place in a medium oven for one hour.

Serve hot with cooked rice, especially with spicy rice or with cooked bulgur wheat.

Qawurme Piyaz: (Lamb with onions)

4 medium onions
500 g / 1 lb lamb cut into 3 cm pieces (boneless)
2-3 Tbsp sour grape juice (verjuice)
Salt
Oil for frying

Boil the meat in a little water until it is soft and there is a thick stock reduced from the water. Slice the onion into thin rings and fry until soft, barely changing colour, then drain away the oil and place on kitchen paper to soak up some of the oil. Add the onions to the meat also the grape juice and salt. Put over a low heat and simmer gently for 15 minutes.

Serve hot with rice or bread.

Qûşbaşı: (Lamb with mushrooms, popular in Halabja)

500 g / 1 lb lamb or chicken cut into 2 cm squares.

12 small pickled onions

2 green or red peppers cut into same sized squares

12 small button mushrooms

Salt

Sauce

2 Tbsp tomato puree

250 ml / ½ pt water

2-3 dried limes or ½ Tbsp dried lime powder (**sour pomegranate juice can be used instead**)

Oil for frying

Take a wooden skewer, about 15 cm / 6 in long, and place a piece of meat on it then an onion then a piece of pepper then another piece of meat and the vegetables, then add a few more pieces of meat to fill the skewer if needed. Sprinkle a little salt over the skewer. Repeat this process until all the meat has been used. Should make about 12-15 skewers.

Now make the sauce. Put the tomato puree in a pan and stir over the heat for a minute add the water and 2-3 dried limes or ½ Tbsp dried lime powder. Mix well. Leave it to cook for about 10 minutes over a low heat.

While the sauce is cooking, fry the kebabs. Heat a pan of oil about 2 cm / 1 in deep, when it is hot, put in the kebabs and fry them. Put the kebabs in the sauce and simmer for 15 minutes until meat is soft.

Take them out and arrange them on a plate and sprinkle each one with a tablespoonful of sauce.

Serve with cooked rice.

This dish can be made with just the meat and small onions or one other vegetable. Instead of limes, pomegranates or sour grapes or lemon juice can be used as desired.

Şiley Kinger: (Lamb with cardoon)

1 kg / 2 lb cardoon (artichoke) chopped into 1 cm pieces, parboiled
500 g / 1 lb lamb cut, into 2 cm pieces and boiled and drained

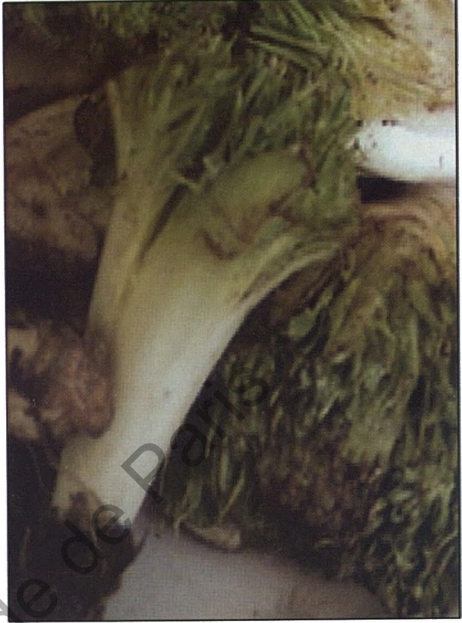
500 g / 1 lb fresh tomatoes, chopped or 2 Tbsp tomato puree, or add tomato puree with the tomatoes if they are lacking in flavour

1 medium onion, chopped

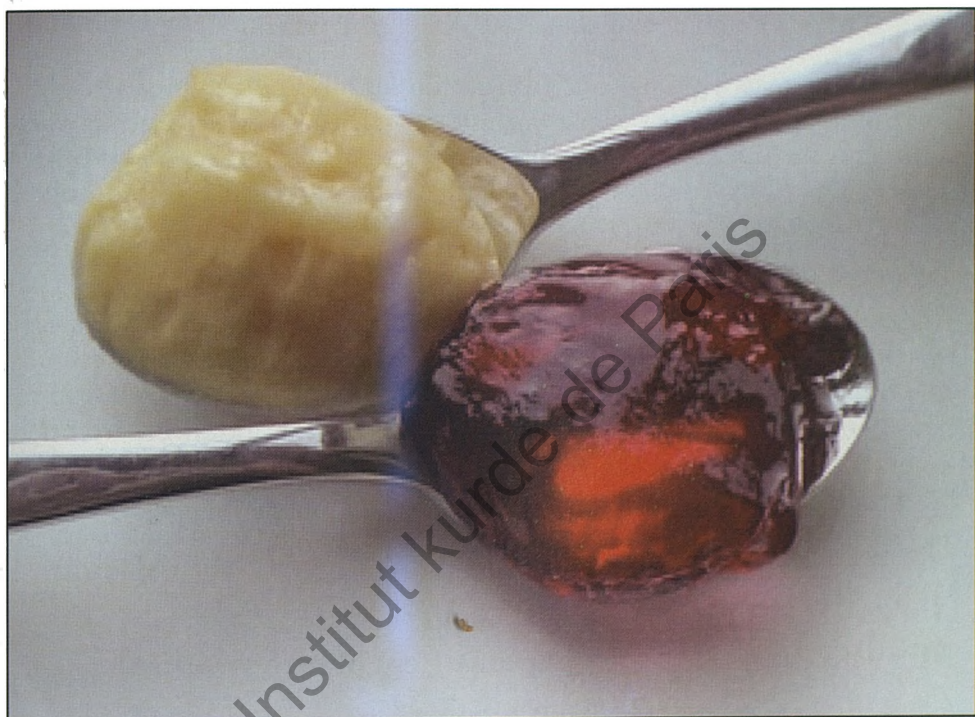
2 Tbsp lemon juice or sumac

Fry the onion in some oil until soft, add the boiled meat, fry a little until soft and then add the boiled cardoon and fry them together. Add the tomatoes, cover with water and bring to boil. Add salt and simmer for 30 minutes.

Served with rice.



JAMS & PRESERVES



Mirebayî Halûje: (Black plum preserve)

Traditionally these are made by leaving the peeled fruit in the sun for several days, covering it with a piece of thin cotton. This recipe is included but also a recipe for making the preserve in a very slow oven. It is very popular and made in large quantities.

500 g / 1 lb red or black plums, about 6-7 plums
250 g / 9 oz sugar

Wash the plums and skin them. Sprinkle a deep dish with sugar **(best not a metal one due to the effect of the acid on the fruit)**. Take each plum and dip it in sugar, making sure it is well-coated, and place it on the tray. Do this with all the plums packing them tight on the tray, in a single layer, leaving no gaps. When they are finished then cover with the rest of the sugar making sure they are completely covered. It is important that the dish is not too big and that the plums are tightly packed so that when the juice forms it also covers the plums. Otherwise they will come out with hard exteriors.

Cover the tray with a piece of thin cotton material, stretching it tight over the dish so that the cloth does not touch the fruit. Then put out in the sun during the hot summer for at least one week. Check from time to time. They are ready when the plums are soft and jelly-like and have become very dark in colour.

This method can be used for apricots, plums and peaches.

Alternatively the dish can be put in a very slow oven uncovered at the lowest possible and left for at least 4-5 hours. Or cook covered on top of the stove on a very low heat for about 2 hours. The sugar should be divided into three parts so that it can be added bit by bit. Cover the fruit with part of the sugar approximately every hour. Put in sterilized jars and keep covered.

This is used as a sweet, eaten with a spoon and fork.

Mireba Bayîncan: (Eggplant / eggplant preserve)

500 g / 1 lb very small eggplants (about 8)

500 g / 1 lb sugar

1½ l / 3 pt water

3-4 Tbsp walnuts, chopped coarsely

1 tsp cardamom powder or 3-4 whole pods

1 tsp cinnamon powder

Wash the eggplants and make a long cut down one side. Make a deep cut with a sharp knife. Put the eggplants in a saucepan, cover with water and leave over a low heat for five minutes, to extract the bitterness, then drain.



Gently put your finger through the cut to make a space inside, fill the hole with walnuts and close tightly with a cotton thread. Put the sugar with the water over a low heat, add the seasoning, and bring to boil to make syrup. Put the stuffed eggplants in the syrup, leave to simmer gently over a low heat for about 1 hour, until the syrup is thick, then allow cooling.

This can be stored in jars but usually is stored in a deep tray with a lid. (This can be a plastic container). Lay the eggplants out in rows and pour on the dark coloured syrup.

Additional water should not be added as this spoils the colour.

Mirebayî Tûr: (Radish jam)

Our radishes are round, however, not easy to find here so I have experimented with mooli and found them to be very similar in taste and available in many shops.

- 500 g / 1 lb large white radishes or mooli
- 500 g / 1 lb sugar
- 1 tsp ground cardamom
- 2 1 / 4 pt water
- 1 tsp lemon juice

Wash and peel the radishes. Grate the radish coarsely, put the grated radish in a saucepan and cover with water. Bring to boil and boil for 5 minutes then drain. Cover with cold water and drain again.

Boil the 2 litres of water in a saucepan and then add the sugar, stirring all the time. When the sugar and water come back to a boil add the grated radishes. Then leave to cook over a low heat for one hour or more until the syrup thickens and the grated radishes are shiny and transparent, then add the cardamom powder and the lemon juice.

The colour of the jam should be a pale and shiny yellow. Take off the heat and allow to cool. When cold, store in sterilized jars.

Twêklî Pirteqal: (Orange skin jam)

This jam is made in the same way as radish jam. The skin of the orange carefully pared off, taking care not to cut off the white flesh underneath.

Shred it finely into long strips, the pieces should be about 50 mm wide and 300 mm long or longer if you can. Alternatively the skin is cut into rectangles 2-3 cm wide and 3-4 cm long and then rolled. Each piece is then threaded onto a necklace using a needle and cotton thread.

The necklace is then cooked in the same way. Then follow the above recipe excluding the cardamom if you want.



Mirebayî Behye: (Quince jam)

This is very popular and more commonly used than any other jam. It has a wonderful colour and shape and is often served to guests.

500 g / 1 lb fresh quinces (2-3 big ones)

500 g / 1 lb sugar

1½ l / 3 pt water

1 tsp lemon juice

1 cinnamon stick

Peel the quinces and slice into pieces which are 4 cm by 2 cm (1 in by 2 in). Some people make the pieces much smaller.

Bring the water to boil in a pan then add the sugar and the lemon juice and cinnamon. Stir well until dissolved and bring back to boil. Add the pieces of quince, bring to a boil again, lower the heat and leave to boil slowly, uncovered, until the quince pieces look



transparent and have darkened to a dark reddish colour. Remove the cinnamon stick.

Remove from heat, leave to cool and then put in dry sterilized glass jars and cover with a fitted lid as when making jam. This will keep for a long time.

Some types of quince, especially the sour kind will disintegrate while cooking, so to keep well shaped pieces, the sweet ones are preferred.



Sometimes a little extra water has to be added during cooking if the mixture gets too sticky.

Mirebayî Sêw: (Apple jam)

This jam is made with whole apples therefore it is good for very small, firm and sweet apples. If the apples are not a firm variety they will break up which is a different jam.

The jam can be made from whole apples or from apples cut into quarters with the seeds removed, but the two should not be mixed.

500 g / 1 lb small sweet apples (**firm like Gala, not Bramley**)

500 g / 1 lb sugar

2 1 / 4 pt water

1 tsp lemon juice

2-3 sticks cinnamon

1 tsp cardamom (**optional**)

Wash the apples. Put the water and the lemon juice in a large saucepan. Add the sugar, put over heat and bring to a boil. Put the apples into the syrupy mixture and cook over a low heat for about an hour or until the syrup is thick. The apples must keep their shape and look transparent and shiny like glass. Care should be taken that they do not break up.

Twêklî Şûtî: (Water melon peel)

Take pieces of peel, cutting off the green outside skin and keeping only the white inner skin. Cut into 2 cm square pieces and make into jam in exactly the same way as the apple jam above.

Mirebayî Henjîr: (Fig jam; this jam is made from whole figs)

500 g / 1 lb small figs, hard and well-formed (both green and black figs can be used)

300 g / 10 oz sugar

2 1 / 4 pt water (more if needed)

2 tsp lemon juice

4-6 whole cardamom

2-3 small sticks of cinnamon

Put the sugar in a saucepan. Add the water and lemon juice and mix well. Put over heat, add the figs and then bring to a boil. Lower the heat and leave to boil until they are shiny and translucent and the syrup is thick, but not too thick.



Mirebayî Qox: (Peach jam)

500 g / 1 lb firm peaches

300 g / 10 oz sugar

2 Tbsp lemon juice

Cut the peaches in half and remove the stones. Cut the peaches into 1 cm thick slices, put into a small deep saucepan, add the lemon juice and cover with a little sugar. **(If the saucepan is wide the fruit will not be completely covered with the sugar)**. Put on a low heat and as the sugar melts add more of the sugar until all the sugar has been added. Cover and leave over a very low heat for about an hour or until the syrup is thick.

Mirebayî Qeysî: (Apricot jam)

500 g / 1 lb firm apricots
500 g / 1 lb sugar

Cut the apricots in half and remove the stones. Cover with sugar. Cook in the same way as the peaches, but do not add lemon juice as with the peaches.



Mirebayî Gêlas: (Cherry jam)

500 g / 1 lb cherries
400-500 g / 1 lb sugar
100 g / ½ pint water
1 Tbsp lemon juice



Make a light syrup with the sugar, adding the water and boiling for 2-3 minutes. Then add the cherries and leave to cook on a low heat until it thickens. A teaspoon of lemon juice can be added if the cherries are very sweet. It is important to remove any white foam that appears on top of the jam while it is boiling.

Most fruits with hard skins can be made in this way.

SWEETS

Basoq: (Dried grape syrup)

4 1 / 8 pt. grape syrup
500 g / 1 lb white flour

Put the grape syrup in a large saucepan and bring to a boil, stirring all the time. Simmer slowly and when it starts to get very thick, add the flour. Mix well and then spread the paste onto a floured board or tray and roll it flat. Then cut it into 2-4 cm squares. Dust with flour and store.

Sincok: (Grape syrup with chopped almonds and walnuts, often served with basoq)

4 1 / 8 pt grape syrup
500 g / 1 lb almonds
500 g / 1 lb walnuts

(The quantity of nuts can be decreased or increased)

Put the grape syrup in a large saucepan and bring to boil, stirring all the time. Simmer slowly and when it starts to get very thick add the chopped nuts and mix well. Flour a board and then pour out the mixture on it and roll into a long sausage about 2 cm in diameter (a little thicker or thinner is also possible). Dust with flour. This can then be cut into 10 cm long pieces to store. These are served as sweetmeats, snacks, after meals and in the evenings.

In the villages people eat their evening meal early, so later on these small dishes are served on large trays with a variety of different sweetmeats, nuts, salted seeds and dried fruits such as raisins, prunes, apricots, pomegranates and dates.

Helwayî Şekir:

This pudding is very popular in Kurdistan. It is used as a dessert or eaten with bread or for lunch or dinner especially by poorer people. On most occasions you find this pudding with other foods, but the

most important occasion is at funerals. On the fourth day of the funeral, the family and friends go to the burial ground to see their beloved buried. In the early morning before they go, they prepare a large amount of this pudding with freshly baked bread, either home baked or bought from the shop. Sometimes it is served with pilau instead.

They put a full cup of the pudding in the middle of the round bread, then they fold it and put it in a big container. At the burial ground it is given out to people and at home it is given to neighbours, poor people or to anyone else who wants some! People believe that this helps the spirit of the deceased and God will bless him or her.

150 g / 5 oz white flour (**wheat flour**)
100 ml / 4 fl oz cooking oil or ghee (**clarified butter**)
100-150 g / 4-6 oz sugar
500 ml / 1 pt water
1 tsp each of ground cardamom, coriander and fennel seeds
2 Tbsp rose water
Pinch of salt

Heat the water and the sugar together until the sugar melts and forms a light syrup. Then take off the heat and keep to one side. Heat the oil until smoking; add the flour, stirring all the time, until the colour changes to light brown. Remove from the heat. Add the syrup to the browned flour; stir quickly until well mixed. Return the pan to low heat. Stir continuously until the mixture becomes a very thick paste and does not stick to the pan. Add the seasoning, mix well and remove from the heat. Place in a flat dish, smooth over and flatten the surface with a spoon. Decorate with blanched browned almonds.

Serve hot or cold.

Ħelwayî Nişaste: (Cornflour Ħelwayî)

4 Tbsp cornflour
6-8 Tbsp sugar
4 Tbsp ghee / clarified butter
450 ml / 15 fl oz water
1 tsp ground cardamom or 1 Tbsp rose water
100 g / 4 oz walnuts or almonds (**half should be ground, half finely chopped**)
Pinch of salt

Put the cornflour in a bowl and mix in the sugar then the water; salt and combine well.

Fry the chopped nuts very lightly in a frying pan and then remove them from the oil with a slotted spoon and keep to one side. Fry the ground nuts lightly in the same oil and add the cornflour mixture stirring well, cook until it thickens. Add the flavouring, either the cardamom or rose water, and then add half the fried chopped nuts and mix well.

Pour onto a flat dish and flatten with the back of a spoon. Decorate with the rest of the fried nuts. Serve hot or cold. Halved instead of chopped almonds can be used as decorations.

Ground Mistekî or natural chewing gum can be added in the final stage to thicken it.

Helwayî Gülezerd: (Rosepetal Helwayî)

Strongly perfumed yellow roses are commonly used, but other rose petals can be used.

25 g / 1 oz dried yellow rose petals

200 g / 7 oz ghee (**clarified butter**)

200 g / 7 oz sugar

125 g / 4 oz ground walnuts or mixed walnuts and almonds

200 ml / 7 fl oz water

2 tsp rose water (**2-3 tsp cardamom or cinnamon can be used instead of the rosewater**)

A few halved almonds for decoration

Wash the petals and put them in a saucepan, cover with water and boil them for 5 minutes to extract the bitterness. Drain and wash with cold water and drain again and squeeze out excess water from the petals. Heat the ghee and drop the rose petals into the hot ghee, stirring for 2-3 minutes, then add the ground nuts, stirring again and mixing to combine all together well until the colour changes to brown. Dissolve the sugar in the water. Turn off the heat, then add the sugar solution to the petal mixture. Put the pan on the heat again, stirring the mixture until it becomes a thick pudding. Add the rose water or spices and combine well. Remove from the heat. Put in a flat dish, it can be decorated with lightly fried halved almonds.

Serve hot.

Helwayî Birinc: (Rice Helwa)

300 g / 12 oz ground rice
200 g / 7 oz oil or ghee
300 g / 12 oz sugar
1½ l / 2½ pt water
1 tsp cardamom or 2 Tbsp rosewater
50 g / 2 oz almond flakes

Put the oil in a saucepan and gently fry the almonds to slightly change their colour. Remove the almonds with a slotted spoon. Then add the ground rice to the hot oil and stir well until it changes colour to a reddish brown. Remove from the heat. Dilute the sugar in the water and add to the fried rice, mix well and return to a low heat until it thickens to a doughlike consistency. Then add the rosewater or cardamom and half of the almonds. Mix well. Remove from the heat. Then spread this mixture onto a flat plate and smooth the surface, it should be about 2 in or 5 cm thick. Decorate the top with the remaining almonds. It can be eaten hot or cold.

Mihellebî Birinc:(Rice pudding)

500 ml / 1 pt milk
75-100 g / 3-4 oz sugar (according to taste)
50 g / 2 oz of ground rice
1 tsp ground cardamom (optional)
1 Tbsp rosewater (a reasonably strong one, optional)
Cinnamon for decoration

Mix the milk, sugar and the ground rice together.

Put the mixture in a saucepan and put over medium heat, stirring continuously, until it thickens. Add the cardamom; keep stirring. Remove from the heat, add the rosewater and mix well. Put in a dish and garnish with ground cinnamon.

The amount of ground rice can be varied, as some people like this dish to be thick or almost solid and others thin and runny.

Cornflour or wheat flour can be used instead of ground rice.

2 Tbsp of rosewater can be used and no cardamom, especially with cornflour.

Mihellebî Aow: (Water Pudding)

3 l / 3½ pt water (more if a thinner lighter version preferred)

200 g / 7 oz cornflour

400 g / 14 oz sugar

5 Tbsp rosewater

1 tsp cardamom (optional)

Cinnamon or ground nuts for decoration (optional)

In a saucepan mix the sugar and cornflour into the water. Place over a medium heat and stir until it thickens. Then add the rosewater (and cardamom). Place into small serving bowls and sprinkle lightly with cinnamon or ground nuts. Allow to cool. Serve when cold.



Semenî:

Semenî is made from the juice of wheat sprouts and wheat flour and is rather healthy, without any added sugar or fat.

This pudding is very traditional in Kurdistan. It is a special pudding made for Newroz and spring. It is believed that it brings good luck and blessings. It can be prepared in small amounts for a family but is often prepared in large quantities in one family house, and then shared amongst family and friends. Usually about 5 kg of wheat and 15 kg of flour is used.

This pudding is prepared from whole wheat, which is cleaned and washed and then put in cold water for 24 hours. Then it is spread out on wicker trays and covered with a thin white cotton cloth and sprinkled with cold water. Keep the cloth moist by sprinkling regularly for 5-7 days. Just when the sprouts are beginning to turn green (if they turn green they cannot be used as they will make the pudding bitter) remove them from the tray and grind them to a pulp (traditionally with a wooden mortar and pestle, or nowadays in a food processor). Then squeeze the pulp pressing the juice through a sieve.

Mix the remaining pulp with some water and then put through the sieve again. Repeat this three times, until all the taste and flavour have gone into the liquid. Then throw away the pulp.

The liquid is put in a large pan and the flour is mixed well into it. Add water until the mixture lightly coats a wooden spoon. The pan is put over a very low fire (traditionally a wood fire) and seven young virgins take turns stirring the liquid, from sunset to sunrise, and everyone makes wishes for the following year. It is a very joyful time and everyone comes to the celebrations, singing and dancing and wishing until the early morning while the mixture thickens to a sweet brown pudding. Then the fire is removed from under the pan and covered with a lid and left until the sun has risen.

Then the oldest person in the household comes and removes the lid. The pudding will have lines of cracks along the top and it is said that this is a mark of the fingers of angels and that everyone's wishes will be granted. Then the elder removes the marks from the top of the pudding which is then shared out amongst family and friends and those who have contributed flour for the making of the pudding. Portions of *semenî* are sent to many people. It is sent in a bowl and the recipient sends the bowl back with a small gift inside showing their appreciation.

To make a smaller amount take:

500 g / 1 lb whole wheat grain

1½ kg / 3 lb wheat flour

Water

Wash the wheat and put it in cold water for 24 hours. Then wrap the wheat in a wet fine cotton cloth and keep moist for another 24 hours, sprinkling with water from time to time, for 5-7 days until the sprouts are just beginning to turn green. Alternatively the wheat can be laid out on a wooden tray and covered with a cotton cloth and then sprinkled from time to time as before.

When the wheat is ready, remove from the tray and grind in a food processor. Push the mixture through a sieve, mix the remaining pulp in a bowl with a little water and then put back in the sieve. Repeat this three times until all the flavour has transferred into the liquid. Now gradually mix in the flour until the mixture is thin enough to lightly coat a wooden spoon. Put the liquid in a saucepan and then

cook over a very slow heat stirring all the time until it comes to a boil and then keep stirring until it thickens. Then leave to thicken a bit more, until the consistency of rice pudding. Take off the heat and allow to cool. Keep covered and serve it in small bowls. Traditionally it is eaten without any additions, but anyone can add spices or rose water or colour to decorate it.

Paqlewe:

This is a dish that is well known throughout the Middle East with many local variations. This version is typically made in Sulemani, where there are a lot a walnuts. We start by making the syrup.

Sugar syrup

400 g / 12 oz sugar
1 tsp lemon juice
400 ml / 16 fl oz water
1 Tbsp rose water

Put the sugar and lemon juice and water in a small saucepan and bring to a boil, stirring until the sugar dissolves. Cook over a low heat for 5-10 minutes. Take off the heat and add the rose water.



Paqlewe

600 g / 1 lb white wheat flour
2 eggs
100 g / 4 oz butter or oil
125 g / 4 oz ground walnuts
50 g / 2 oz sugar
2 tsp cardamom
2 tsp cinnamon
Cornflour (for dusting the board and the dough)
Pinch of salt
200 ml / 8 fl oz water
150 ml / 4 fl oz melted butter or oil for brushing layers and final dressing

Put the flour in a large bowl, add the oil or butter and rub it into the flour using your finger tips until it is all crumbly. Then add the egg, mix well with your hands and then add the water gradually, mixing all the time until you have a soft dough. Divide the dough into 18 small balls. Place on a board and cover with a damp cloth and leave for 15-20 minutes.

Whilst the dough is settling, prepare the filling by mixing together the walnuts, sugar, cinnamon and cardamom.

When the dough is ready, sprinkle a pastry board and a rolling pin with cornflour. Take one ball of dough and roll it out until it is as thin as you can get it, paper-thin if possible, keeping it round.

Oil a round baking tray and place the pastry on it. Sprinkle with a little oil or brush some melted butter on it. Repeat this process with five more balls, laying these six layers one on top of the other.

Then spread half of the walnut mixture on top of the pastry, covering it all. Prepare another six layers, putting each one on top of the other, making sure that you oil or butter each layer. Then add the other half of the walnut mixture spreading it on top as before and then cover this with the remaining six layers in the same way, oiling between each one.

With a very sharp knife, mark a series of parallel lines, about 10 across the pastry. Then cut right through along these lines. Turn the tray around and cut another ten lines across, right through to the bottom, making a set of diamond shapes (**not squares**). Pour the remaining oil along the cuts. Put the tray in the oven at 180 C or 350F for one hour or until the top of the pastry is light brown in colour.

When the pastry is done take it out of the oven and pour the sugar syrup over it **immediately**. The syrup should go over it when the pastry is still very hot.

Ready made filo pastry and sugar syrup can be used instead. The filo pastry is square or oblong and so a square or oblong baking tray should be used.

Burme:



Using the same quantities and ingredients as for paqlewe, burme is simply a different shape.

Roll the pastry thin or take the filo sheets and cut each one into 4 oblongs. Put a little of the nut mixture along one of the long edges, leaving about 1 cm clear at each end. Place a thin rolling stick about the diameter of a fat pencil along the edge with the mixture and then roll it up like a fat cigarette or tube. Then wet your finger tips and seal along the long edge pressing the pastry onto itself. Then push in the two ends towards each other, which will make the pastry in the middle of the tube crinkle a little and concertina up. The tube should end up about half its original length. Then pull out the rolling stick. Sometimes oil is brushed on top of each burme.

Put on a baking tray and cook for 20 minutes in a moderate oven. Take them out of the oven and one by one dip in sugar syrup or icing sugar while the burme are still hot. You can leave them as they are.

Arrange them in a serving dish. Serve hot with tea coffee or cold drinks. This is usually served on special occasions, feasts and celebrations, but they are also often simply eaten when the fancy takes one.

Burme can be of different lengths; traditionally they are quite long, but at home it is easier to make them shorter.

Both paqlawe and burme can be deep frozen or just kept well covered in the fridge for a long time.

Zelebîye:

500 g / 1 lb white wheat flour

1 1 / 2 pt soft yoghurt

Pinch of salt

Sugar syrup

Rose water (optional)



Mix the flour, salt and yoghurt to make a thick batter, adding water if necessary. Cover and leave the mixture for about 40 minutes in a warm place.

Heat some oil in a frying pan; when it is very hot, take a funnel and pour a ladle full of the batter into the pan through the funnel, moving the funnel around to make circles or a spiral from the centre out, or crossing over. It is not necessary to use a funnel, you can work directly from the ladle if you have a steady hand. There should

be many gaps between the spiral twists. Let it fry until golden. Then remove the zelebîye from the pan and dip in some sugar syrup, let the syrup drain off a little and the place on a dish. Repeat this process until all the batter is used up.

Arrange on a serving dish. These can be eaten hot or cold and served with tea or coffee.

An alternative dough can be made from flour, one egg and water or from cornflour, yeast, egg and water.

Luqme:

I remember my mother making these whenever we were expecting special guests. My uncle who lived in Baghdad would write to my mother-in-law when he was coming to Sulemani asking her to prepare luqme for his arrival. They were highly appreciated.



- 500 g / 1 lb white flour to which is added a pinch of salt
- 400 ml / 15 fl oz water
- 4 eggs
- 2 Tbsp oil
- Oil for frying
- 500 ml / 1 pt sugar syrup

Heat the oil in the frying pan adding the water and bring to a boil; remove from the heat and add the flour. Mix it well very quickly, with a wooden spoon.

Put the mixture on a very low heat, stirring continuously, until it becomes a very thick dough. Remove from the heat and allow to cool. When it is cool add the eggs one by one and knead well until it becomes a soft and smooth dough.

Fill a deep frying pan with oil, it should be 2 in deep, or deep enough to cover the balls you are going to make. Do not heat it at the moment. Oil your hands and make balls about 2-3 cm / 1 in diameter. Put the balls in the cold oil in the pan. When you have finished making enough balls to fill the pan, without any balls

touching each other, then place over a medium heat and leave to fry until golden.

Place the sugar syrup in a wide and shallow bowl. Take the balls out of the oil with a slotted spoon, letting the oil drain back into the pan. Then immediately place them in the sugar syrup and leave to soak.

Serve hot or cold.

This pastry is made for special occasions or for special guests and is served with tea or coffee.

Gilûl: (From Duhok region, yoghurt pudding)

500 ml / 1 pt water

250 ml / ½ pt yoghurt

100 g / 3 oz white short grain (**pudding**) rice

1 tsp cardamom or dried mint or a few drops of mint oil (**optional**)

4 Tbsp grape syrup

2 Tbsp butter

Put the water in a saucepan and mix with the plain yoghurt and rice and seasoning. Heat until it boils, simmer over a low heat until it is thick and the rice is really soft.



Take some (6) pudding bowls and divide the rice pudding among the bowls. Leave to get cold. Mix the syrup with the butter combining well. Then pour / spread some of the syrup over the rice pudding, covering the top. Serve cold as a dessert.

Xurmaw Ron: (Dates a Egg)

- 500 g / 1 lb soft, stoned, dried dates
- 4 eggs
- 4 Tbsp oil or butter
- Walnuts (**optional**)

Put oil in a pan over a low heat and add the dates, pressing them down with a wooden spoon to break them up. Keep stirring all the time to avoid burning the dates until they become a paste. Add the eggs one by one and mix gently with the dates until the eggs are roughly mixed in and cooked but the mixture is still streaked with white. Put the mixture into a flat dish and spread out evenly. Garnish with ground walnuts (**optional**).

White cheese, which has not been salted, can be used instead of eggs.

Doşaw Kuncî: (Koysincaq region; baked sesame with grape syrup)

This is very popular in this region and is eaten for breakfast

250 g / 8 oz grape syrup
150 g / 5 oz sesame seeds
1 Tbsp butter (**optional**)

Take a frying pan and put over a medium heat. Pour in the sesame seeds and roast until they give off a nice aroma, about 2-3 minutes. Put the seeds in a liquidiser and grind.

Put the syrup in a bowl, add the roasted sesame and mix well. Serve in a bowl.

More sesame can be added if you prefer the consistency. If using butter add it also at this point and mix in well.

This is used as a dip or spread on bread for breakfast or for a snack. If more seeds are added it becomes harder and more like a sweet.

Loqum: (Rahethulqum)

(This is similar to the sweet known as Turkish delight)

1 kg / 2 lb sugar
4 l / 8 pt water
200 g / 8 oz cornflour
1 tsp lemon juice
100 g / 4 oz walnuts or almonds coarsely chopped (**this quantity can be doubled if desired, some people like it very nutty**)
2 Tbsp rose water or 2 tsp cardamon powder or ½ tsp vanilla essence

Mix half of the water with the cornflour. Put the other part of the water in a saucepan over the heat and add the sugar and lemon juice. Keep stirring while the sugar dissolves. Add the cornflour mixture and mix well to get rid of any lumps. Stir from time to time until it thickens. Add the nuts and the rose water; mix well. Sprinkle a little cornflour or ground nuts (**these days even coconut is used**) over a flat serving dish or tray. Pour the mixture over the tray spreading it evenly and leave to cool. Some more of the nut or coconut mixture can be sprinkled on the top as well. Cut with a sharp knife into 2-4 cm squares.

Helwayî Gêzer:

1 kg / 2 lb carrots (yellow, if possible)
150 g / 5 oz oil or butter
300 g / 12 oz sugar
100 g / 4 oz chopped walnuts
100 g / 4 oz wheat flour
1 tsp cardamom
1 tsp lemon juice
570 ml / 1 pt water

Cut the carrots in half lengthwise and remove the centres if hard. Chop finely or put through a grinder.

Put the carrots in a saucepan and cover with water and put over the heat. Leave to boil until soft. Drain and keep the juice to use it later. Put the oil over the heat, add the carrots and cook, stirring for about 10 minutes. Add the flour, mix well and cook stirring until the colour changes.

Add the sugar and lemon juice to the carrot juice to make up to a pint. Put in a saucepan and dissolve the sugar over a low heat. When the sugar is dissolved add to the carrot mixture and add the walnuts and cardamom. Mix well and stir continuously over a low heat until the mixture thickens and becomes like a dough.

Spread into a flat plate and sprinkle with some chopped walnuts.

Herîse: (Semolina pudding from Kamishly and Amûdê region)

This pudding is often sold by street vendors

500 g / 1 lb semolina
250 ml / ½ pt milk
100 g sugar
1 tsp baking powder
150 g / 5 oz ground almonds or walnuts or coconuts
1 tsp cardamom or 2 Tbsp rose water

Syrup

500 g / 1 lb sugar
275 ml / ½ pt water
1 tsp lemon juice

Mix the semolina with the sugar and nuts and baking powder in a bowl. Add the milk and mix well. Leave for 15 minutes.

Meanwhile make the syrup. Mix the sugar, lemon juice and water in a saucepan over the heat and add the cardamom or rose water. Bring the syrup to boil and cook for 10 minutes.

Oil a round oven tray (35cm / 13 in in diameter). Pour in the semolina mixture and shake gently to make sure it is evenly spread. Put into a hot oven, 200C / 400F / Gas Mark 6, for 45 minutes or until the surface is light brown. Remove from the oven.

Spread the syrup over the top of the pudding and cut with a sharp knife into square or diamond shapes like paqlawe.

Lebzîne:

1 kg / 2 lb sugar

750 g / 1½ lb white flour

2 tsp lemon juice

275 ml / ½ pt water

½ Tbsp cardamom powder

Cinnamon powder

In a saucepan dissolve the sugar in the water and add the lemon juice. Heat gently until the sugar starts to become threadlike and syrupy; put on one side immediately. Take care not to over cook or it will become too hard. Let the syrup mixture cool a little and then add the flour and mix well. Then add the cardamom and mix in. Sprinkle cinnamon onto a small tray, covering it all over, and then spread the mixture on the tray over the cinnamon. Leave to cool and then cut into diamond or triangular shapes about 2-3 cm long.

Some drops of rose oil can be added instead of the cardamom.

This is sold in shops and sent as a gift to friends.

Mesket:

Same as lebzîne except that 50 g / 2 oz of coarsely chopped walnuts are added to the dough at the same time as the cardamom. Cinnamon is not used, instead cornflour is sprinkled over the tray. Then the mixture is spread over the tray and cut into squares.

A larger quantity of walnuts can be used according to taste.

Gezo Kuncî:

1 kg / 2 lb sesame seeds
300 g / 11 oz sugar
Rosewater or cardamom
2 tsp lemon juice

Lightly roast the sesame seeds in a dry frying pan for a few seconds, taking care not to burn them. Put them immediately into a bowl as the heat of the pan may continue to burn them even when they come off the heat.

Put the sugar in a saucepan with the lemon juice and cover with water. Mix well and bring to a boil. When it starts to turn into a syrup add the sesame seeds and mix well. Add the rosewater or cardamom. Then spread this mixture over a tray which has first been sprinkled with flour; leave to cool and cut into diamonds or squares or whatever shape you want.

Şekirleme:

3 eggs
400 g / 14 oz sugar
300 g / 10 oz butter
500 g / 1 lb wheat flour
2 tsp baking powder
1 tsp cardamom or 2 Tbsp rosewater or vanilla essence to flavour
2 Tbsp almond flakes or walnut pieces or pistachios for decoration

Preheat the oven to 150C / 300F / Gas Mark 2.

Mix the butter into the flour, then add the other ingredients and mix well to make a dough. Make into small marble sized balls and press a nut on top of each ball. Line a baking tray with baking paper. Place these balls on the baking tray about 2 cm apart. Then put in the oven and bake until they start to brown a little. Do not overcook as they will get black quickly. Then take out and allow to cool and harden before removing from the baking paper as they might break if still warm and soft.

These are served with tea or coffee as a snack.

Helwayî Gezo:

1 kg / 2 lb ground gezo

1½ l / 2½ pt water

2 egg whites

1 Tbsp ground aspen wood (**for whitening, can be omitted**)

1 Tbsp ground cardamom

200 g chopped walnuts

1 tsp lemon juice

Cornflour or white flour for covering the tray

Put the Espon in 2-3 Tbsp water in a saucepan over a low heat until it froths, take off the heat.

Add the ground gezo to water and put over a medium heat stirring to dissolve the gezo. The leaves and twigs will separate out to the top; take these off with a fine sieve and keep the clear syrup. Return the clear syrup over the heat and add the egg whites. Mix well with the syrup. The egg whites will also clear the syrup a bit; again skim off any twigs and leaves, etc. with the egg whites. Use a small slotted spoon or sieve. Readymade syrup can be used instead.

Leave it to boil over a medium heat until it becomes thick, then add the lemon juice and sieved aspen water. Mix well. It should be thick. Then add the chopped walnuts.

Sprinkle a tray with cornflour and spread the syrup mixture over the cornflour. Sprinkle more cornflour over the top. Sprinkle a little cornflour over a sharp knife and cut the gezo into 5 cm square pieces. Make sure each piece is covered with flour. It is usually stored in wooded boxes and kept for a long time.

Sesame Gezo:

500 g / 1 lb gezo syrup

500 g / 1 lb sesame seeds (**white or brown**)

1 Tbsp lemon juice

1 Tbsp rose water

2 Tbsp water

Put the syrup and water and lemon juice in a saucepan and place over a medium heat and bring to a boil. Put the sesame seeds in a pan and dry roast them slightly. Add them to the boiling syrup, stirring all the time until it becomes a thick paste. Spread the paste 2-3 cm thick onto a flat, floured tray and leave to cool. Cut into square shapes, 4-5 cm large. This is eaten as a sweet.

Şirûbî:

500 g / 1 lb sugar
300 ml / 11 fl oz water
80 g / 3 oz starch added to 80 ml water
1 tsp lemon juice
1 tsp rose water
Drop of food colouring (**usually red is used**)
40 g / 1½ oz sugar

Put the first amount of sugar (**500 g**) in a saucepan and add the water. Put over the heat, add the starch solution and stir well. Leave over a medium heat, add the colour and rose water and mix well. Cook gently until it becomes soft like a pudding. Then add the lemon juice. Test it with your finger, if it does not stick to your finger it is ready. Do not let it get too hard. Add the 40 g of sugar and mix in well and remove from heat.

Sprinkle a tray with starch and pour the pudding over the flour spread it evenly and allow to cool. Then cut into 2-3 cm squares. Sprinkle some more starch on top.

Mecûmî:

1 kg / 2 lb sugar
1 l / 1½ pt water
Colouring
1 tsp rose water

Put the sugar and water together in a saucepan and mix well until all the sugar has dissolved. Put over a medium heat and bring to boil. Do not stir until it gets thick. Test it by putting a drop of the mixture into cold water: if it hardens it is ready. Then add the colour and rose water, mix in and pour over an oiled tray. Put the tray over another

tray containing cold water. Leave to get cold and thicken. When it gets cold, turn the whole piece over with your hands and make into 2-3 balls. Take a ball in your hands, then pull it, push it, stretch it and push it together until it starts to lighten in colour. Then take pieces of the mixture and make shapes with them. Lay the shapes on a tray and leave to harden.

Institut kurde de Paris

THICK SOUPS & SAUCES ŞORBA



Şorba / Chest / Shiew or thick soups

There is a kind of Kurdish dish that is somewhere between a soup and a stew and is very commonly eaten. It is thicker than a soup and is used for meals at all times of day, from breakfast to dinner, for everyday and for special occasions. Each one has its own unique name.

There are a variety of these dishes, made from meat, vegetables, fruits, legumes, eggs, grains, rice, wheat, barley or from mixtures of many of these ingredients. These dishes are traditionally eaten with Kurdish dried crisp bread or with the soft thin bread.

Other bread can be used but the crisp bread is best to dip into the food, and it is often used as a way of spooning the food to one's mouth.

Another way to eat them is for the bread to be cut into small pieces and put into each person's own bowl, then the soup is then poured over the bread. This is eaten with a spoon.

A Kurdish professor and friend of ours, Dr Jamal Nebez, says that the word Şorba comes from şor meaning salty. Originally from the Kurdish language, it has become so much part of Arabic that it is presumed to be an Arabic word.

Berbisêle / Quřaw: (Spring lamb with yoghurt)

1 kg / 2 lb yoghurt

1 kg / 2 lb young lamb cut into 10 pieces

¾ bunches of spring onions

Salt

1 egg lightly beaten

1 1 / 2 pt water or more if it is very thick

1tsp turmeric (**optional**)

Mix the yoghurt and the water with the beaten egg add the salt (**and the turmeric if using**) in a saucepan, bring to boil stirring well. Then add the meat in pieces and leave to simmer for about 20 minutes if young, or longer, until it is cooked. Then chop the spring onions and fry lightly in oil. (**Frying can be omitted**). Add the onions to the sauce and mix well. Leave it to cook over a low heat for another 10 minutes until it thickens a little. It can then be served with bread or with rice or on its own. About 2 Tbsp of hot butter can be poured on at the end as a garnish. The turmeric can be added to the butter instead of at the beginning if preferred.

Chicken can be used instead of spring lamb.

Berbisêle / Quřaw 2: (Spring lamb with yoghurt)

Traditionally very young newborn lambs are used for this. The quality of the meat is very important.

- 1 kg / 2 lb yoghurt
- 1 kg / 2 lb young lamb cut into 10 pieces
- $\frac{3}{4}$ bunches of spring onions or mint or a mixture of both
- 2 tsp salt

Add salt to the chopped meat and put over the heat stirring from time to time until it becomes tender. If not yet tender, add a little water and continue to cook until tender. Put the yoghurt in a separate saucepan. Place over a medium heat and, stirring all the time, bring to a boil. If it is very thick, add some water. Then add to the meat and mix well. Add the mint and or spring onions.

řorba Xeyar:(Cucumber soup)

- 1 medium cucumber
- 1 small bunch of small leeks or spring onions and chives, chopped
- 1 bunch of watercress, chopped
- 1 Tbsp flour (**wheat or barley**)
- Salt
- Black pepper or a red chili (**optional**)
- Oil for frying
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 570 ml / 1 pt water

Fry the chopped onion. Add the flour and mix well until just changing colour. Cut the cucumber lengthwise into four and remove the seeds, then cut into 2 cm pieces. Then add to the fried onions for a few minutes. Add the chopped leeks and the watercress, cook for a moment then add the water. Bring to a boil, then simmer on a low heat for 10-15 minutes. Add salt and pepper.

Serve hot with bread. It is often eaten as a side dish.

řorba Bayîncan:(eggplant soup)

- 1 medium eggplant (**about 500 g / 1 lb**)
- 300 ml / 10 fl oz of diluted Keřik
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped and fried until brown
- 1 Tbsp chopped fresh mint
- 2 cloves garlic
- 250 g / 8 oz minced lamb (**optional**)

Roast the whole eggplant until the skin is black. Then remove the skin and mash the eggplant. Mix well with the Keşik in a bowl, then put in a saucepan and bring to a boil. Simmer gently for 5 minutes. Put the soup in a serving dish and garnish with the fried onion and the garlic and the mint.

If using meat, fry it until brown and then add it to the Keşik and eggplant mixture before bringing to boil. Then it is necessary to cook the soup a little longer until the meat is tender.

Şorba Kerewiz: (Celery Soup)

250 g / 8 oz finely chopped lamb

250 g / 8 oz parsley or celery leaves, finely chopped.

Salt

Pepper (optional)

1 tsp saffron or 1 Tbsp tomato puree

1 Tbsp yellow split peas

1 Tbsp unripe grape or sumac juice

570 ml / 1 pt water

Fry the meat in a saucepan in a little oil until the colour changes thoroughly. Then add the parsley and stir well. Add the tomato puree if used. Add the water and the split peas and bring to a boil. Add the saffron (if used) and the salt and grape juice. Simmer until the meat and the split peas are soft.

Serve hot with bread.

Tirxene: (Turnips with cracked wheat)

This is a very traditional Kurdish dish, especially in Sulemani province, prepared from leafy turnips and cracked wheat. It is very interesting and it takes a long time and a lot of work until it becomes ready to eat. Anyone arriving in town is immediately offered some Tirxene to eat, as it is considered the most typical food from Sulemani.

I remember when my mother was thinking about making tirxene. She had to ask someone who knew his turnips to bring her a large quantity of baby ones, usually about 50 kg / 100 lb, or even more.

When the turnips arrived usually from farms around the city, my mother had to ask 2-3 people to help her prepare the tixrene.

It begins with washing and cleaning the turnips and draining them; a large drainer made from straw (**kulîne**) is used. Then 7-10 kg / 15-20 lb of cracked wheat are put into a large saucepan, water is poured on the wheat until the water just covers it and salt is added after being brought to a boil. Then the pan is removed from the heat and the wheat allowed to cool.

Then the turnips are shredded or chopped with their leaves (like a salad), leaving a few turnips whole (**these are handed out when serving as a special treat**). The shredded turnips are mixed with the cold boiled cracked wheat and put in large clay jars with a little water and covered with a lid, then covered with a cloth to keep them warm. After three days, half of the mixture is removed from the top and placed in separate clay bowl. Then the bottom half of the mixture is removed and placed into another bowl. The top half of the mixture is put back into the jar and then the bottom half placed on top and the lid replaced covered with a cloth as previously, and left for another week. Then it is tasted and by this time it should be very sour and have become a very tasty thick pickle. My mother would often send it to relatives and friends. A small amount was put in a nice small bowl and sometimes mixed with pomegranate seeds to give a nice colour to the pickle.

Then balls (**tennis ball size**) are made from the pickle and put on a straw mat in the sun to dry. The balls are turned every day to ensure that they dry throughout. When completely dry the balls are put into clay pots and stored for winter. Nowadays Tixrene is put in the freezer.

The following recipes are examples of how we use this kind of pickle in our cooking after it is dried:

Tixrene 2: (Tixrene with lamb and nuts and dried fruit)

500 g / 1 lb lean lamb cut into large pieces (**about 6**)

200 g / 7 oz whole brown lentils

100 g / 4 oz chickpeas

4 balls dried tixrene (**more can be used**)

8 stoned dates

100 g / 4 oz chopped walnuts

2 Tbsp tomato puree (**optional**)
1 medium beetroot, diced
Salt

Wash the chickpeas and soak in cold water overnight then drain.

Put the balls in cold water for 20-30 minutes

Boil the meat and the chickpeas until tender. Add the lentils and the diced beetroot to the boiled meat and peas. Mix together and cook over a low heat for 30 minutes adding more water if necessary. Add the remaining ingredients and the seasoning. Stir occasionally to prevent sticking. Lower the heat and cook for a further 30 minutes. Adjust the seasoning and thickness (**it must be medium thick**). The thickness depends on how you like it.

Serve hot with crispy bread or with spiced Kurdish pilau rice.

Çansoteke: (Tirxene with lamb or chicken)

500 g / 1 lb turkey or chicken or lamb meat
4 balls tirxene
1 medium onion
2 Tbsp oil or butter
1-2 Tbsp tomato puree
Salt

Put the tirxene balls in cold water for ½ hour. Boil the meat and add salt.

Cut the onion into small pieces and fry it in the oil in a saucepan. Add the tomato puree and fry it together with the onion for one minute. Add the meat and the tirxene with their juices. When it comes to a boil, lower the heat and leave it to cook for 30-40 minutes. Serve hot.

Doklû: (Rice with yoghurt; in some parts this is called Doxawa)

This dish, although cooked at other times, is very special for spring and summer because people believe that it cools the blood.

It is special for spring because we have a lot of milk at that time and of course, a lot of yoghurt is made from it. Especially in villages, people use a lot of yoghurt in their food. They believe that the yoghurt of spring is very good for health because the animals a.

eating many different kinds of weeds and herbs, their milk thus becoming useful in treating many ailments and diseases.

This soup is very easy to prepare.

Ingredients

500 g / 1 lb thick natural yoghurt

1½ l / 3 pt water

150 g / 5 oz rice

1 Tbsp finely chopped fresh or dried mint

Salt

Mint leaves to garnish

Mix the yoghurt with the water and the salt.

Put the mixture on the heat, stirring continuously until it comes to a boil to prevent lumps and clots from forming in the sauce.

Wash the rice and add it to the sauce, stirring until it starts boiling again. Lower the heat and leave it to simmer for about 15 minutes. Add the mint, mix well, and turn off the heat.

Place in a deep bowl; garnish with mint leaves.

Serve hot with crispy thin flat bread.

Doklû with chickpeas: (As made in Mahabad in Iranian Kurdistan)

500 g / 1 lb natural yoghurt

200 g / 7 oz rice, long grain or short

100 g / 4 oz chickpeas **(soaked over night in cold water and boiled)**

500 g / 1 lb mix of spinach, spring onions, parsley and mint

1 egg or 1 Tbsp cornflour

Salt

Pepper

2 l / 3 pt **(approx)** water or meat stock

Prepare the chickpeas. Whisk the egg. Wash the rice. Shred the vegetables. Add the water to the yoghurt, then the egg. Put over the heat and mix well until it comes to a boil. Add the rice and bring back to a boil, and then add the other ingredients. Leave to boil over a low heat until the rice and the vegetables are soft. Add salt.

Serve hot with bread or as part of a meal.

Doklû with chickpeas: (As made in Zaxo)

500 g / 1 lb lamb meat chopped into 2 in squares
200 g / 7 oz boiled chickpeas or one tin drained of its liquid
3 medium onions sliced into rings
1 Tbsp dried mint
570 ml / 1 pt yoghurt
Salt
Water to cover

In a saucepan cover the meat with water and cook until soft. Fry the sliced onions in a little oil. Put the meat in a dish add the chickpeas; cover with the onions and cover with yoghurt. Garnish with mint and serve straight away.

Mehîr: (Cold yoghurt soup with garlic, from Syria – Dêrik and Tilkoçek)

1 1/2 pt yoghurt
1 1/2 pt water, or more if necessary
200 g / 7 oz pearl barley or wheat
2-4 cloves garlic
½ bunch fresh mint
1 egg
Salt

Wash the barley and leave to soak in cold water for 2-3 hours, then drain. Dilute the yoghurt with the water and mix with the egg. Stir well and put in a saucepan. Put over a slow heat and, stirring all the time, bring to a boil. Put in the barley and leave to simmer until the barley is soft. If the mixture gets too thick (**it should be medium thick**), add water. Take off the heat and leave to cool. Serve in a bowl garnished with crushed garlic and chopped mint. **Serve cold.**

Denok: (Chickpeas, meat and pearl barley or whole wheat From Qamişlî Syria)

200 g / 7 oz chickpeas
500 g / 1 lb minced meat, lamb or mutton and some lamb bones (**8 pieces**)
100 g / 4 oz skinned wheat or barley
1 medium onion, finely chopped

50 g / 2 oz shredded parsley and mint
Salt
Pepper
Turmeric

Soak the chickpeas in cold water over night. Also soak the wheat or barley in cold water overnight.

Put the chickpeas and wheat together in a large saucepan and put over heat, covering it with boiling water. Bring to a boil. Lower the heat and cook gently until all the ingredients are soft.

Fry the chopped onion until soft. Add the minced meat, then add the parsley mix and turmeric. Add this to the wheat mixture and season. Cook for 5-10 minutes on a low heat to mix the flavours.

Serve hot.

Dendûk:

500 g / 1 lb thick yoghurt
200 g / 7 oz cracked wheat (**soaked in cold water over night**) or bulgur
1 Tbsp wheat flour or 1 egg
1 1/2 pt water
Salt
250 g / 8 oz vegetables, if used, or a small bunch of the herbs
4 Tbsp ghee or oil

Dilute the yoghurt in the water in a saucepan, add the salt and the flour (**or egg**) and mix well. Put over the heat and bring to a boil stirring all the time. Add the cracked wheat and cook over a low heat for 20-30 minutes.

Put the soup in a serving bowl. Heat the oil in a small pan until it smokes, then pour over the soup. Serve immediately.

A variety of different vegetables and herbs can be added to this soup. Spinach, coriander, kinger, watercress, fennel, mint, or dill. One or more of these can be added to alter the taste.

Keşik can be used instead of yoghurt.

Daneroke: (Skinned wheat or barley and chickpea soup)

This soup is made when a child starts teething. Then a large amount is made and distributed to family and friends. In return the families that get the soup put something in the soup container and send it back to the child. They put in sweets, foods, eggs or any other presents to celebrate the event. This is done for every new child in the family.

How to prepare a small amount, since this is usually made in huge quantities:

200 g / 7 oz pearl barley or wheat
100 g / 4 oz chickpeas
2 Tbsp ghee or oil
1 medium onion, finely chopped
1 Tbsp dried oregano
Salt

Wash the chickpeas and the barley or wheat and soak in cold water over night.

Drain off the soaking liquid and wash. Put the chickpeas and barley in a saucepan and cover well with water. Bring to a boil and cook over a medium heat. A pressure cooker can be used as this reduces the time of cooking considerably. When the grain and peas become soft and the liquid is creamy, add the oregano. Fry the onion in oil until the colour changes to light brown and add to the soup, keeping the oil to one side. Mix well, then turn off the heat, it can be cooked for a further 10 minutes over a very slow heat.

Serve hot or cold and garnish with the oil the onions were fried in.

Maşâne: (Green Mung Bean soup)

200 g / 7 oz mung beans
100 g / 4 oz pearl barley or wheat or rice
2 Tbsp ghee or oil
1 medium onion, finely chopped
1½ l / 3 pt water (more if you like your soup thinner)
Salt

Soak the pearl barley or wheat overnight.

Place the beans in cold water, put over heat and bring to a boil to remove the skins **(if you want to remove them)**. The skins come off and the skins are taken off the top of the soup with a ladle or when cooked the beans are put through a sieve and the skins come off. It is not necessary to remove the skins. Many people leave them in the soup. In any case the beans are cooked until soft and sieved. Cook the pearl barley in a separate pan until it is very soft and breaks up into a cream. Then add the pureed beans.

Heat the oil in a frying pan and add the onion and fry until the onion is light brown.

Pour the soup into a serving bowl; it is rather thick and in consistency. Pour the onions and the oil over the soup. Serve with crispy bread.

A pressure cooker can be used for the beans and the barley to cut down the cooking time.

Mizewre: (Rice with vegetables and meat from Koye)

1 medium eggplant **(eggplant)**

1 medium zucchini **(zucchini)**

2 large tomatoes

500 g / 1 lb lamb or beef cut into 6 pieces

1 Tbsp tomato puree

Small bunch chopped parsley

1 small onion **(optional)**

200 g / 7 oz short grain rice **(can use long grain)**

4 Tbsp oil

Salt

1 1/2 pt water

2 Tbsp whole tırş or sumac berries, soaked in 5 Tbsp of cold water for an hour **(lemon juice can be used as an alternative)**

Wash the rice and leave it in cold water to soak.

Put the meat in a pan and cover with boiling water; add a little salt and then simmer on a medium heat until it is soft.

Wash and clean the vegetables. Cut the eggplant and zucchini into thick slices and then in half again. Do the same with the tomatoes and onion. Fry the eggplant and zucchini lightly in 2 Tbsp oil in a frying pan. Drain and put to one side. Then soften the onions in the rest of the oil, add the cooked meat, mix well with the onions then add

the chopped tomatoes and cook until the tomatoes are soft. Add the tomato puree, stir well and cook for a few minutes, then add the 4 cups of water and the tirş water or lemon.

Transfer the meat and tomato to a large deep saucepan and put on a medium heat. When it comes to a boil, add the rice. Bring to a boil again and then add the eggplant and the zucchini. Lower the heat and leave to simmer for 20 minutes. Just before serving add the finely chopped parsley and mix in well. The dish should be of a thick consistency.

Serve hot with crispy bread.

- 2 Tbsp yellow split peas can be added at the same time as the rice for colour and flavour.
- Other vegetables can be substituted, used on their own or in pairs, for example: spinach, chard, peppers, cauliflower, celery or turnips.
- Mint can be mixed with the parsley or used instead.

Helaw: (Rice with chickpeas, spinach and lamb from Sine)

500 g / 1 lb lamb on the bone cut into medium sized pieces with the bone

500g / 1 lb spinach

100g / 4 oz rice

100 ml / 4 fl oz sour grape juice or lemon juice

100g / 4 oz chickpeas soaked overnight

Drain the chickpeas and put them in a saucepan. Cover the chickpeas with cold water, bring to a boil and then simmer gently until soft.

Put the meat in a pan, cover with boiling water, add a pinch of salt and simmer until the meat is soft. Add the rice to the meat and the chickpeas. Stir and cook for a few minutes. Wash and then roughly chop the spinach and add to the meat and rice. When the spinach has reduced add the grape juice and salt .

Cook slowly for 20-30 minutes, if it is becoming too thick add a little water. The sauce should be thick (**like a tomato puree**) but not dry, and some people like it quite liquid. Season to taste, it should be sour, so more grape juice can be added.

Serve hot with crispy bread or with plain rice. Tinned chickpeas can be used instead.

Ĥelawî Nok: (Chickpeas, beetroot and lamb)

100 g / 4 oz chickpeas (**boiled**)
200 g / 8 oz lamb cut into small cubes, fat removed
1 bunch beetroot leaves, finely chopped
½ small bunch of mint, finely chopped
½ small bunch parsley, finely chopped
1 medium eggplant (**eggplant**)
200 g / 8 oz white, short grain rice
5-6 sour plums or juice of one lemon or unripe grape juice
1 1 / 2 pt water

In a large saucepan, boil the meat in 1 1 / 2 pt of water until soft. Add the chickpeas and the rice. Then chop the eggplants into small 2 cm cubes and add to the soup. Then add the herbs and the beetroot leaves and flavour with the plums or lemon juice and some salt to taste.

Serve hot in a large bowl and eat with bread.

Tirşî: (Rice with lamb liver soup)

500 g / 1 lb lamb liver (**or beef**)
500 g / 1 lb tomatoes
150 g / 5 oz rice (**short grain or long**)
1 medium onion, finely chopped



1 Tbsp oil
1 1 / 2 pt water
2 Tbsp lemon juice
2 Tbsp yellow split peas
2 Tbsp raisins
5 apricots or plums
Small bunch chopped fresh mint (50 g / 2 oz) or 1 Tbsp dried mint

Wash the liver and chop into medium-sized cubes. Place in a saucepan over the heat, stir until the liver is nearly dry. Add the oil to the liver and the finely chopped onion and fry for a few minutes until the onion is soft. Add the chopped tomatoes, stirring occasionally until it is soft. Add the 4 cups of hot water and bring to a boil.

Add the washed rice and the yellow split peas; bring to a boil again. Add the apricots, raisins and some salt; leave to simmer for 10-15 minutes, then add the chopped mint. Mix well, then take off the heat. The rice should be cooked but not mushy.

Serve hot with crispy bread, or with rice. Kebabs are sometimes served along with this dish.

This dish is traditionally made with all kinds of offal, including liver, kidneys, tongue, heart, throat and lung, all together. Other cuts of

meat can be used. Sometimes it is made without meat at all, then the quantity of tomatoes and onions can be increased.

Sengesîr 1: (Rabbit stew)

This dish is normally prepared from rabbit although chicken or lamb can be used.

- 1 rabbit (1 kg / 2 lb, approx) cut into 3-4 large pieces with bones
- 1 Tbsp wheat flour
- 750 g / 24 oz of keşk sauce (dried yoghurt) or fresh yoghurt slightly warmed in a pan
- 200 g / 7 oz brown lentils
- 700 ml / 25 fl oz water or meat stock more if needed
- 100 g / 4 oz short grain rice
- 1 large onion, finely sliced
- Pepper
- Salt
- Oil for frying



Boil the water in a saucepan, add the rabbit and bring back to boil. Cook for about 10 minutes until half cooked. Separate out half of the meat in order to mince it, Put the other half of the rabbit with all the bones to one side and cut the large pieces into a few smaller pieces, if you wish.

Mince the other meat finely and mix with the flour, pepper and salt; knead well. Divide into small portions to make 20-25 small balls. Fry them and put to one side.

Fry the sliced onion. Boil the lentils in the rabbit stock in a large saucepan for about 20 minute or until soft. Add more water if necessary. When soft add the rice. Then add the meat and the bones and mix well. Add salt and the Keşik or warmed yoghurt. Simmer for about 20 minutes or until soft. Add more water if necessary; it should resemble a thick sauce. Put in a bowl and garnish with the meatballs and fried onions.

Serve hot with bread.

Sengesîr 2: (Lamb with lentils and rice)

250 g / 8 oz short grain rice

250 g / 8 oz lentils

500 g / 1 lb minced meat.

Salt

1 tsp turmeric

Oil for frying

500g / 1 lb Keşik sauce (**dried yoghurt**)

Water

Soak the rice and the lentils in cold water for two hours. Drain. Separate into two halves. Mix the minced meat with one half and the turmeric and salt; make into a firm paste. Make into small balls. Then fry them in a little oil until cooked.

Put the rest of the rice and lentils in a saucepan and just cover with water. Bring the water to a boil, then turn down the heat and simmer until the rice and lentils are just soft and all the water is absorbed. Add more water if needed. Put to one side.

Put the Keşik sauce in a medium pan and heat, stirring all the time, until it comes to a boil. Then add the cooked rice and lentil mixture and stir well, and then cover and simmer for 5-10 minutes.

Then serve the rice mixture in a bowl and garnish with the kiftes and pour the oil over the top.

Silqaw: (Spinach soup)

500 g / 1 lb stewing lamb
1 kg / 2 lb spinach or Swiss chard
100 g / 4 oz chickpeas or other kinds of
peas / beans
200 g / 7 oz long or short grain rice
1 medium onion
2 Tbsp tomato puree (or 500 g / 1 lb
fresh tomatoes)
Salt
1 1 / 2 pt water
2 Tbsp lemon juice or juice from tirs
(sumac)



1 Tbsp oil

Soak the chickpeas overnight. Drain off the soaking water, and then put the chickpeas in a saucepan. Cover with water and bring to boil and simmer. Cook the chickpeas until soft and keep to one side. A pressure cooker is very useful.

Cut the onion finely, put it in a saucepan add the oil and put it over the heat. Fry until soft. Add the meat, stir it until it is soft and all the water is evaporated. If the meat is not soft at this point add water and repeat.

Chop the spinach into small pieces and add to the meat. Stir until the spinach has wilted. Add the tomato puree and combine with the mixture. Add the water, lemon juice and salt; add the chickpeas and their water and the washed rice. Leave to cook over a slow heat for 30 minutes. Adjust the seasoning to taste.

Serve hot with bread

Şorba Birinc be Mirîşk: (Chicken with rice)

200 g / 7 oz rice (short grain)
1 small chicken cut into 8 pieces
1 medium onion, finely chopped
1 Tbsp cooking oil (or butter)
Salt
1 tsp pepper (or more to taste)
1 tsp turmeric (or more to taste)
1 1 / 2 pt chicken stock or water

Wash the rice and leave to soak in cold water for 10 minutes.

Wash the chicken and put into a saucepan of lightly salted boiling water. Cook until soft, 15-20 mins approx, depending on the size and age of the chicken. Take the pieces out of the liquid and let them drain. Keep the liquid.

Put the oil in a medium saucepan and heat it. Add the chopped onion and fry gently until it is soft. Add the chicken pieces to the fried onions stirring 2-3 times and then add the water or stock and bring to boil. Cook for about 10 minutes or until half cooked.

Drain the rice and add it to the chicken, stirring it in and then bring back to a boil. Simmer over a medium heat until the rice is soft. Add the seasoning, adjust the taste and then cover with a lid.

Lower the heat and leave for another 10 minutes, serve hot in a large bowl with crispy bread and fresh herbs.

This dish can be garnished with some fresh chopped tarragon sprinkled over the top of the chicken and rice.

This dish can also be cooked without the onion, and, in that case, the rice is added directly to the chicken when it has been boiled and they are cooked together.

Nískêne: (Lentil Soup)

- 200 g / 7 oz orange lentils
- 100 g / 4 oz rice
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 2 Tbsp oil or butter
- 1½ l / 3 pt water
- Salt and pepper
- ½ tsp cumin
- ½ tsp turmeric

Wash the rice and drain it. Wash the lentils and drain them. Heat the oil in a saucepan, add the chopped onions and fry until they start to change colour. Add the water and



bring to a boil then add the lentils and the rice. Bring back to boil and simmer over a moderate heat for 30 minutes or until the soup becomes thick and creamy.

Add the seasoning and spices and lower the heat. Cook over a very low heat for another 15 minutes. Add more water if it gets too thick. Serve hot with bread or as part of a meal with many dishes.

Sometimes the lentils are cooked on their own without rice, sieved, returned to the pan, seasoned and cooked until creamy.

Serve in a bowl garnished with some fried onions and hot oil or hot oil on its own.

Chopped parsley and lemon juice are sometimes added.

Nîskêne be Tirş: (Sour lentil soup)

This soup is specially cooked for dinner during Ramadan. In some regions people break their fast with lentils as they believe that it brings blessings and goodness. So various different lentil soups are served in order to break the fast.

200 g / 7 oz orange lentils (split)
50 g herište noodles (vermicelli will do)
1 medium onion, finely chopped
Small bunch of parsley, finely chopped
(or celery leaves)
2 Tbsp lemon juice
1 l / 2 pt water or more
250 g / 8 oz minced lamb or mutton
1 Tbsp plain wheat flour
Salt
1 tsp cumin
Oil for frying



Mix together the mince meat, flour, cumin and salt and combine well. Knead it to make a dough-like mix. Make the mixture into about 15 small balls. Heat some oil in frying pan and lightly fry the balls until they are light brown all over. Remove from the oil. In the same oil fry the finely chopped onion and keep to one side.

Wash the lentil and place them into a pan of boiling water (**1 1 / 2 pt**) and cook the lentils for 20 minutes until they are soft. Then pass them through a sieve or liquidise them and put the puree into a saucepan over a slow heat. Add the fried balls, the noodles, and the fried onions to the lentils, then add salt and lemon juice. Mix it all together well, add the chopped parsley leaving aside just a little for final decoration, put a lid on the pan, turn the heat down low and simmer gently for 15 minutes.

Serve hot in a deep bowl sprinkled with the rest of the parsley.

Qerexerman or Frike soup:

This is one of the most popular grains in Kurdistan. It is prepared from green wheat that is not fully matured. It is baked still green and then cracked like bulgur with the coarse part separated from the fine flour. The coarse part is used like bulgur for pilau or Qubûlî and the fine part is used in soups. It can be bought in Lebanese shops these days where it is known as frike (**non-mature**).

200 g Qerexerman (**coarse**)

1 medium onion, finely chopped

1 1 / 2 pt water

1-2 Tbsp oil

Salt

Wash the qerexerman thoroughly and drain in. Heat the oil in a saucepan and add the onions. Fry until they are soft. Add the water and bring to boil, then add the qerexerman and a little salt according to taste. Simmer gently until the grain is well cooked.

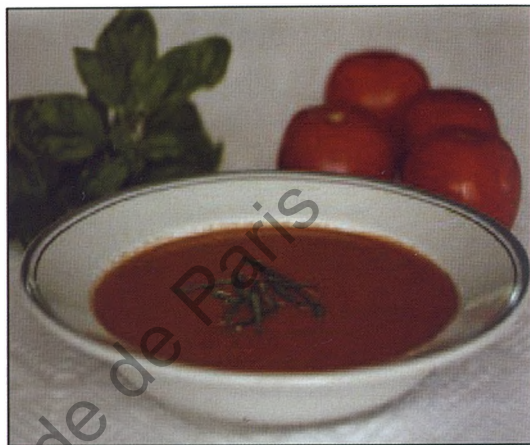
Put in a large bowl and serve hot.

Most usually eaten is this simple version; however, at the end some boiled or fried poultry or lamb can be added in small pieces. Vegetables can also be added to this soup while it is boiling. Chives, spring onions, spinach, carrots, leeks or any vegetables you desire can be first chopped into small pieces, then added to the soup directly or fried before being added.

Şorbay Temate: (Tomato Soup)

500 g / 1 lb fresh tomatoes, finely chopped
100 g / 3 oz short grain rice
1 Tbsp oil
1 medium onion, finely chopped
500 ml / 1 pt water
Salt

Heat the oil in a saucepan and add the finely chopped onion stirring until the colour nearly changes. Add the finely chopped tomatoes and add a little salt and cook gently stirring from time to time until soft. Add the water and bring to a boil. Wash the rice and add it to the tomatoes. Bring to boil and let it boil for 3 minutes, then reduce the heat, cover the pan and let the soup simmer for 10 minutes. The rice should not be too soft.



Serve hot with thin Kurdish bread or crisp bread or perhaps toast.

Doyîne: (Cracked wheat with Keşik)

Doyîne can be found in Middle Eastern shops where it is sometimes called Terxene. These are dried balls of cracked wheat

mixed with yoghurt and dried. Various forms of this are found in many Middle Eastern countries and come in different shapes and seasoning.

100 g / 4 oz doyîne either in balls or in flakes or ground

1 1 / 2 pt water (at least – the balls take more than the flakes)

Oil or ghee
Salt



Soak the doyîne in cold water for 2 hours. Break up the balls in the water (**a food processor can be used**) and mix it well. Put the mixture in a saucepan and heat, stirring until it comes to a boil. Lower the heat and leave to simmer for 30-40 minutes.

Put the cooked doyîne in a bowl, heat the ghee until it smokes and pour over the soup as a garnish.

Serve immediately.

Variations:

Vegetables and herbs can be added to this soup. Chives, mint parsley, spring onions, garlic can be added one or more at any time.

Boiled chicken or turkey meat can be chopped into small pieces and added at the end. Turkey is the most preferred option for this dish.

Pîr xenîle: (Bulgur soup with rabbit or chicken)

Literally translated as smiling old people, presumably the effects of this soup!

200 g / 7 oz fine bulgur

1 1/2 pt water

500 g / 1 lb rabbit, chicken or lamb cut into small pieces, can be on the bone

1 medium onion, finely chopped

1 Tbsp oil

1 Tbsp tomato puree (**or more if desired**)

Bring the water to a boil in a saucepan and then add the meat. Cook until it is soft. Heat the oil in a saucepan and add the onion and then fry until it is light brown. Add the meat and stir a few times; add the meat stock or water and the salt and bring to a boil. Add the bulgur, bring to a boil and cook for 10 minutes stirring all the time. Lower the heat and cover the pan. Simmer gently for 10 minutes.

Put the soup in a serving bowl and serve with an onion salad or a finely sliced raw onion. Sometimes this soup is made without meat and fried onions are added.

Aş: (Mixed legumes soup, from the eastern part of Kurdistan)

500 g / 1 lb mixed green and brown lentils, chickpeas, mung beans, red beans, whole wheat or barley, yellow split peas or other legumes can be used also and often are

1 large onion, finely chopped

1 Tbsp oil

1 large bunch fresh coriander

1 tsp turmeric

Salt

500 g / 1 lb lean lamb's meat if desired.

Wash the legumes and put in cold water to soak overnight. Heat the oil in a large sauce pan, add the chopped onion and cook gently until soft but not yet changing colour. Add the legumes, which have first been drained of all their water. Cover with water and leave over a medium heat for two hours until all the beans are very soft. A pressure cooker can be used for this.

If you use meat, this should be added at the same time as the legumes, and should be cut in small pieces.



Add more water; add the turmeric and salt. It should be quite thick but this depends on taste. Add the chopped coriander and leave for 2-3 minutes and mix it in well. Turn off the heat and cover the pan. Leave it to stand for about 10 minutes.

Serve hot in a deep bowl. Sometimes meatballs are added at the last especially if the soup is cooked without meat. This is usually eaten with bread, sometimes a piece of flat bread is put in each person's bowl and the soup is poured on top of it.

Aş Keşik: (Legumes with Keşik from Sine)

1 kg / 2 lb lamb meat cubed and boiled until soft
50 g / 2 oz white haricot beans
50 g / 2 oz red beans
50 g / 2 oz brown lentils
50 g / 2 oz chickpeas (**pre-cooked or tinned**)
1 kg / 2 lb mixed chives, spinach, parsley and coriander
50 g / 2 oz fine noodles (**Kurdish or very fine spaghetti**)
600 ml / 1 pt Keşik sauce
½ bunch fresh mint or 2 Tbsp dried mint
1 medium onion, chopped into rings
1 clove garlic (**optional**)
1 l / 2 pt water
Salt

Put the white and red beans, the lentils, the chickpeas and the meat in a large saucepan. Cover with water and bring to a boil. Simmer until the beans are soft. Meanwhile, finely chop the green vegetables. When the beans are cooked, add the chopped vegetables and combine well. Add salt to taste.

Lower the heat and cook gently. Mix the mint with the Keşik. Add the Keşik and mint to the beans. In a frying pan, fry the onion rings in a little oil. Put the soup in a serving bowl and garnish with the onion rings. The soup should be thick.

Aş Keşik be Birinc: (Dried yoghurt soup with rice)

200 g / 4 oz short grain rice, washed

1 tin of chickpeas or 200 g of cooked chickpeas

500 g / 1 lb ground dried Keşik or Keşik paste (**yoghurt**)

A small bunch of parsley, finely chopped

A small bunch of celery leaves, finely chopped

A small bunch of beet leaves or spinach or fresh coriander, finely chopped

Salt

2 medium onions, finely sliced in rings

1½ / 2 pt water

Put the dried Keşik in water and leave 1-2 hours or until it dissolves into the water. If using balls of Keşik, then a ball will need to be put into water for a least a day, or until it is soft enough to make into a paste. A food processor can be used to make a good thick sauce.

Put the Keşik sauce into a pan and cook over a slow heat, stirring until it comes to a boil, avoiding lumps. Add the washed rice to the Keşik sauce with the boiled chickpeas. Cook for 5-10 minute over a slow heat. Add the chopped vegetables, mixing well, then lower the heat and simmer over a low heat for 10-15 minutes.

Fry the onions in a little oil until brown.

Put the soup in a bowl when it is ready, and garnish with the fried onions and the oil used in frying.

Keloş1: (Soup with Qawurme / fried meat)

This is a soup that is often eaten when travelling in the mountains as the Keşik and Qawurme can be easily carried and the soup cooked very fast.

2 or 3 pieces of Qawurme (**200 g lamb can be used instead**)

1 medium onion

2 Tbsp oil

1 Tbsp raisins

500 ml / 1 pt Keşik or yoghurt

1 Tbsp chopped fresh mint

Cover the meat with water and bring to boil. When it is cooked, add the Keşik; simmer slowly until warm and pour into a bowl. Meanwhile heat the oil in a frying pan and add the chopped onion and fry until it changes colour, then add the raisins, add the mint and mix well. Sprinkle the onion and raisin mixture over the soup and serve hot.

Keloş 2: (Keşik soup without meat)

2 medium onions, chopped

50 g / 2 oz raisins

5-6 Tbsp chopped fresh mint

275 ml / ½ pt thick Keşik sauce or yoghurt with salt

275 ml / ½ pt water

1 Tbsp oil

Fry the chopped onions in a little oil in a frying pan until soft and the colour is about to change. Add the raisins and mix well and remove from heat to avoid burning the raisins. Mix the Keşik with the water and in a saucepan put over a medium heat. Bring to boil and add the onion and raisin mixture. Chop the mint and fry it lightly. Put the soup in a bowl and garnish with the fried mint. The soup should not be too thick and should be served as a light soup with bread.

Pirpole: (Meat with lentil soup from Duhok)

500 g / 1 lb of lean lamb cut into 4 cm squares

200 g / 7 oz whole green lentils (**other whole lentils can be used**)

1 1 / 2½ pt (I don't understand this.) water or meat stock

Salt

Ground pepper or finely chopped green chili

Take a large saucepan, put in the meat and cover with the water or stock, which should be hot. After 15 minutes add the lentils and cook until the meat and lentils are tender. If the meat needs a lot of cooking more water may be needed, however the soup should be very thick. Then add the salt and chillies and serve hot.

Herîşte be Tirş: (Sour noodle soup)

200 g / 7 oz whole brown lentils or mixed with split lentils
100 g / 4 oz chickpeas (**tinned can be used**)
200 g / 7 oz Kurdish noodles
1 medium onion, finely chopped
1 Tbsp oil or ghee
1 Tbsp tomato puree
2 Tbsp sumac juice or unripe grape juice or lemon juice
Salt
1 1 / 2 pt water (**more or less depending on desired thickness**)

Soak the chickpeas overnight and then put in a pan and cover with cold water and boil. After half an hour add the lentils to the chickpeas. Cook together until soft then drain the water. In a saucepan heat the oil and fry the onions for 2-3 minutes then add the tomato puree and stir over a medium heat. Add the water and the salt, the sumac juice and the drained beans and lentils. Bring to a boil then add the noodles, bring to a boil again and lower the heat. Cook gently until the noodles are soft.

Palpîne Be tirş :(Sour pars lane (parsley?) stew)

500 g / 1 lb pars lane coarsely chopped
200 g / 7 oz red lentils
100 g / 4 oz short or long grain rice
1 medium onion, finely chopped
Juice of 1-2 lemons or 2 Tbsp sumac mixed in a little water
4-5 medium fresh tomatoes or 1-2 Tbsp tomato puree
1½ l / 2½ pt water (**depending on how thick you like it**)
2 Tbsp oil
Salt

Wash the lentils and the rice together. Fry the chopped onion in the oil in a deep saucepan. Add the washed lentils and rice to the onions and add the water. Leave to cook until just soft. Then add the pars lane, the salt and the lemon juice or sumac. Leave over low heat for about 15-20 minutes. Check seasoning, it should be quite sour tasting.

Serve with crisp bread.

Alternatives to pars lane are spinach, spring greens, cabbage or chard.

Silqaw: (Spinach soup)

500 g / 1 lb stewing lamb

1 kg / 2 lb spinach

100 g / 4 oz chickpeas or other kinds of peas/beans

200 g / 7 oz long or short grain rice

1 medium onion

2 Tbsp tomato puree (or 500 g / 1 lb fresh tomatoes)

Salt

1 1 / 2 pt of water

2 Tbsp lemon juice or juice from tirs (sumac)

1 Tbsp oil

Soak the chickpeas over night. Drain off the soaking water and then put the chickpeas in a saucepan, cover with water and bring to a boil and simmer. Cook the chickpeas until soft; keep to one side. A pressure cooker is very useful.

Cut the onion finely, put it in a saucepan, add the oil and put it over the heat. Fry until soft. Add the meat; stir it until it is soft and all the water is evaporated. Chop the spinach into small pieces and add to the meat. Stir it until it has wilted. Add the tomato puree and combine with the mixture. Add the water, lemon juice and salt. Add the chickpeas and their water and the washed rice. Leave to cook over a slow heat for 30 minutes. Adjust the taste.

Serve hot with bread.

VEGETABLES



Kinger:

Kinger is a plant from the thistle group which grows wild in the highlands and mountains of Kurdistan. It is used widely for preparing many kinds of important dishes. Kinger is popular all over Kurdistan. The plant is also similar to the artichoke, although much longer and narrower and it has spikes which have to be cleaned away. Kinger starts to appear in early spring and it is a joyful season for young village girls. The day is spent going into the mountains in the early morning and then spending the day filling their sacks in between singing and dancing and chatting.

Kinger is either used by the family or taken into town to sell. During springtime at least one kinger dish is eaten everyday in every home. It

can also be dried and used in other seasons. Kinger can be used raw as a salad or it can be cut up finely and mixed with yoghurt as another salad. It is boiled with a little salt and used for a number of different dishes, soups, stews, etc. For instance, boiled kinger can be fried, eaten with bread and fresh herbs, spring onions, parsley, mint.

Soup is made from boiled kinger, fried with a little onion, and then added to some water, salt, turmeric, pepper and a small quantity of rice (**100 g rice to 6 cups of water**). Then it is cooked until a medium thick soup.



Kinger Masî: (Cardoon styled like a fish)

1 kg / 2 lb boiled kinger (boiled in salty water until soft)

2 eggs

25 g / 1 oz flour

50 g / 2 oz ground tirş (sumac)

Oil for frying

Beat the eggs with the flour to make a light batter. Take two or three pieces of boiled kinger and squeeze together between the palms of your hands. Dip this in the egg mixture and fry it until it has a brown colour. Repeat until all the kinger has been fried. Sprinkle it with the ground tirş (sumac).

Fried Kinger:

1 kg / 2 lb boiled kinger

2 large onions (finely chopped)

Oil

1 tsp pepper

Heat the oil. Add the onion and fry until it changes colour. Add the kinger to the fried onion. Mix together and leave to fry for 2-3 minutes. Stir it from time to time. Serve in a flat dish, decorate with cut spring onions.

Jajî Kinger: (Cold yoghurt and cardoon or dill, from Dihok)

1 bunch of spring onions, finely chopped

500 g / 1 lb lightly boiled and then finely chopped cardoon

750 ml / 1½ pt thick yoghurt

Salt

Mix the onions and the cardoon and the yoghurt together and then serve cold. This is often served for breakfast.

Fried Cauliflower:

1 medium size cauliflower

2 eggs

½ Tbsp flour or corn flour

Oil for deep frying

Ground sumac

Salt

Cut off the leaves and tough stem of the cauliflower. Cut the cauliflower into medium size florets and cook them in lightly salted water and then drain. Beat the eggs with the flour and dip each floret in the beaten egg mixture. Heat the oil in a pan. When very hot fry each floret in the oil until golden. Drain them on kitchen paper.

Serve them on a flat tray or dish and sprinkle with sumac and garnish with fresh herbs. Serve hot with salad, fresh herbs and bread.

Boranî: (From Sine)

2 medium eggplants (**eggplant**) or zucchinis (**zucchini**)

500 g / 1 lb thick yoghurt

2-3 cloves garlic

Salt

Slice the eggplant into rounds and sprinkle with salt. Leave for 10 minutes and then wash the salt off.

Fry the sliced eggplant until the colour slightly changes and the vegetable softens. Finely chop the garlic and mix with the yoghurt. Warm the yoghurt on a very low heat stirring all the time. Pour the yoghurt in a dish and then cover with the eggplant slices arranged in nice rows.

This can be garnished with a little finely chopped celery leaves or mint or parsley. This dish can be made with fried eggs instead of eggplants or zucchinis. The eggs are fried in oil and then laid on the yoghurt mix.

Serve hot with bread.

Şêlim: (Turnips)



A typical early morning dish, eaten in winter. Street sellers will bring it from house to house.

The turnips are cooked alone or with beetroot in equal proportions. Dates or sugar can be added to make this dish taste sweeter. Approximately 1 date per small turnip is added or 1 tsp sugar.

500 g / 1 lb turnip, medium-sized

500 g / 1 lb beetroot, medium-sized

1 date for each medium turnip, if desired

Put the whole turnips and the beetroots either together or separately into a saucepan and cover with water. Add the dates. Bring to a boil and simmer on a very low heat until soft. This traditionally is left cooking over a very low heat overnight.

Serve sliced and hot for a winter breakfast.

Leblebî: (Qendîley nok), (Spicy chick peas)

This dish is a popular street dish and is often sold outside schools at lunch time.

500 g / 1 lb chickpeas

½ Tbsp turmeric

½ Tbsp black pepper, or other spices, such as cumin

Meat stock to cover or meat bones (**about 1 lb**)

Salt

Wash the chickpeas and leave to soak in cold water overnight. Then strain the water from the chickpeas. Put the chickpeas in a large pan and cover completely with fresh cold water or meat stock. Meat stock is preferred or meat bones can be added and removed after cooking. More hot water or stock may need to be added during the cooking as the chickpeas should not dry out.

When the chickpeas are just soft (**after approx 1 hour**), leave them in the water and add the turmeric, pepper and salt. More can be added if one likes a spicy flavour. Simmer over a low heat for another hour until the chickpeas are very soft. Remove from the heat and serve hot or cold.

An onion can be sliced and fried and mixed in at the end.

These chickpeas can be mashed and spread on soft bread or in pita bread and sprinkled with chopped spring onion and other herbs such as chopped mint, tarragon or parsley.



Qarçîk: (or Qarg), (Mushrooms)

250 g / 8 oz mushrooms

2 medium onions, chopped

2 Tbsp oil for frying

2 cloves garlic, finely chopped (**optional**)

Heat the oil in a frying pan and add the onions. When the onions start to change colour, add the garlic, the mushrooms and a little salt. Cover the pan and cook over a low heat for 30-40 minutes, or until the mushrooms are nearly dry.

Serve hot with şifte, fried tomatoes or potatoes and soft bread.

Mushrooms can also be served with cooked rice.

Qarçîjî Birjaw: (Mushroom kebabs)

In Kurdistan, very large mushrooms are often cut into large 3-4 in squares, salted, put on skewers and then cooked over a charcoal fire. Small mushrooms can be used instead. Mushrooms are often deep fried whole and used as decorations for rice.

Sorbay Sard: (Cold barley and mushroom soup)

100 g / 4 oz pearl barley or skinned wheat

1 small onion, finely chopped

50 g / 2 oz chopped fresh mushrooms

½ Tbsp flour

2 Tbsp double cream

Oil for frying

Soak the barley in water for several hours and then drain. Put the barley in a saucepan, cover with water and bring to a boil. Cook until soft. Fry the chopped onion in the oil. Add the flour to it and stir until the flour changes colour. Add the chopped mushrooms and mix well. Add the mixture to the cooked barley which should still have a little water with it. Cook for a few minutes, and then when thick, cool it. When cold, place in serving dish and spread the cream over the top. Sometimes butter is spread instead.

Institut kurde de Paris

CEREMONIES



A Jewish Feast:

Within the Jewish population in Kurdistan, most of which has now immigrated to Israel or elsewhere, the 14th of September was the celebration of kepre şine, roughly translated as blue bower, the feast of Tabernacles. Rain is propitious on that day and everyone prayed for it. The bower is decorated with fruit and vegetables, sweets, pastries stuffed with sugar and walnuts, and all sorts of nuts, salted wild almonds (**çaqale**), and quince seeds, sweets and round sesame sweets. Then the next day trays of these were sent around to neighbours.

The story of Haman

During the time of the Persian Empire there was a prominent person, Haman, who persecuted the Jews and despite much opposition denied the Jews access to business and trade. Finally he was killed and everyone rejoiced. On the 14th of September an effigy made of animal skins was made and everyone stuck knives into it, killing him all over again and cutting him into small pieces.

On Saturdays Jewish families made special kiftes. There is an old superstition amongst the Muslims that if you steal one of these Jewish kiftes and feed it to a sick person it will cure them of all ills.

Yezidi Feast:

In Shingar north of Mosul in central Kurdistan is Lalish, the most important holy place for the Yezidis, where a five day celebration is held at midsummer. Many people come from all around, even from Russia, Syria and Germany. It is a pilgrimage likened to the Haj.

Every pilgrim washes their neck with water from the white spring, and if they are a true Yezidi the water turns violet.

Sheep are slaughtered and cooked with cracked wheat and then distributed to the pilgrims. There is a special boiled wheat (**Samatî Şêx Adî**) known as danûle in Kurdish, which is cooked in the temple and distributed to all for three days.



Yezidi New Year:

In April yezidis celebrate their new year. They stay up all night and cook bulgur and colour eggs red and go round from house to house.

The first Wednesday in October they celebrate Berat. Again they stay up all night and pray and cook food to be distributed to the poor.

Newroz:

To celebrate Newroz, the 21st of March, most people go out into the fields or open spaces, where they light bonfires, dance and eat. With them they take food cooked at home such as yaprax, şifte, fried kifte, fried dates, nuts and seeds and bunches of fresh herbs and fruit. Also meat is barbecued and kebabs are sold, though most people bring their own food. Street vendors bring drinks and other snacks.

Around the time of Newroz, celebrating the arrival of spring, people change from stored winter foods. So a lot of yoghurt is eaten and sweet (**not salted**) cheeses, stuffed fresh vine leaves and large glasses of mastaw (**yoghurt drink**). Kinger and various fresh herbs are gathered and cooked and eaten every day until they are no longer available. One favourite is Kingerumast (**kinger and yoghurt**).

Wedding:

Wedding invitations are sent out by the bridegroom's family. Then people come to the wedding from both families. The bridegroom's family (**according to their means**) cooks many things: rice dishes, stews, boiled and fried meat, stuffed lamb, yaprax, different kinds of kiftes, sawar and many other dishes. They also serve many different drinks such as homemade drinks made from fruits (**pomegranates, grapes and other fruits**), many sweet drinks made from sugar (**and rosewater**), ready-made drinks



and tea. The most traditional (**and still popular in villages**) are pilau tixene or pilau tirşî **served with tea**.

When the bride arrives at the house of the bridegroom, some families kill a sheep in front of her and then cook it. They also throw sweets and money over her head (**şabaş**).

On the second day the bride's family sends food to the bridegroom's home. They also invite as many people as they can feed. The bride's family makes two to three days worth of food.

After two days people come to the new family home and bring presents (**paştilane**) to the bride. The bridegroom's family feeds the guests or at least prepares stuffed pastries and various sweetmeats, nuts and seeds.

After seven days the girl goes back to her family (**bawhonî**) where she stays for a few days. Her family invites her husband and his family and those who will take the girl back.

Births:

Before a family has a new baby they are preparing many kinds of sweets, pastries, dried fruits, fruit syrups and special Kurdish sweets such as başûk, sencûq, Helwayî gezo and salted nuts and seeds and dates with walnuts and dried figs. When the baby is born these foods are given for 14 days to visitors who call to see the baby and mother. Most people invite friends and family for lunch or dinner on day seven after the birth. Some families celebrate for seven nights (**şaware**). Close family members come to be with the mother, father and new baby and dance and eat and drink. They do this particularly if it is a first child or first son.

Circumcision:

This is an important ceremony especially for a first son, usually performed when the child is between 5 and 7 days. Many dishes are made depending on the family's circumstance: rice, yaprax, stews sweets and drinks. Food is sent to friends and poor people and friends show their happiness by bringing presents to the family.

Sometimes the ceremonies are shared with other families, perhaps poorer ones, and another one or two boys are circumcised at the same time. So presents are brought for everyone.

Mewlûd:

This is celebration of the birthday of the prophet Mohammed. A celebration meal and fruit drinks made at home are prepared and people are invited to share with the family and pray. Special music groups are invited to sing, play music extol, the virtues of the prophet and recite the Koran.

Prayers to Mohammed that have been answered are also acknowledged at this time and new prayers are offered.

At the end everyone is given a small bag containing dried grapes, salted chickpeas and sweets.

Miîrac:

Fifteen days before Berat, one month before Ramadan, religious people cook rice and stews and meat dishes and distribute them to people. Many people, whose wishes have been granted make a mewlûd celebration on the day of Miîrac. In the mosques on this day mewlûd is celebrated and people gather there too. People sing the praises of Mohammed and pray to have their wishes answered.

Berat:

This comes 15 days before Ramadan. Most families cook and prepare some sweets, nuts, especially dates and walnuts, etc. and put them in large containers. Friends are invited to dinner and the food in containers is offered to people who come to the door and sing.

Ramadan:

Muslims fast for one month. Every day different food is cooked; especially good foods are made during this time. People are invited to dinner to share the meal after sunset, called *berbang*.

At the beginning soup and dates are eaten. Lentil soup is preferred; then dates, even fried dates, are eaten and grape juice is drunk. Then the rest of the meal follows. Families all have special favourites to be eaten at this time. Before sunrise another meal is often freshly prepared, people are invited over and another feast is had before the

fast begins. Nan sacî (**fried bread**) is a very common food for this period and large amounts are made to be given to friends and the poor. Especially on Fridays (**cumane**) food is made to give to others..

At the end of Ramadan, in the early morning people cook, pilau, stews and meat in large quantities so that it is ready for breakfast and the whole day, to be handed out to family, friends, visitors and the poor. This food is eaten all day as people visit each other. Also, the older members of the family give money to the youngest. Many other foods also need to be ready for this feast: sweets, nuts, pastries and coffee.

Haj [pilgrimage]:

Many people go to Mecca one month after Ramadan. Everyone who goes there must kill a sheep. When they return the family celebrate their return and invite many friends over and cook a lot of food, rice, meat, yaprax and many sweets. These foods are distributed to the poor.

Two months after Ramadan is Qurban, a few days after the end of the Ilaj. Most families slaughter a sheep and eat this. In some families, they kill a cow or a sheep and give it to the poor in memory of the spirit of a departed family member.

Funeral ceremonies:

If there is a death in the family everyone rallies round. Mastaw or Do will be brought, tea is served, but no şerbets. Visitors are given glasses of water and a tiny coffee cup with only 2-3 teaspoons of coffee and no sugar.

When someone dies neighbours and other family members cook and bring food to the close family so they do not have to be preoccupied with feeding all the visitors. On the third day and sometimes the seventh day after the death the family will do a lot of cooking. A Koran singer a **mewlûd** comes to the family and recites some special verses and then everyone is fed. Also on the third day some special sweets are made, for example *helwaşekir* which is taken to the grave and given to people along with some cooked rice, or after the *mewlûd* has visited everyone is given some sweets to take away. Women cry

and people lament, calling over everything good that they remember about the deceased. Usually the men stay for a day or two and the women stay for 3-7 days while someone reads the Koran. The men often stay in the mosque with someone sitting constantly reading the Koran. Traditionally black is worn to show respect either for 7 days or for 40 days or for 3 months.

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About the writer

Louisa Attar was born and received school education in Sulaymaniyah (Iraqi Kurdistan city). She later obtained degree in economy in Baghdad University and start working as high school teacher in Baghdad.

Louisa and her husband left their hometown in 1974 and joined the Kurdish freedom fighters, but she was injured in an airdate by Iraqi Army Forces, and later, was moved to Iran for medical treatments. She left Iran in 1979, and got refugee with her husband and four sons in United kingdom.

While Louisa was continued with her proficiency as a school teacher, she was involved in Social and Cultural activities for over 40 years. We can Point to

a numbers of more than 20 national and international Kurdish food and Custom Exhibitions, which she was participated or organized in the UK. Within this cultural activities, she received a number of Awards and recognitions

Collection of Kurdish Food from deferent parts of Kurdistan may gives an evidence how deeply she was involved in her nation's culture, while she believed there are still more tens kinds of traditional Kurdish Foods among tribes and remote villagers, which she could not reach to be collected.

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