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Khoreshe Karafs (Celery Stew)

- *1 to 1.5 pounds of beef cut into 1 inch cubes*
 - *1 head of celery (preferably with the leaves)*
 - *2 bunches of mint (~ 0.5 lb.)*
 - *1 bunch of parsley (~ 0.25 lb.) or equivalent amount in spinach*
 - *1 large yellow onion*
 - *2 tsp. salt*
 - *1/2 tsp. black pepper*
 - *1/4 tsp. cinnamon*
 - *1/4 tsp. turmeric*
 - *juice of 1 - 2 lemons (depending on taste and lemon size)*
1. Cut the celery in 2 inch long pieces and stir fry them over med/high heat for about 10 - 15 minutes. They should change color a little, but they should not be very dark. Set aside.
 2. Clean, dry (make sure they are very dry) and chop the mint, parsley, and the celery leaves very fine. Stir fry the chopped vegetables and herbs the same way as the celery. Set aside.
 3. Chop the onions coarsely and fry them in about 2 Tbsp. of oil over med/high heat till they are lightly golden. Add the beef and keep frying till all the juices are absorbed. You may add a couple of cloves of garlic (minced) in the middle of this stage.
 4. When the juices are absorbed, add the spices and fry for a minute or so (don't over fry), and then add the fried celery and vegetables/herbs. Add 1/2 - 1 cup of water and bring to boil. The amount of water depends on the rest of the ingredients. You want enough water to almost cover every thing, but it should still be thick! Add the lemon juice also.
 5. Cover and reduce heat to low/med and simmer for 1.5 to 2 hours till the meat is cooked to your satisfaction. If the liquid is too thin, cook uncovered.
 6. Serve over hot basmatti rice.

Khoreshe Ghormeh Sabzi (Herbs & Meat Stew)

- *1 to 1.5 pounds of stewing beef or lamb cut into 1 inch cubes*
 - *1 large onion, finely chopped*
 - *2 cups parsley, finely chopped*
 - *1 cup tareh (garlic chives), finely chopped - in case you can't find chives, you can substitute spring onions*
 - *1/2 cup shanbelileh (fenugreek), finely chopped (optional)*
 - *3/4 cup red kidney beans*
 - *2 tsp. salt*
 - *1/2 tsp. black pepper*
 - *1/2 tsp. turmeric*
 - *2 - 3 dried lemons (you may substitute 1/4 cup fresh lemon juice)*
 - *Cooking oil*
 - *1 cup of water*
1. Fry the herbs (parsley, tareh, and shanbelileh) in about 2 Tbsp. of oil over med/high heat for about 10 - 15 minutes. They should change color but they should not be very dark. Set aside.
 2. Fry the onions in about 2 Tbsp. of oil over med/high heat till they are lightly golden. Add the meat, raise the heat to high and keep frying till all the juices are absorbed.
 3. When the juices are absorbed, add the spices (salt, black pepper, and turmeric) and fry for a minute or two (don't over fry), and then add the fried herbs and red kidney beans. Add 1/2 - 1 cup of water and bring to boil. The amount of water depends on the rest of the ingredients. You want enough water to almost cover every thing, but it should still be thick!
 4. Crack the dried lemons into small pieces (or powder it in a spice mill) and add to the stew. Dried lemons can be found in middle eastern or indian grocery stores. Use all of the dried lemon except may be the seeds if you have the patience to remove them. Of course lemon juice can be substituted but it won't taste the same!
 5. Cover and reduce heat to low/med and simmer for 1.5 to 2 hours till the meat and beans are cooked to your satisfaction. If the liquid is too thin, cook uncovered.
 6. Serve over hot basmatti rice.

Khoreshe Kadoo Bademjan (Eggplant and Zucchini Stew)

- *2 pounds of stewing beef or lamb cut into 1 inch cubes*
 - *1 large onion, finely chopped*
 - *3 cloves of garlic chopped finely (optional)*
 - *2 large cans of whole tomatoes*
 - *6 or 7 small (chinese) eggplants peeled*
 - *6 or 7 small zucchinis, peeled*
 - *3 tsp. salt*
 - *1 tsp. black pepper*
 - *1 tsp. turmeric*
 - *1/2 tsp. cinnamon*
 - *1/4 tsp. cayenne pepper*
 - *juice of two lemons*
1. Fry the onions in about 2 Tbsp. of oil over med/high heat till they are lightly golden. Add the meat, raise the heat to high and keep frying till all the juices are absorbed. If you want to add any garlic, it may be added at the same time as the meat.
 2. When the juices are absorbed, add the spices (salt, black pepper, turmeric, cinnamon, and cayenne pepper) and fry for a minute or two (don't over fry). Add the canned tomatoes and bring to a simmer. Add the lemon juice and simmer gently for about 2 hours, or till the meat is done to your satisfaction.
 3. While the meat is stewing, fry the eggplant and zucchini in a small amount of oil (2 or 3 Tbsp.) till the outside is almost black. I try to find eggplants and zucchinis which are very thin but if they are not available, cut them length-wise in half. Set them aside on paper towels. Treat them gently or they would fall apart.
 4. About 15 minutes before serving, put the eggplants and zucchinis in sauce and simmer gently. They don't need to be simmered more than 15 minutes. This should be done in a very large pot so they are not over crowded. If such a pot is not available, use a roasting pan.
 5. Serve over hot basmatti rice.

Khoreshe Gheymeh

- *2 pounds of stewing beef or lamb cut into 1/2 inch cubes or smaller*
 - *1 large onion, finely chopped*
 - *2 - 3 cloves of garlic chopped finely (optional)*
 - *1 large can of whole or crushed tomatoes (don't use tomato puree)**
 - *1 - 2 Tbsp. tomato paste*
 - *1/2 cup yellow split peas*
 - *1 pound of potatoes for french fries (Idaho is the best)*
 - *3 tsp. salt*
 - *1 tsp. black pepper*
 - *1 tsp. turmeric*
 - *1/2 tsp. cinnamon*
 - *1/4 tsp. cayenne pepper*
 - *4 - 5 dried lemons*
 - *Lots of vegetable oil for frying*
1. Fry the onions in about 2 Tbsp. of oil over med/high heat till they are lightly golden. Add the meat, raise the heat to high and keep frying till all the juices are absorbed. If you want to add any garlic, it may be added at the same time as the meat.
 2. When the juices are absorbed, add the spices (salt, black pepper, turmeric, cinnamon, and cayenne pepper) and fry for a minute or so (don't over fry). Add the canned tomatoes and bring to a simmer. If you use whole tomatoes, cut them into big chunks.
 3. Break the dried lemons into small pieces and discard the seeds as best as you can. Add the dried lemons and yellow split peas and simmer gently for about 2 hours, or till the meat is done to your satisfaction (fork tender). If the sauce looks too thin, add the 1 - 2 Tbsp. tomato paste to thicken it. If the sauce is too thick, add water as needed.
 4. While the meat is simmering, make the french fries. You want to have the french fries ready when the meat is done so don't start too early. I like to make the fries thinner and shorter than one usually sees in restaurants.
 5. When the meat is done, the sauce should be thick. Serve the stew in a large bowl with the fries spread over the stew.
 6. Serve with hot basmatti rice.

* Of course you can use fresh tomatoes instead. Substitute about 2 pounds of skinless, seeded tomatoes.

Khoreshe Loobia (Green Bean Stew)

- *2 pounds of stewing beef or lamb cut into 1/2 inch cubes or smaller*
- *1 large onion, finely chopped*
- *2 - 3 cloves of garlic chopped finely (optional)*
- *1 large can of whole or crushed tomatoes (don't use tomato puree)**
- *1 - 2 Tbsp. tomato paste (optional)*
- *1 pound of fresh green beans cut into 1/2 to 1 inch long pieces*
- *3 tsp. salt*
- *1 tsp. black pepper*
- *1 tsp. turmeric*
- *1/2 tsp. cinnamon*
- *1/4 tsp. cayenne pepper*
- *2 - 3 Tbsp. lemon juice*
- *vegetable oil*

1. Fry the onions in about 2 Tbsp. of oil over med/high heat till they are lightly golden. Add the meat, raise the heat to high and keep frying till all the juices are absorbed. If you want to add any garlic, it may be added at the same time as the meat.
2. When the juices are absorbed, add the spices (salt, black pepper, turmeric, cinnamon, and cayenne pepper) and fry for a minute or so (don't over fry). Add the canned tomatoes and bring to a simmer. If you use whole tomatoes, cut them into big chunks.
3. Add the lemon juice and simmer gently for about 2 hours, or till the meat is done to your satisfaction (fork tender). If the sauce looks too thin, add the 1 - 2 Tbsp. tomato paste to thicken it. If the sauce is too thick, add water as needed.
4. While the meat is simmering, prepare the green beans. Make sure they are clean and dry first. Fry them in 1 - 2 Tbsp. of vegetable oil over medium/high heat. Don't over fry the beans. This should take about 10 to 15 minutes. Set aside.
5. When the meat is half way done, add the green beans and bring back to a simmer. When the meat is done to your satisfaction, the sauce should be thick.
6. Serve with hot basmatti rice.

* Of course you can use fresh tomatoes instead. Substitute about 2 pounds of skinless, seeded tomatoes.

Halvah

- *2 cups of flour (half whole wheat and half all purpose) **
- *1 cup sugar*
- *1 cup water*
- *3/4 - 1 cup vegetable oil ***
- *1/4 - 1/2 tsp. saffron*
- *2 Tbsp. hot water*
- *1 tsp. rose water (optional)*

1. Grind the saffron and dissolve in the hot water. The amount of saffron depends on its quality but don't use too much because it gives it a bitter taste. The saffron is for color and aroma.
2. Make the syrup by dissolving the sugar in 1 cup of water and set aside. If the sugar is not dissolved completely, heat the water till it does. It does not matter that the syrup is hot.
3. Put the flour in a large sauté pan and heat over medium/high flame. Stir the flour constantly so it does not burn. This is a critical stage and you want the flour to stay powdery and to change color slowly and consistently. Keep doing this for about 10 minutes till you can smell the flour and see steam rising from the flour. You should also watch the color of the flour. It should not get too dark.
4. Add the oil slowly and lower the heat to medium. Stir the mixture and keep heating for another 10 minutes or so. Stop if the mixture starts smoking. You can also stop earlier if you want the color to be lighter. It is important to keep stirring so the mixture heats uniformly.
5. Add the dissolved saffron to the syrup and mix. You can add the rose water here also if you wish.
6. When the flour and oil mixture has cooled down so it can just be touched, add the syrup and mix till you get a smooth mixture. The consistency should be softer than a pie dough but not watery. If the mixture is too watery, heat the mixture over low flame till you get the right consistency. Don't forget to stir continuously.
7. Let the mixture cool down a little and put in dessert plates and spread to thickness of about 1/2 inch. Decorate the edges. Halvah can be served warm or cold.

* The mixture of the flour depends on your preference. The more all purpose flour you use, the smoother the Halvah would be. Some people like their Halvah to be a little gritty and they use more whole wheat. You can also include some rice flour. It does not affect the taste too much, just the texture.

** Traditionally, Halvah is supposed to be oily. Some persian cook books suggest more oil but I found that 1 cup of oil to 2 cups of flour is as much oil as I can tolerate. You can use as little as 3/4 of a cup of oil depending on your preference for the final texture.

Khoreshe Fessenjan

- *2 pounds of boneless chicken breast cut into 2 inch pieces*
 - *1 medium onion, finely chopped*
 - *2 - 3 cloves of garlic*
 - *1 medium zucchini (green squash), peeled*
 - *2 - 3 cups of shelled walnuts*
 - *3 tsp. salt*
 - *1 tsp. black pepper*
 - *1/2 tsp. turmeric*
 - *1/2 tsp. cinnamon*
 - *1 - 2 Tbsp. vegetable oil*
 - *2 - 3 Tbsp. pomegranate paste/molasses **
 - *sugar to taste*
 - *1/2 Tbsp. tomato paste (optional)*
1. Fry the onions in the oil over med/high heat till they are lightly golden. Add the chicken, raise the heat to high and keep frying till all the juices are absorbed.
 2. Meanwhile put the walnuts, zucchini and garlic into a food processor fitted with the steel blade and process till smooth (almost paste). Set aside.
 3. When the juices in the meat/onion mixture are absorbed, add the spices (salt, black pepper, turmeric, and cinnamon) and fry for a minute or so (don't over fry). Add about 2 cups of water and the walnut mixture. Bring to a simmer.
 4. Add the pomegranate paste and the optional tomato paste. The tomato paste is used mainly for color. It makes the stew darker. Addition of sugar depends on the type of pomegranate you use. If it is in the form of molasses, you probably don't need the sugar (it is already in there). The dish should not be too sour. Adjust the sugar to your taste.
 5. Stir frequently because the walnuts have a tendency to settle down and burn at the bottom of the pot.
 6. When the meat is done, the sauce should be thick.
 7. Serve with hot basmati rice.

* You can find pomegranate paste in specialty food stores that carry middle eastern or indian spices. It is usually found in 5 oz. bottles referred to as pomegranate molasses.

Tiramisu

- *lady fingers**
- *1/2 to 1 cup of cold coffee*
- *2 - 3 Tbsp. Amaretto*
- *3 Tbsp. sugar*
- *3 egg yolks*
- *300 grams of Mascapone*
- *dash of vanilla extract*
- *cocoa for sprinkling on the top*

1. Separate the egg yolks and beat lightly
2. Add the sugar and vanilla extract and beat till slightly frothy
3. Fold the mascapone into the egg mixture and mix till very smooth
4. Add the amaretto to the coffee
5. Line the pan (an 8" x 8" or smaller Pyrex pan with a cover) with a layer of lady fingers and spoon enough coffee on top of it till soaked. The amount of coffee depends on the type of lady fingers (cookies) you use but soak them as well as you can. Having some extra coffee is better than not enough.
6. pour half of the egg/mascapone mixture on the lady fingers and spread evenly
7. Repeat steps 5 and 6 one more time
8. Put some cocoa and sprinkle evenly
9. Cover and store in the fridge over night.

Enjoy!

* Try to find lady fingers that are rectangular. This will make the layering of the lady fingers a lot easier. If you can't find rectangular ones, you could fill in the holes that are left in each layer with small pieces. A pretty layer is not an essential part of this recipe since every thing gets covered.

Curry Potatoes

- *2 Tbsp. corn oil*
- *6 large baking potatoes*
- *Juice of 1 lemon*
- *1 tsp. turmeric*
- *2 tsp. salt*
- *1 tsp. black pepper*
- *1 tsp. cayenne pepper*
- *2 tsp. ground coriander*
- *2 tsp. ground cumin*
- *1 Tbsp. mustard seed*

1. Peel potatoes and slice them thinly (not paper thin, about 1/8" thick).
2. Heat the oil in a large saute pan (preferably a 6.5 quart one since you want a lot of surface area), and add the mustard seed.
3. When mustard seeds start popping, add the rest of the spices and fry for about 1/2 minute, don't overdo this stage since spices can burn easily in high heat. The spices are fried well when you can smell them. Keep the heat on medium high.
4. When you can smell the spices, add the potatoes and stir around so all the potatoes are coated with the oil and spices. Reduce heat to medium and fry the potatoes for ~ 5 minutes stirring occasionally.
5. When the surface of the potatoes look crispy and brown, add the lemon juice and cover the pan. Reduce heat to medium low and cook for another 15 minutes stirring occasionally. The length of this stage varies a little depending on the type of potatoes.
6. Serve as a side dish with any kind of barbecue.

Stuffed Grape Leaves

- *Corn Oil (1 cup)*
- *Juice of 4 lemons (large ones)*
- *Grape leaves (1 large bottle - or 2 small ones)*

Filling:

- *Ground beef (2.5 lbs)*
- *Chopped onions (1 big one)*
- *Rice (1 cup)*
- *Peeled tomatoes (1 small can - chop them up)*
- *Dry mint (1 Tbsp.)*
- *Salt and pepper to taste*

1. Prepare the filling by mixing all the ingredients well.
2. Take the Grape leaves out of the bottle as gently as possible and rinse them.
3. Put a couple of the leaves at the bottom of a dutch oven pot and start stuffing the leaves with the filling. It would be a good idea to snip the stems if they are tough. Arrange them in the pot snugly and continue till the pot is almost full (leave about 1 inch).
4. Pour the lemon juice and the oil in the pot and add enough water till it covers the stuffed leaves.
5. Cover the leaves with a heavy plate that just fits inside the pot and weigh it down with some thing heavy and clean (the leaves should not be free to move around, otherwise they become unwrapped).
6. Bring the pot to boil and reduce to a simmer and cook for about 1.5 hours.
7. Pour out the extra liquid and arrange the leaves on a plate....

Pfirsichkuchen

- *200 grams butter at room temperature (about 1 3/4 sticks)*
- *200 grams sugar (about 1 cup)*
- *4 eggs*
- *2 Tbsp. rum*
- *1 tsp. lemon zest*
- *1 tsp. vanilla extract*
- *200 grams flour (about 1 3/4 cup)*
- *1 Tbsp. baking powder*
- *3 to 4 peaches (you may also use apples)*
- *Powder Sugar*

This recipe will be very easy to make if you use an electric mixer.

1. Add the butter to the mixing bowl and start beating. Add the sugar gradually and keep beating.
2. Add the eggs one at a time and continue beating till smooth (hence the need for the electric mixer)
3. Meanwhile blanch the peaches, remove the skin and cut the peaches into halves. Discard the pits! (If you are using apples, peel and core them and cut in halves.)
4. Add the rum, lemon zest, and vanilla extract
5. Add the flour and baking powder together to the liquid and beat till it is incorporated well.
6. Grease the bottom and the sides of an 8" spring form pan and sprinkle some bread crumbs at the bottom of the pan
7. Put the dough in the pan and put the peaches in the mixture decoratively and press them in a little, they should not be covered with the cake dough
8. Put in a 350 degree preheated oven for an hour
9. Cool to room temperature and sprinkle the top with powder sugar.

Penne Pepperonata

This is a nice and quick vegetarian pasta sauce.

- *1 Tbsp. butter*
 - *1/4 cup olive oil*
 - *1/4 cup finely chopped onion*
 - *1 - 2 red peppers in strips*
 - *1 can tomato sauce*
 - *1/2 Tbsp. red wine vinegar*
 - *1 tsp. each salt, pepper, and cayenne pepper*
 - *6 oz. Gorgonzola cheese*
 - *1 lb. Penne pasta (al dente)*
1. Heat up the butter and olive oil in a skillet and add the onions. Fry the onions till they are golden brown.
 2. Add the red peppers, tomato sauce, vinegar, and the spices to the skillet. Cover and cook over medium heat for ~ 10 minutes
 3. Crumble the cheese and add to the sauce and continue heating till the cheese is melted
 4. Mix and applaud...

Neiman-Marcus Cookies

I received the following recipe via E-mail and it has a great story attached to it. It is supposed to be a true story!!! Believe it or NOT...

- *2 cups butter*
- *2 cups sugar*
- *2 cups brown sugar*
- *4 eggs*
- *2 tsp. vanilla extract*
- *4 cups flour*
- *5 cups blended oatmeal**
- *1 tsp. salt*
- *2 tsp. baking powder*
- *2 tsp. baking soda*
- *24 oz. chocolate chips*
- *1-8 oz. Hershey bar, grated*
- *3 cups chopped nuts*

1. Cream butter and both sugars.
2. Add eggs and vanilla.
3. Mix together with flour, oatmeal, salt, baking powder and soda.
4. Add chocolate chips, Hershey bar and nuts.
5. Roll into balls and place two inches apart on a cookie sheet.
6. Bake for 10 minutes at 375 degrees. Makes about 110 cookies (recipe may be halved**).

* Measure oatmeal and blend in a blender or food processor to a fine powder.

** I recommend making only half the amount unless you have an extra large capacity standing mixer and lots of cookie sheets!