

PERSIAN FEAST MENU

"Live life as if everything is rigged in your favour." Rumi, 13th-century Persian poet

***Kuku Sabzi* (Herb Frittata)**

***Chelow* (Saffron Rice)**

Dal Adas Lentil Stew

***Khoresh bademjan* (eggplant, split pea and pomegranate stew)**

Yogurt and Spinach Dip

Feta, walnut, garden radish

***Salad-e Shirazi* (Persian Cucumber, Tomato & Onion Salad)**

Pita bread

Persian Love Cake

Served with mint and cucumber sherbet & kombucha



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VEGETARIAN KHORESH BADEMJAN (Aubergine & split pea)

Serves 4-5

Preparation time: About 30 minutes; simmer time: 30 minutes

INGREDIENTS

4 eggplants peeled, sliced lengthwise

1 cup slow-cooking yellow split peas, precooked (lapeh dir paz)

½ tsp salt

2 large yellow onions, peeled and sliced very thin, fried to golden brown

Olive oil for frying

½ tsp ground turmeric

2 TBSP tomato paste

½ tsp salt

¼ tsp freshly ground black pepper

Pinch of cayenne pepper

A few strands of saffron

2-3 TBSP pomegranate concentrate

Zest of one orange

1 cup freshly squeezed orange juice (3 medium oranges)

½ cup freshly squeezed lemon juice (2 lemons)

½ cup hot water (more if needed)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Rub the cut aubergines with salt and olive oil. Bake till soft and golden, cut side down in a 200c oven. Let them cool, then chop into chunks.
2. To the fried onions add turmeric, tomato paste, salt, the peppers, saffron and the cooked split peas and saute for 3-4 minutes over low heat, stir several times.
3. Add the pomegranate concentrate and saute while stirring for another 2 minute over low heat. Add the orange/lemon juice mixture (1 ½ cups), ½ cup hot water, and zest of one orange to the skillet and bring it to a boil.
4. Add the baked eggplants, bring it to another boil. Cover and cook over the marking between low and medium low for 20–30 minutes, or until the eggplants are very flavourful. The sauce will be thick. If you want a thinner



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sauce, add about ¼ cup hot water, stir and bring to a boil and continue cooking for couple of minutes.

Kuku Sabzi (Persian Herb Frittata)

Kuku is a Persian frittata. Washing and picking through the piles of herbs can be overwhelming, so feel free to prepare them in advance.

Ingredients

large bunches fresh herbs (coriander, parsley, dill, chives, any greens you might have like silverbeet)

2 large leeks, chopped and sautéed (for about 20 minutes)

3 tablespoons plus 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil

Fine sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 tablespoon dried fenugreek

2 teaspoons dried dill

2 T barberries

1 teaspoon ground turmeric

½ teaspoon baking powder

8 large eggs

4 tablespoons unsalted butter (1/2 stick)

Preparation

1. Trim woody ends from coriander, parsley and dill so that only leaves and tender stems remain. Wash herbs and leaves, then use a salad spinner to dry very well. Set aside.
2. Very finely chop the coriander, parsley, dill and greens by hand — the smaller the pieces, the more deeply green your kuku will be. Repeat with remaining herbs until finished. Combine the chopped herbs with the dried fenugreek in a very large bowl.
3. Beat the eggs in a large bowl and add the chopped greens.
4. Set a 10-inch cast-iron pan over medium-high heat. When the pan is hot, add 3 tablespoons oil. When the oil shimmers, add leeks. Season with a generous pinch of salt.
5. Once the leeks are cooked, add the egg mixture, cover, and cook slowly over a low heat 10-20 minutes, loosening around the edges from time to time with a



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rubber spatula. It will appear almost burned. Don't worry! It will taste divine. To serve, flip the kuku onto a plate.

Dal Adas Lentil Stew

A healthy and filling vegan lentil soup booming with Middle Eastern spices and flavours. A great soup for those days when we all need a bit of soul warming.

Ingredients

3 cup lentils (rinsed)
20 cups vegetable stock (make sure it's good quality; I recommend Simon Gault's pouches if you don't make your own)
3 tablespoon olive oil
3 large onion finely chopped
12 garlic cloves (crushed)
3 tins tomatoes
6 teaspoons salt
1 bunch of parsley (finely chopped*)
2 teaspoon pepper
1 teaspoon cayenne
6 tsp sumac
4 tsp 7-spice
juice of 1-3 lemon

Preparation

1. Add olive oil to a 5 qt pot and sautee onions and garlic together and let them sweat. You do not want any color. Add the spices.
2. Add lentils and stock to this mixture and bring up to a boil. Reduce the heat, cover and continue simmering on medium low for 25 minutes.
3. Add tomatoes, parsley and all seasoning and cook for 25-30 minutes on medium heat, until the lentils are tender. At this point, add lemon juice. Taste and season with additional salt, pepper and lemon as you see fit.
4. Pour into a bowl and garnish with chopped parsley.

*If you have never seen sumac, I recommend that you try using it in all your middle eastern recipes. It is regularly used in that region of the world. It has a tart flavor to it



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and was originally used in food before the Romans introduced lemons. It goes well with chicken, beef, hummus almost anything. 7-Spice is a spice blend with cumin, ground coriander, paprika, nutmeg, cinnamon and cardamon.

Yoghurt & Spinach Dip, 'Borani Esfanaaj', in the Persian Manner

1 bunch spinach, washed, chopped, blanched, sautéed in olive oil.
1 clove garlic, minced and divided into two separate batches.
2 tbsp olive oil
300 g very thick yoghurt
Salt
Fresh mint

1. Sauté 1/2 clove of garlic in 2 tbsp olive oil and add the spinach. Add a pinch of salt. Stir for a few minutes.
2. Remove from stove, allow to cool
3. In a bowl, add yoghurt, 1/2 clove of minced garlic, spinach and stir gently. Add salt to taste.
4. Transfer to the bowl you are serving it in and sprinkle with mint, and a lazy trail of olive oil.



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Persian Saffron Rice

Ingredients

3 cups basmati rice, uncooked , rinsed 5 times under warm water

8 cups of water

2 tbsp salt

2 tbsp plain yoghurt

1 teaspoon saffron

1/2 cup olive oil

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 180C/350F (fan).
2. Rinse the rice 5 times, then soak overnight in 8 cups of water and 2 T salt.
3. Bring water to the boil in a large pot. Add salt and rice. Bring back up to the boil then cook for 3-5 minutes. Drain and leave to steam dry for 5 minutes. Bite a few grains: if the rice is soft (but not too soft), it is ready.
4. Lightly grease a pyrex dish with oil.
5. Dissolve saffron in 4 T hot water. Leave to steep for 10 minutes.
6. In a bowl, mix 2 spatulas of rice, yogurt, 1/2 cup oil and 1/2 cup hot water and a few drops of the saffron water.
7. Pour this mix into a large PYREX dish (oiled), smooth surface.
8. Cover with remaining rice, in the form of a pyramid. Poke holes in the rice with the end of a wooden spoon to allow air to escape.
9. Cover with foil and bake for 15-25 minutes.



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Salad-e Shirazi (Persian Cucumber, Tomato and Onion Salad)

- Yield 6 to 8 servings (about 5 cups)
- Time 20 minutes

Named for the city in southwestern Iran, salad-e Shirazi is found on practically every Iranian table at practically every meal. It should be bright, crunchy and tart, a nice counterpoint to rich, buttery rice and unctuous stews. Toss the cucumbers, onion, herbs and tomatoes with the lime vinaigrette just before serving to preserve their crunch. In Iran, dining companions usually fight over the leftover juice at the end of a meal.

Featured in: [Samin Nosrat's 10 Essential Persian Recipes](#).

Ingredients

- 3 to 4 Persian cucumbers (about 3/4 pound)
- Green onions
- 2 tablespoons any combination of finely chopped fresh parsley, coriander, basil or dill and mint
- 2 to 3 medium tomatoes
- ¼ cup verjuice
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- Fine sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

Preparation

1. Remove alternating stripes of peel on cucumbers and trim ends. Dice cucumbers into 1/4-inch pieces and place in a large bowl with onion and fresh herbs. Using your fingers to break up any large pieces, gently grind the dried mint into the bowl. Remove tomato cores, dice remaining tomatoes into 1/4-inch pieces and add to bowl.
2. In a small bowl, make a vinaigrette by whisking together 1/4 cup lime juice, oil, 3/4 teaspoon salt and 1/4 teaspoon pepper. Just before serving, dress vegetables with vinaigrette and stir to combine. Taste and adjust seasoning with salt and lime juice as needed. This salad should be bright, crunchy and tart, a nice counterpoint for rich, buttery rice and unctuous stews. Serve at



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room temperature or lightly chilled. Cover and refrigerate leftovers for up to 2 days.

Persian Love Cake

Think those golden baklava-ish flavours, but in a moist cake with sticky, dark caramelised sides. This is a cake to make if you are usually bad at making cakes. Two plusses: it uses a muffin method (what I call a 'bung-in-and-stir'), which requires very little to no technique, and is a wonderful gluten-free option.

Crumb base

- **300 g** (10½ oz/3 cups) almond meal
- **185 g** (6½ oz/1 cup) caster (superfine) sugar
- **220 g** (7¾ oz/1 cup firmly packed) soft brown sugar
- **120 g** (4¼ oz) unsalted butter, melted
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Cake batter

- **2** eggs, lightly beaten
- **250 g** (9 oz/scant 1 cup) natural or Greek-style yoghurt
- **1/8 tsp** salt
- **1 tsp** ground cardamom
- **2 tsp** rosewater
- **12** saffron threads
- **3 tbsp** flaked almonds
- **3 tbsp** pistachio nut kernels, roughly chopped

Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 170°C (325°F) fan-forced. Grease the ring of a 24cm (9½ inch) springform tin, then line with strips of baking paper. Turn the base upside down, so it no longer has a lip. Place a piece of baking paper over it, then clamp the ring around it to secure.
2. To make the crumb base, combine the almond meal, caster sugar, brown sugar and butter in a large mixing bowl, and rub together until you have an even, sandy consistency. Divide the mixture in two, and tip half into the prepared tin. Using the back of a spoon or a spatula, press the crumb mixture evenly over the bottom of the tin.



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3. To make the cake batter, add the eggs, yoghurt, salt, cardamon, rosewater and saffron to the remaining crumb mixture and whisk until there are no lumps. Pour over the crumb base and sprinkle the flaked almonds and pistachio nuts over the top.
4. Bake for about 30 minutes until golden and fully risen. If the top is colouring too quickly, cover with foil, then bake for a further 20-30 minutes. Cool completely, before removing from the tin and cutting to serve.

Decorate with edible rose petals, and a very light dusting of icing sugar.



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