We all have a place we call home. From time to time, I do miss mine.

Since culinary experiences help us travel faraway,
this document compiles the recipes I use as a portal to Lebanon and elsewhere.

I hope you enjoy the trip.



Follow this link for the latest version of my cookbook: https://sergenader.org/cookbook/

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Recipes in bold are the most requested or "fan favorites"

Hommous: 2 servings (preparation time: 15 minutes)

1. Drain and wash 400 g of canned chickpeas. Alternatively, cook 1 cup of dried chickpeas.
2. In a food processor add:
    - lemon juice: ½ cup (2-3 lemons)
    - garlic: 1-2 cloves
    - salt: 1 tea spoon
    - Aquafaba: 2 table spoons (if you cooked your own chickpeas)
3. Add the drained chickpeas and blend using a food processor until all the chickpeas are broken down.
4. Add ¾ cup of tahini and blend until the mixture is homogenous.
5. Do not over blend. *Hommous* should have a paste like consistency and not look watery.

Dress with olive oil, radish slices, chili powder, cumin or paprika.

For a richer dish, pan fry ground lamb and pine nuts. Use as topping.

Store in the refrigerator for up to one week.

Variation: add one beetroot (oven roasted, blend with the rest). You will get a pink earthy sweet dish.



Baba ghannouj: 1 kg (preparation time: 2 hours; ready the next day)

Ingredients: 2 kg black beauty eggplants, 5 lemons, 1.5 cups of tahini, 4 tea spoons of salt, 4 garlic cloves.

1. With a knife, poke evenly spread holes into the eggplants. Bake for 1h15-1h30 at 430 °F. (220 °C)
2. Place the baked eggplants on a colander and peel them. Use a knife to take the skin off. It will easily peel if the eggplants baked thoroughly. Slice each eggplant longitudinally and drain for a few minutes.
3. In a bowl, add the lemon juice, salt and mashed garlic cloves. Mix then add the sliced eggplants. Use a fork to mix or breakdown the eggplant slices. Do not mash or use a food processor.
4. Add your tahini and mix with the fork.
5. If necessary, add equal proportions of additional lemon juice and tahini. You should be able to taste the baked eggplants. Do not overwhelm with garlic or lemon juice.
6. Store overnight in a refrigerator before serving.

Dress with olive oil and cracked rosemary. Serve with pita bread and/or salad.

Replace some of the lemon juice with pomegranate molasses for a richer taste.

Store in the refrigerator for up to one week. The garlic flavor intensifies with storage.



<u>Labné</u>: 1 kg (preparation: 20 minutes; ready the next day)

<u>Ingredients:</u> 3x 750g of plain Greek yogurt (fat: 2% or higher)



1. Add 1.5 table spoons of salt to the yogurt. Stir until the mix becomes homogenous and fluid in consistency.
2. Pour the mix into a cheese cloth and let it drain over a container.
3. For a smooth and spreadable *labné* drain for 6 hours. For a thicker consistency, drain overnight (preferred).
4. Remove the *labné* from the cheesecloth and mix it in a bowl. Store overnight in a refrigerator to equilibrate water content levels.

Dress with olive oil and sprinkle some dried mint. Serve with pita bread and a plate of fresh vegetables (cucumbers, tomatoes, olives, mint, thyme, mizuna, arugula …).

Store in the refrigerator for up to one week.

<u>Long term storage:</u> (Up to one month at room temperature. Avoid direct sun light or heat.)

1. Drain the *labné* for 24 hours.
2. Shape into ping pong sized balls, cover with a cloth and let dry for 24 hours.
3. Roll, smoothen and press the balls into their final shape. Optionally, coat them with herbs for added flavor.
4. Place the balls in a jar and cover with olive oil.

Labné will ferment slowly and acquire an acidic taste, becoming more solid in consistency overtime.





Baladi cheese: 500 g (preparation time: 1 hour; ready: next day)

Ingredients: Whole Milk: 4 liters; White vinegar: 1/3 cup; Salt 2 table spoons

1. Bring 4 liters of whole milk to a boil then reduce the heat to medium.
2. Slowly add 1/3 of a cup of white vinegar; this will curdle the milk. Stir for two minutes. (Keep stirring the whole time while the milk is heating, otherwise it will stick to the bottom of the casserole.)
3. Collect the liquid! Place a cheesecloth over a sieve and empty the contents of the casserole. Collect the cheese curds in the cheese cloth and the whey in a container.
4. Wrap the cheesecloth around the curds and keep twisting until excess whey comes out. Use a baking pan, a rolled kitchen towel and a cutting board to make an inclined cheese pressing station.
   Tip: use a small plate to exert pressure on the cheese, especially when hot. Stop pressing when whey stops draining. Avoid excessive pressure otherwise the cheese will turn out hard.
5. Keep cheese in cheesecloth and let it cool at room temperature.
6. Bring 3 cups of whey to a boil then add 2 table spoons of salt. Stir and let cool.
7. Take the cheese out of the cheese cloth and submerge in the salted whey. Refrigerate overnight before serving.



Store in the refrigerator for up to one week.



Fattouch: 5 portions

Mix all the following ingredients together:

- Onion: 1 big, wing chops.
- Sumac: 1 table spoon.
- Lettuce: 10 leaves, big chops.
- Tomatoes: 2 ripe, dice chops.
- Cucumber: 4 regular (1 big), half-moon chops.
- Parsley: half a bunch, leaves or rough chops, use flat leaf parsley.
- Mint: half bunch, leaves or rough chops.
- Radish: 5, thinly sliced.
- Pita bread: 1 loaf, fried or toasted and broken into pieces. Microwaving for two minutes will toast one loaf placed on a metal rack or an upside-down bowl. To preserve its crunch, soak toasted bread in olive oil before mixing it with the salad.

Dressing**:**

- Garlic: 3-4 cloves, mashed.
- Salt: 1 table spoon.
- Red grape vinegar: 3 table spoons.
- Olive oil: 5 table spoons, good quality.
- Salt, vinegar and olive oil are to be adjusted to taste after the final mixing.

Will work without the bread. Can be stored in the refrigerator for 3 days.



Tabboulé: 8-10 portions

- Flat leaf parsley: 2 bunches
- Mint: 1 bunch; mint to parsley ratio should be ≤ 1:2
- Tomatoes: 3-4 ripe, avoid Roma
- White onions: 1 big
- Bulgur: ½ cup, ***do not use couscous***
- Lemon juice: 2-3 lemons
- Olive oil: 1 cup; good quality
- Salt: ¾ tea spoon
- Pepper: ¼ tea spoon

1. Bulgur: soak in cold water for 20 minutes. Strain and squeeze by hand to remove excess water.
2. Parsley: roughly chopped, keep the visual aspect of the leaves. Do not use the big main stems.
3. Mint: finely chopped.
4. Onion and tomatoes: diced.

Mix the ingredients then add lemon juice, olive oil, salt and pepper. *Tabboulé* should look "shining or glossy" and not dry. The taste should be more acidic than oily.

Serve when ready. After adding lemon juice and olive oil, the clock starts ticking and crunchiness is lost gradually. *Tabboulé* can be prepared a couple of hours before serving if kept chilled.

Store in the refrigerator for up to 3 days. It will lose texture and acquire a different taste after the first refrigeration. The taste becomes so different that some people like "aged" *tabboulé*. Each family has someone like this...

You can prepare this without bulgur, it becomes lighter. Traditionally bulgur is added to give *tabboulé* more nutritional values. It is known as the poor people's salad, because you mix what you have and voilà. You can also increase the quantity of bulgur to satiate the hungry.



Man'ouché and Lahem bi ajin: 4 large pieces (preparation time: 2.5 hours)

Dough preparation:

- Flour: 4 cups
- Wheat bran: ½ cup
- Salt: 1.5 tea spoons
- Sugar: 1 table spoon
- Yeast: 1 table spoon
- Vegetable oil: ¾ cup
- Water: 1.5 cups

1. Mix the dry ingredients together before adding the lukewarm liquids. Knead the dough for 5 minutes.
2. Cut the dough into 4 ball shaped pieces. Cover, and let them rest for 1-2 hours.
3. Flatten using a rolling pin, or by hand, and place on a baking sheet.
4. Add the meat or *zaatar* topping.
5. Bake at 450 °F for 8-12 minutes. (230 °C)

Zaatar mix: 4 servings (for *man'ouché*)

To prepare, mix ⅔ cup of Lebanese *zaatar* to ⅔ cup of olive oil.

Don't have *zaatar*? Make your own by mixing dried oregano, sumac, toasted sesame seeds and salt. Recipes can become family secrets, so here's a good starting point:

- Dried oregano: 1 cup
- Sumac: ½ cup
- Toasted sesame seeds: ½ cup
- Salt: 1 teaspoon

Consider additional toppings such as mint, cucumbers, tomatoes and labné.





Minced meat mix: 4-6 servings (for *lahem bi ajin*)

- Ground beef: 500 g
- Diced tomatoes: 2 cups
- Tomato paste: 2 tablespoons
- Diced white onions: 2 cups
- Salt: 2 teaspoons
- Paprika: 2 teaspoons
- Nutmeg: ½ teaspoon
- Black pepper: ¼ teaspoon
- Cayenne pepper: ¼ teaspoon

Bake at 450 °F for 12-15 minutes, or until the meat is cooked. (230 °C)

Serve with a slice of lemon, or squeeze some on the *lahem bi ajin* when still hot.





Fatté: 2 servings (preparation time: 20 minutes)



1. Drain, wash and soak in water 400 g of canned chickpeas for 10 minutes. Alternatively, cook 1 cup of dried chickpeas.
2. Toast some pita bread and crumble them. Microwaving for two minutes will toast one loaf of pita bread placed on a rack or inverted bowl.
3. In a bowl, mix 2 mashed garlic cloves with 1 tea spoon of salt, ½ tea spoon of black pepper and ½ teaspoon of water.
4. Add the drained chickpeas, the toasted bread and mix to evenly coat them.
5. In a pan, sauté ¼ cup of pine nuts in butter until golden brown.

For each serving, place the chickpeas in a bowl and top them with a generous layer of cold Greek yogurt. Cover the perimeter with toasted pita bread crumbs. Drizzle the melted butter on top and place the sautéed pine nuts in the center. Serve while still warm.



Tarator:

This is the sauce served with falafel. You can also have it with grilled or fried fish, and vegetarian wraps.

1. Mix ¾ cup tahini and ½ cup of lemon juice. The tahini will become less fluid.
2. To avoid a soupy consistency, add little by little, up to ¼ cup of water and keep stirring, the mix should become more fluid.
3. Add ½ tea spoon of salt and one mashed garlic clove, mix and serve.

Store in the refrigerator for up to one week. *Tarator* will harden when cold, let it warm up at room temperature before serving.

Vegetarian wrap with tarator sauce: 4 servings

- Cauliflower: 1 head
- Eggplant: 2 black beauty
- Tomatoes: 2
- Mint: a few leaves
- Pickled turnip and/or cucumbers: as needed.
- Radish: a handful

Depending on your preference, fry or bake the cauliflower and the eggplants (long slices).

Place them on a large pita bread, drizzle with *tarator* and cover with mint leaves, tomatoes, pickled turnip or cucumber and radish. Wrap the bread around and enjoy.

To make folding the wrap easier, dice the radishes and prepare julienne cuts for the tomatoes and pickles.







Bulgur with tomatoes: 4 servings (preparation time: 40 minutes)

- vegetable oil: 1 table spoon
- Onion: 1 white, diced
- Garlic: 2 cloves, pressed
- Tomatoes: 4, diced
- Bulgur: 1.5 cup, washed and drained
- Water: 2.5 cup
- Salt: 1.5 tea spoon
- Pepper: ¼ tea spoon
- Tomato paste: 1 tea spoon

1. Heat the vegetable oil in a pan and add the onions.
2. When golden brown, add the garlic and stir for 1 minute.
3. Add the tomatoes and stir for 1 minute.
4. Add all the other ingredients and bring to a boil.
5. Cover and place on low heat for 25 minutes or until dry.
6. Serve lukewarm with a side of plain Greek yogurt.

Tip: mix 4 cups of yogurt, 2 pressed garlic cloves, 2 table spoons of dried mint, and some sliced cucumber. Salt to taste and refrigerate for 15 minutes before serving.



Mjadara: 5 servings (preparation time: 40 minutes)

Lentils: 2 cups
Rice: ½ cup
Onion: 1 cup, diced (1 onion)
Salt: 1 tea spoon
Pepper: ¼ tea spoon
Olive oil: 2 table spoons

1. Cook 2 cups of lentils in 8-10 cups of water. Bring to a boil then simmer for:
   - 25 minutes when using brown lentils.
   - 40 minutes when using green lentils.
2. Cook ½ cup of rice in 1 cup of water.
3. Salt and pepper the diced onion then sauté in olive oil until golden brown.
4. Blend the cooked lentils in a food processor or mill until completely smooth.
5. Transfer them to a pot with the rice and onions, bring to a boil then reduce to medium heat.
6. Keep stirring for 5 minutes.
7. Pour into bowls or deep dishes. The mjadara will thicken as it cools down.

Serve warm or cold with a side of salad and pickles of your choice.



Pasta in tahini sauce: (4 servings, preparation time: 30 minutes)

Cook 500 g of pasta. Set aside a couple of table spoons of pasta water.

For the sauce, mix together:

- garlic: 4 cloves, mashed
- salt: 2 tea spoons
- tahini: 1 cup
- lemon juice: ½ cup, or 1 lemon
- water: ¾ cup (½ to 1 cup) depending on your tahini.

Mixing tahini with lemon juice will create a thick paste. Adding water makes the sauce more fluid. Add water slowly while mixing to reach the right consistency, avoid a runny sauce.

Toss the pasta in the sauce. Add a few table spoons of pasta water if needed. Dress with dried mint, parsley or thyme. This dish can be served cold or warm.



Pasta in yogurt sauce: (4 servings, preparation time: 30 minutes)

Cook 500 g of pasta. Set aside a couple of table spoons of pasta water.

For the sauce, mix together:

- garlic: 4 cloves, mashed
- salt: 2 tea spoons
- yogurt: 2 cups
- olive oil: 1 tea spoon
- pasta water: 4 table spoons
- oregano, thyme, parsley: to taste

Toss the pasta in the sauce. Dress with dried mint, parsley or thyme. Optionally, sauté pine nuts in butter then place on top. This dish is best consumed fresh.



Orange cake: (preparation time: 1 hour; baking pan: 5x9 inches)

Preheat your oven to 350 °F. (175 °C)

Dry ingredients:

- all purpose flour: 1 ¼ cups
- baking powder: ¾ tea spoon
- baking soda: ¼ tea spoon
- salt: ¼ tea spoon
- sugar: ¾ cup

In a separate bowl, mix together:

- eggs: 2 large (whisk well)
- orange blossom: ½ table spoon
- pure vanilla extract: ½ tea spoon
- orange zest: ⅓ cup (½ of a large orange)
- vegetable oil: a little bit less than ½ cup
- milk: ½ cup
- orange juice: ¼ cup

Whisk well all of the wet ingredients. For example, whisk the mix manually for 5 minutes, or for 1 minute after adding each ingredient. This is important, otherwise your cake will smell or taste eggy.

Gradually mix the wet and dry ingredients together. Whisk at the same time, for around 2 minutes.

Pour your cake batter into a cake pan and bake at 350 °F for 45 minutes on the middle rack.

Marble effect: pour 2/3 of the batter into the pan. To the remaining ⅓, add 1 table spoon of cocoa powder, mix and pour into the pan. Bake as is, or use a knife to make swirling shapes before baking.





<u>Nammoura</u>: (preparation time: 1h30)

1. Mix together:
   - Semolina: 2.5 cups (coarse)
   - Salt: ½ tea spoon
   - Baking soda: ½ tea spoon
   - Baking powder: 1 tea spoon
   - Butter: ¾ cup, melted
2. Separately, mix:
   - Yogurt: 1.5 cups
   - Sugar: ½ cup

   Add to the semolina and mix.
3. Coat with butter a 30 cm baking pan. Spread the *nammoura* mix, tap its sides and bottom to remove air bubbles. Let it rest for 15 minutes.
4. Wet your hand and smoothen the surface of the *nammoura*. Cut it with a knife to the desired final shape. Place one almond on each piece, pressing slightly so that the almond sinks in.
5. Bake at 350 °F for 50 minutes on the middle shelf. (175 °C)

In the mean time, prepare the sweet syrup (*ater*):

1. Mix 3 cups of sugar, 1.5 cups of water and juice from half a lemon.
2. Bring the mix to a boil then lower the heat to medium. Keep for 10 minutes.
3. Take off the heat and add 1 or 2 table spoons of orange blossom.

When the *nammoura* is done baking (watch the edges for shrinkage and colour changes), pour all the quantity of *ater* on top of it and let it soak for two hours, or ideally overnight. If the baking was successful, the *nammoura* should soak all the *ater* quantity. If not, discard of excess *ater* and reconsider your life choices.

Store at room temperature for up to two weeks.



Sfouf: (preparation time: 45 minutes)

In a bowl mix: (quantities are for a 30 cm baking tray)

- All purpose flour: 2 cups
- Semolina (fine): 2 cups
- Sugar: 2 cups
- Baking powder: 1 table spoon
- Turmeric: 3 tea spoons
- Anise seeds: 3 tea spoons
- Salt: ½ tea spoon
- Milk: 2 cups
- Vegetable oil: 1 cup

Start by mixing the dry ingredients, and then add the liquids. Mix well until homogeneous. Pour in a baking tray covered with parchment paper. Sprinkle sesame seeds or slivered almonds on top.

Anise seeds can be replaced by ground anise. When using anise seeds, boil them in the volume of milk to enrich the flavor. If desired, milk can be replaced by water and vegetable oil by butter.

Bake for 30 minutes at 400 °F. (205 °C)

Store for up to two weeks in an airtight container.



Meghlé: 4 portions (preparation time: 30 minutes)

In a pot mix:

- Rice flour: ½ cup
- Sugar (fine): 1 cup
- Cinnamon: 1 ½ tea spoon
- Ground caraway: 1 ½ tea spoon
- Ground anise: 1 tea spoon
- Nutmeg: ½ tea spoon
- Water: 5 cups
- Cardamom: ½ tea spoon - *optional*

Mix all the ingredients on the stove's highest heat setting. Keep stirring otherwise the rice flour will stick to the bottom. Once the mixture starts boiling, bring the heat down to medium.

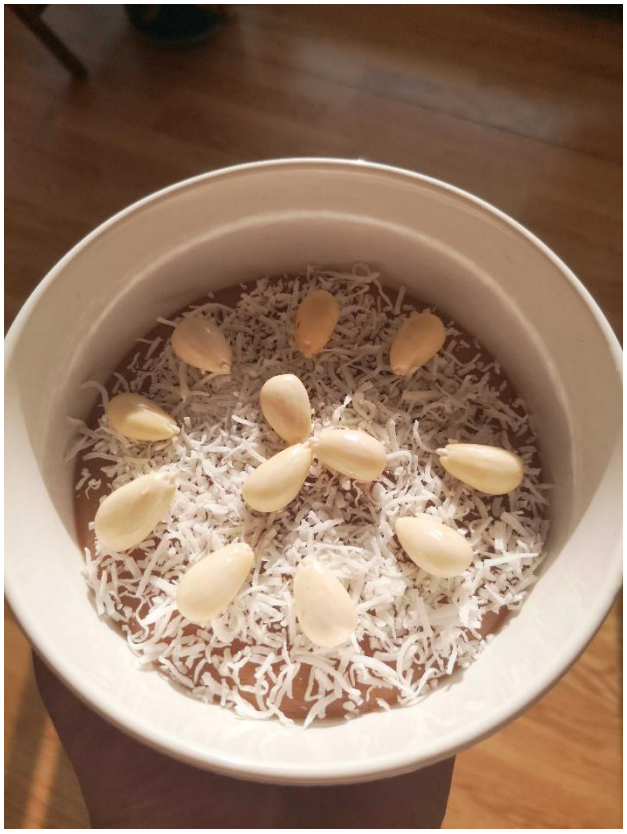
The mixture will thicken over time, boil for 5 minutes or until you reach the desired consistency. Pour the mixture into bowls and let it cool down. The mixture solidifies quickly, have your bowls ready beforehand.

Seeds can replace ground anise and ground caraway. When using anise or caraway seeds, boil them in a cup of water, filter, then add to the final mixture when it starts boiling. Powder will always be more potent than boiled seeds.

Once the bowls and their content are cool, cover and place in the refrigerator for up to one week.

To serve, decorate with coconut shavings and nuts. Usually, a mixture of almonds, pistachios and walnuts (soak raw almonds in water overnight before using them).





Mhalabiye: (preparation time 30 minutes, 4 portions)

Ingredients:

- Milk: 5 cups
- Rice flour or corn starch: ½ cup
- Mastic powder: ¼ tea spoon (crushed)
- Sugar: ½ cup
- Orange blossom: 2 table spoons

In your pot, mix milk and rice flour. Place on the stove on medium heat. From now on, you have to stir non stop. When the milk starts boiling reduce the heat to low.

Gradually add the sugar and mastic powder, stir for about 5 minutes.

Take off the heat and add the orange blossom, stir well.

Pour in bowls, let cool at room temperature. Cover and store in the refrigerator for up to one week.

Serve cold. You can dress with nuts, usually pistachios. Optionally, add cinnamon, cardamon or turmeric. I tend to put some of these spices in the liquid mix while stirring. I also like to add a teaspoon of maple syrup at the bottom of the bowls before pouring the mhalabiye in.





Give blueberries a try

Wheat berries: (preparation time: 1 hour, 6-8 portions)

Including all the spices is optional, this happens to be the way I prefer it. I have underlined the ingredients that are traditionally used for this recipe.

Soak the hard wheat berries overnight in water, drain and rinse before proceeding to the next step.

Add the following ingredients to a pot and boil, covered, on low heat for 45 minutes or until the berries are soft enough to your taste.

- Hard wheat berries: 2 cups
- Water: 8-10 cups
- Cardamom: 4 pods
- Caraway seeds: 1 table spoon
- Fennel seeds: 1 table spoon
- Turmeric: ½ table spoon
- Cinnamon: 2 tea spoons (or 1 stick)
- Cloves (whole): 1 tea spoon
- Nutmeg: ¼ tea spoon

Fennel seeds can be replaced by anise seeds. I use fresh turmeric rhizome that I cut into cubes.

Serve lukewarm, there is supposed to be liquid and berries in each serving.

For dressing, add 1 table spoon of orange blossom, raisins and almonds or any other nuts. You can add a sweetener as well. I tend to use 1.5 tea spoon of maple syrup. Alternatively, soak the dried fruits and nuts in Port wine onvernight before using them.



Semsmiyeh: 15-20 pieces (preparation time: 30 minutes)

- Sesame seeds: 1 cup
- Sugar: 1 cup
- Butter: 1 tea spoon
- Rose water: 2 tea spoons

Optionally, add some nigella seeds, honey, cinnamon or cardamom.

On medium heat, toast the sesame seeds making sure to stir them until they become golden in colour, this should take 5-6 minutes. Remove from heat source, keep in pan, you will get back to it shortly.

Place the sugar in a pot on medium heat, wait for it to caramelize. This usually starts around the edges which turn brown.

While the sugar is slowly caramelizing, get back to the sesame seeds pan. Pour in the rose water and butter and stir to evenly cover the seeds. *If the pan is too warm, the rose water will boil and evaporate without adding any taste to the seeds.*

Keep an eye on the sugar, it should take about 5 minutes to turn brown in colour. There is no need for stirring. Simply move the pot around to make sure there are no lumps of granulated sugar left*. If the sugar starts smoking, reduce the heat otherwise you will burn your caramel*.

From now on, you need to work fast.

Pour the butter coated sesame seeds into the caramel pot, mix well with a wooden or silicone spoon (don't use plastic as it will melt). Place the mixture between two parchment paper sheets. Use a rolling pin to flatten it (3-5 mm is what you're aiming for). Wait a few seconds then peel the top parchment paper. Use a pizza cutter to form the desired pieces. If the mixture hardened too fast, use a sharp kitchen knife or a mallet to form the pieces. Store in an airtight container at room temperature.



Anise and molasses muffins: 12 muffins (preparation time: 45 minutes) **VEGAN**

Dry ingredients:

- All purpose flour: 2 ¼ cups
- Baking powder: 1.5 tea spoon
- Sugar: ½ cup
- Ground anise: 2 tea spoons

Wet ingredients:

- Water: ¾ cup
- Vegetable oil: ½ cup
- Carob molasses: 1 cup

Combine wet and dry ingredients together and mix thoroughly.

Carob molasses can be replaced by fancy molasses.

Bake in a muffin tray at 350 °F for 25-30 minutes. (175 °C)



Choereg: 2 loaves, preparation time 4 hours – **Armenian easter bread, similar to the Greek tsoureki.**

Mix together: (at room temperature)

- Eggs: 3
- Milk: ½ cup
- Water: ¼ cup
- Sugar: ½ cup
- Honey: 3 table spoons
- Salt: ¾ tea spoon
- Yeast: 2 tea spoons

Separately, mix:

- Flour: 4 cups
- Nigella seeds: 1 table spoon
- Baking powder: ¾ tea spoon
- Mahlab: 3 tea spoons
- Mastic powder: ¼ tea spoon
- Anis, ground: 2 tea spoons
- Cloves, ground: ½ tea spoon

Mahlab is a key ingredient in this recipe. Without it, you won't be making Choereg. Raisins are optional.

Slowly combine the wet and dry ingredients and knead the dough for 5 minutes.

Add 1 cup of diced butter and knead for another 5 minutes. Rest the dough for 2 hours.

Divide into 6 equal parts and let the dough rest for 30 minutes.

Shape into long strands (12 inches). Weave 3 strands into one loaf. Brush with egg wash and sprinkle some sesame and nigella seeds. Rest the loaves for 15 minutes.

Bake at 350 °F for 25-35 minutes (175 °C). Cool on a wire rack before storing in airtight container.



Easter cookies: (preparation time: 1 hour, makes 30 standard or 60 small cookies)

Melt 1 cup of butter and let it cool at room temperature. Meanwhile, mix together:

- All purpose flour: 3 cups
- Baking powder: 2 tea spoons
- Salt: ¼ tea spoon
- Sugar or maple syrup: 1 cup
- Sesame seeds: 3 table spoons
- Nigella seeds: 2 table spoons
- Anis seeds (ground): 2 table spoons
- Cinnamon: ½ table spoon
- Fennel seeds (ground): 1 tea spoon
- Cardamom powder: ½ tea spoon
- Mastic powder: ½ tea spoon
- Nutmeg: ¼ tea spoon

Separately, mix one egg with ¼ cup of milk. Add the melted butter and mix until homogenous.

Add to the dry ingredients and mix with a spoon until all the liquid is absorbed and no clumps of powder are present. Cover and rest for 10 minutes at room temperature.

At this stage the dough will not stick to your hands and can be easily shaped. Take small pieces, roll into logs roughly the size of your index and join the two ends to form a ring. (size is a personal preference)

Bake at 350 °F (175 °C). Depending on the size of the cookies, they can take anywhere between 15-25 minutes to properly bake. Take them out of the oven when their bottom starts browning. Cool on a rack. The cookies harden as they cool down. Sore in airtight containers for up to 10 days.



Small cookie size

Easter milk cookies: 36 cookies (preparation time: 3 hours), “soft cookies”

Prepare your yeast:

- Yeast: 2 tablespoons
- Sugar: 2 tablespoons
- Milk: 2.5 cups, lukewarm
- Cover and let rest for 10 minutes at room temperature.

Mix together:

- Flour: 1 kg (7 cups)
- Sugar: 0.5 kg (2.5 cups)
- Sesame seeds: ½ cup, toasted
- Anise seeds: ¼ cup, grounded
- Nutmeg: 2 tablespoons
- Salt: 1 teaspoon
- Butter: ½ cup, melted
- Vegetable oil: ½ cup
- Mix for two minutes making sure to break any lumps that may have formed.

- Combine the two bowls together and mix by hand for 3 minutes.
- Cover the dough and let it rest for 2 hours.
- When ready, divide into palm sized pieces and form into flat disks or rings.
- Bake at 450 °F for 15 minutes. (230 °C)



Knéfé: (8 servings; Preparation time: 3-4 hours) ***this is the trickiest desert I have made so far!***

Knéfé consists of three components: the cheese, the crust and a sweet syrup (*ater*).

Cheese preparation: 800 g

Traditionally, akkawi cheese is used after being desalted. If it's not available, mix

- 400 g of mozzarella
- 400 g of havarti

Cut roughly into 2x2x2 cm cubes and desalt in water for 3 to 4 hours. Changing the water each 30 minutes. Mozzarella and Havarti desalt at different rates. Do not desalt them in the same container. When the time is over or if you can barely taste the salt in the cheese, wash and drain them.

Ater (sweet syrup):

- In a pan mix 2 cups of sugar and 1 cup of water.
- Bring to a boil, then keep on low heat for 5 minutes while stirring.
- Add the juice from half a lemon and keep on low heat for 5 more minutes.
- Take off the heat and add 1 tablespoon of rose water and 1 tablespoon of orange blossom.
- Let the *ater* cool at room temperature.

Crust preparation:

- Warm up and mix 1 cup of milk and 1/2 cup of ghee.
- Add 2 cups of fine wheat semolina.
- Mix well then spread on a baking sheet.
- Bake at 340 °F for 20-30 minutes or until dry. Keep a close eye on the edges to avoid over baking it. (170 °C)
- Cool down at room temperature.
- Break into small pieces by hand.
- Break into fine particles using a blender.
- Sift to eliminate big pieces.
- Add 3 tablespoons of rose water, 3 tablespoons of orange blossom and 4 tablespoons of water.





Knéfé preparation: (cooked upside down, will be flipped over at the end).



- Coat a thin film of ghee on a baking pan (8.5 inches in diameter or equivalent surface).
- Spread the crust mix evenly (0.5 cm thick), tapping it slightly to ensure its cohesion.
- In a casserole, melt the desalted cheese, remove excess water if present.
- Pour the melted cheese on top of the crust layer.
- Place on the stove on medium heat for 15 minutes.
- Keep turning the baking pan to avoid burning the crust layer. Watch the sides for colour changes and shrinking.
- When done, swiftly flip the pan over a plate.
- The crust should be the top layer now. Slowly pour *ater* until all the crust looks soaked.



While still warm, cut into pieces and serve inside a *kaake* loaf or on a plate. Drizzle with additional *ater*.

Knéfé can be stored in the refrigerator and reheated using a microwave oven.



<u>Kaak</u>: (sesame bun/bread): 10 loaves; ***optional***

Mix the following ingredients together:

- All purpose flour: 3 cups
- Wheat semolina: 3/4 cup
- Sugar: 3 tablespoons
- Salt: ½ tablespoon
- Yeast: 2 tea spoons

In a separate bowl, mix together:

- Ghee: 1 tablespoon
- Milk: 1 cup
- Water: 1 cup

Make sure the mix is at room temperature, then add it to the dry ingredients.

- This dough is sticky. Mix well, then add 2 tablespoons of vegetable oil to make the next step easier.
- Knead the dough, cover and let it rest for 1 hour at room temperature.

Prepare the sesame coating by mixing:

- Raw sesame seeds: 1 cup
- Honey: 2 table spoons
- Water: 1/4 cup.



When the dough is ready:

- Cut it into tennis ball sized pieces.
- Coat the dough with the sticky sesame mix, then flatten with a rolling pin. Let it rest for 15 minutes.
- Cut an off-center hole in the dough (optional).
- Bake at 365 °F for 8-12 minutes or until golden brown. (185 °C)



Pita bread: 4 loaves, preparation time: 1 hour

This recipe is similar to the one described on the previous page.

Mix the following ingredients together:

- All purpose flour: 1.5 cups
- Wheat semolina: 1/3 cup
- Sugar: 1.5 tablespoons
- Salt: ¼ tablespoon
- Yeast: 1 tea spoons

In a separate bowl, mix together:

- Ghee: 1 tablespoon
- Milk: ½ cup
- Water: ½ cup

Make sure the mix is at room temperature, then add it to the dry ingredients.

- This dough is sticky. Mix well, then add 2 tablespoons of vegetable oil to make the next step easier.
- Knead the dough then cut into 4 equal parts.
- Cover and let it rest for 1.5 hours at room temperature.
- Flatten by hand to form the loaves, use semolina flour to prevent sticking. Let them rest for 15 mintues. Make sure to flatten them as evenly as possible otherwise they won't rise uniformly.
- Bake at 450 °F for 8-12 minutes or until golden brown. (230 °C)

Store at room temperature in an airtight container.

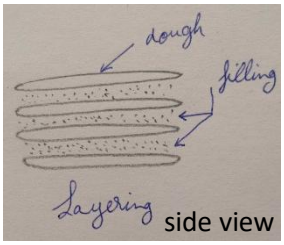


BONUS RECIPES

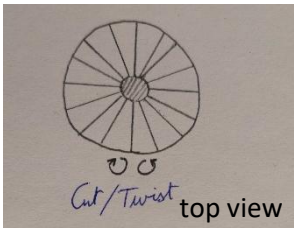
Bread twists: 16 twists (preparation time: 2 hours)

- Instant yeast: 2/3 teaspoon
- Sugar: 1 tablespoon
- Salt: ½ teaspoon
- Flour: 2 cups
- Water: 1 cup
- Vegetable oil: ½ cup

Mix ingredients, knead for 5 minutes and let the dough rise for one hour. Divide into 4 balls and let them rest for 15 minutes, then roll into thin, equal sized, pieces. This dough is a sticky one.



side view



top view





Stack the pieces on top of each other, while placing in-between them the filling of your choice. Once assembled, place a cup in the center and press down. Using a knife, make 16 cuts from the edge of the cup. Twist each cut 3 times in the opposite direction of the previous one.

Bake at 350 °F (175 °C) for 25-35 minutes on the oven's middle rack.


Garlic and butter


Zaatar and olive oil


Pizza sauce and cheese

Crescent rolls: 32 pieces (preparation time: 3 hours) – These are not croissants!

In a bowl, mix:

- Flour: 4 cups
- Salt: 1.5 teaspoon
- Yeast: 1.5 teaspoons
- Sugar: 1.5 tablespoons
- Butter: ¼ cup, room temperature (soft)

Separately whisk:

- Egg: 1 large, room temperature
- Milk: 1.25 cup, room temperature
- Ground cloves: a pinch (1/8 tea spoon)

Slowly add the flour mix into the milk and egg. Mix thoroughly while you can, then knead the dough until it is no longer sticky. Rest the dough for 45 minutes.



Shape into 4 dough balls and let them rest for another 45 minutes.

With a rolling pin, flatten each ball as much as you can, then cut into 8 pieces. Optionally brush with melted butter or add stuffings.

Roll each piece into a crescent shape, place on a baking sheet and let it rest for 1 hour. Brush with egg wash and decorate right before baking.

Bake at 400 °F for 10-12 minutes (205 °C). Store in an airtight container.



Rye bread: (preparation time: 2 hours with overnight incubation, makes one loaf)

Mix together:

- Rye flour: 2.5 cups
- Instant yeast: ½ tablespoon
- Salt: 1.5 teaspoon
- Fennel seeds: ½ tablespoon
- Caraway seeds: ½ tablespoon
- Cocoa powder: 1 table spoon

Then add:

- Dark beer: 1 cup, room temperature
- Molasses: 1.5 tablespoon

Mix the dough for a few minutes and fold it a few times. Place in a covered container and let it rest overnight at room temperature.

When it is time, remove the dough, fold it again and shape it. Place in a loaf pan lined with parchment paper. Let rest for 2 hours.

Bake at 400 °F for 40-50 minutes. (205 °C)





Spinach pie: 4 pies (preparation time: 2 hours)

- Spinach: 300 g chopped, frozen
- Salt: ¾ teaspoon
- Pepper: ¼ teaspoon
- Butter: 1 table spoon, unsalted
- Pine nuts: ¼ cup
- Ricotta: 1 cup

In a heated pan, remove excess water from the spinach. Add butter, seasoning, pine nuts and stir. Stop when pine nuts acquire a golden colour.

Use half the quantity of dough described on page 9. Bake at 450 °F for 10 minutes. (230 °C)





Cheese pie: 3 large or 15 small pies (preparation time: 2 hours)

- Mozzarella: 200-300 g, grated or diced
- Fetta: 150 g, crumbled
- Green onion: 1 bunch, chopped
- Tomatoes: 1 cup, diced (or 1 tomato)
- Basil or oregano: ¼ cup
- Paprika: 1 teaspoon
- Pepper: ¼ teaspoon
- Sriracha sauce: ¾ table spoon
- Vegetable oil: 1 table spoon

In a heated pan, season and wilt the green onions and tomatoes. Add the Sriracha sauce and mix with the cheese.

Use ¾ of the quantity of dough described on page 9, add a quarter cup of dried basil, or rosemary, to the dough before kneading it. Bake at 435 °F for 15-20 minutes. (220 °C)







Tuna cake: 4 portions (prep time: 45 minutes)

In a bow, mix:

- Eggs: 3
- Rosemary: 2 tea spoons
- Dill weed: ½ tea spoon
- Salt: 1 teaspoon
- Pepper: ¼ teaspoon
- Oil: 1 teaspoon
- Milk: ½ cup
- Tuna: 2 cans, drained
- Mixed vegetables: 1 can, drained
- Semolina flour: 1.5 cup
- Baking powder: 1.5 teaspoon

Mix all the ingredients together. Add your semolina and baking powder at the end.

Bake at 375 °F for 25-30 minutes (190 °C), then broil for a couple of minutes to brown the surface.

Serve with the salad of your choice.



Oyster mushroom steak sandwich: 1 sandwich (prep. time: 20-30 minutes) my sister's recipe :)

- Top sirloin steak, sliced (≈ 200g)
- Half white onion, roughly diced
- Garlic: 4 cloves, incise in the middle
- Oyster mushroom: 50 g, sliced
- One shallot, cut into rings
- One pickled cucumber, diced
- Mayonnaise: ¼ cup
- Parika: ½ tea spoon
- Unsalted butter: as needed
- Salt and pepper: to taste
- Half a baguette

In a pan, sauté the onion and garlic until golden. Add the steak and season to taste with salt and pepper. When done, set aside in a colander. Collect garlic cloves and the juices for the sandwich spread.

In the same pan, with butter and no additional seasoning, sauté the mushrooms and the shallot rings together. Set aside when done.

Add butter to the pan and brown the two halves of the sandwich.

Sandwich spread: mix mayonnaise with the diced pickle and paprika. Add the garlic cloves (mashed) and the meat juice. Avoid making the spread too runny.

Spread on the sandwich, add the steak, mushrooms and shallot.

Additional tips:

- Things cool down quickly, pre-cut everything before cooking.
- Marinate the sliced steak in 2 tbsp of soya sauce and a mashed fresh slice of pineapple for 2 hours.
- Field greens are a tasty addition to the sandwich.



Bison back ribs: Two portions (preparation time: 3 hours)

- Bison back ribs: 0.5-0.8 kg
- Onion: one, diced
- Potatoes: 2 large, diced
- Beer: 1/3 of a can, optional

Remove the fascia (silver skin, membrane on the internal side of the ribs). Sliding a butter knife along the arch of the bones helps in detaching it. Wipe the ribs dry with a paper towel. Season as desired. I personally use olive oil, salt, pepper, paprika and thyme.

Dice the potatoes and onion. Season as desired. I use olive oil, salt, pepper, paprika, dill weed, rosemary and cayenne pepper. Mix well.

In a baking pan, lay a layer (or all) of the potato and onion mix, then place the ribs on top. Cover with aluminium foil. Use a baking tray deep enough to avoid contact between the ribs and the foil.

Bake at 300 °F, 150 °C, for 3 hours (or 1 hour at 300 °F, then 1 hour at 350 °F). Rest 10 minutes before serving.

Additional notes:

Optionally, add 1/3 of a can of beer after 1 hour of baking. A lager is preferred, avoid fruity/Radlers as they can add a bitter taste when baked. Make sure your beer is at room temperature before using it.

If you're baking a larger quantity, you may need to bake for more time, or to uncover the aluminium foil and bake for an extra 10-15 minutes to evaporate excess water.

Alternatively, bake at 410 °F for 1h 20min. This usually cooks the ribs in one hour, so 20 minutes before the potatoes are done. In such instances, remove the ribs from the oven and keep covered until the potatoes are done.





Date spread: 500 g (preparation time: 30 minutes)

- Dates: 500g, ripe and pitted
- Water: 2.5 cups
- Corn flour or corn starch: ¼ cup
- Ghee: 3 table spoons
- Cardamon powder: 2 tea spoons
- Pistachios: ¼ cup, crushed
- Cashew nuts: ¼ cup, toasted, unsalted, crushed
- Rose water: 1 table spoon
- ¼ cup sugar (optional)

Mix the corn flour (or starch) with 2 cups of water and set aside.

If you're using sugar, caramelize it before the next step.

On high heat, mix the dates with ½ cup of water and 1 table spoon of ghee. Keep mixing until the dates turn into a pasty mixture. Previously cutting them into quarters helps. This step should take no more than 5-7 minutes. Remove from heat and keep mixing or mashing with a fork until homogenous.

Place back on medium heat and add the water mixture. Stir continuously until the mix thickens and starts bubbling. Add 2 table spoons of ghee. Keep mixing to avoid burning the bottom.

When most of the water has evaporated, add the remaining ingredients (rose water, nuts, cardamom). Mix well before pouring into a storage container.

Eat plain or with bread. Store in the refrigerator.



Butternut squash pie: 3 small pies (prep time: 1 hour)

To prepare the filling, mix the following ingredients in a pot:

- Butternut squash, grated: 400 grams, or approximately 4 cups.
- Sugar: ¼ cup
- Butter: 1 tablespoon
- Cinnamon: ½ teaspoon

Over high heat, wilt the butternut squash. This should take around 5 minutes, stir continuously.

To prepare the dough, mix the dry and wet ingredients separately before combining them. Then knead the dough for 2 minutes:

- Flour: 2.5 cups
- Sugar: ¼ cup
- baking powder: 2 teaspoons
- Butter: ¾ cup, melted
- Egg: 1, whole
- Milk: ¼ cup

Flatten the dough as much as you can before putting the filling in. With your dough now flat, place the filling on half of it and make several cuts to the other half. Fold the sliced half on top of the filled part.

Cover with egg wash and nigella seeds before baking at 415 °F for 12-15 minutes. (210 °C)



Brownies: 9 pieces (preparation time: 1 hour) – I use a 9x9 inch baking tray

Fudgy brownies

In a bowl, mix:

- Flour: ½ cup
- Cocoa powder: ¾ cup
- Salt: ½ teaspoon

Separately mix:

- Butter: ¾ cup, melted unsalted
- Sugar: 1 ¼ cup, whisk until smooth
- Egg: 2, whisk well, add one at a time
- Vanilla extract: 1 tablespoon

Caky brownies

In a bowl, mix:

- Sugar: 1 cup
- Flour: ¾ cup
- Cocoa: ¼ cup
- Salt: ½ teaspoon

Separately whisk:

- Butter: ½ cup, melted unsalted
- Egg: 2
- Vanilla extract: 2 teaspoons

Incorporate your liquids into the flour mix by gently folding. Optionally add 40 grams of roughly chopped dark chocolate. Pour in a baking tray and smooth its surface. Bake at 350 °F for 35-40 minutes. (175 °C)

Cool down before refrigerating, cut into 9 pieces the next day.



Energy snack: 1 portion (preparation time: 5 minutes) – Squash tournament special

In a bowl mix:

- Banana: 1, mashed
- Dates: 3, diced
- Yogurt: 3 table spoons
- Peanut butter: 2 table spoons, unsweetened
- Honey: ½ table spoon

For extra electrolytes, pair with a few salted crackers.

Consume 3 hours before intense physical activities.



Lazy cake: half a loaf (preparation time: 40 minutes)

In a bowl mix:

- Flour: 1 cup
- Sugar: ⅓ cup
- Baking powder: 1 tea spoon
- Nigella seeds: 1 tea spoon
- Cinnamon: ½ tea spoon
- Salt: ¼ tea spoon
- Butter: ¼ cup, melted
- Water: ¾ cup

Optionally add peanut butter, cacao powder, maple syrup, cardamom.

Pour the batter in a loaf pan and bake at 400 °F for 30-35 minutes. (205 °C)



Sweet bread loaf: one loaf or 10 small ones (preparation time: 40 minutes)

Mix together:

- Milk: 1 cup
- Sugar: 1/3 cup
- Salt: ¼ tea spoon
- Honey: 2 table spoons
- Ghee: 1 table spoon
- Anis seeds: ¼ tea spoon
- Cinnamon: ¼ tea spoon
- Cardamom: ¼ tea spoon
- Cloves: one pinch
- Nutmeg: one pinch
- Flour: 2 – 2 ¼ cups
- Baking powder: ½ table spoon

"one pinch" is less than 1/8th of a tea spoon, use a 1/16th measuring spoon if you have one.

The mixture's consistency should be between that of a batter and a very wet dough.

Bake at 400 °F for 30-35 minutes for one big loaf, or 20-25 minutes when making small loaves. (205 °C)



20 cm round pan (8 inches)

Lemonade: 2 servings (preparation time: 5 minutes)

Nothing fancy, but I keep forgetting the quantities, so I wrote this down.

- ½ cup of lemon juice
- 2 cups of cold water
- 3 table spoons of sugar
- ¼ cup of orange blossom

Add ice cubes and mint leaves before serving.

