

THE CUISINE OF GREECE



The Islamic Food and Nutrition Council of America (IFANCA®)
presents this treasure of Greek cuisine recipes from
Executive Chef Demetrios Haralambatos

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THE CUISINE OF GREECE

Greece, which is surrounded on three sides by water, has always been a seafaring nation throughout its history. Its landmass includes 6,000 islands and islets scattered in the Aegean and Ionian Seas, of which only 227 are inhabited. As seafarers, they traveled and traded throughout the Mediterranean.

The first traces of human settlements in Greece appeared during the Paleolithic Age (approximately 120,000 to 10,000 BC) and were organized into various independent city-states that colonized much of the ancient world from the eastern Mediterranean to India. Greece is considered the “cradle of Western civilization,” being the birthplace of democracy and Western philosophy, as well as the creator of the Olympic Games.

The Greek cuisine is diverse, with an abundance of seafood, chicken, sheep, goat, fresh vegetables, and a multitude of herbs and spices. It is not uncommon for a dish to be made several different ways, as each region’s cuisine is based on the ingredients grown in that area. For example, *spanakopita* (spinach and feta cheese wrapped in phyllo) is made only with spinach in northern Greece. In the south, however, leeks are added to the spinach.

The Greek diet is considered one of the healthiest and has been heavily documented, including in the *Deipnosophistae* (“The Dinner Sophists/Philosophers/Experts”), an early Greek work from 3rd century AD. Written by Athenaeus of Naucratis, it is sometimes called “the oldest surviving cookbook.”

The cuisine of Greece is also a cuisine that features *mezze* (small plates). It is not uncommon to enter a restaurant and ask for four, eight, or twelve depending on the number of mezze plates desired. Any main dish can be turned into a mezze.

OPA!

Chef Demetrios Haralambatos

IFANCA extends a hearty thank you to Chef Demetrios of Kontos Foods for sharing his experience and recipes with Halal Consumer© magazine and our readers. We are honored to bring these recipes to you, our readers and followers. Happy cooking and do let us know how you enjoy them!

Halal Consumer magazine & IFANCA

A glass bowl filled with a thick, white, creamy sauce, likely a dressing or sauce, garnished with fresh green dill and small pieces of cucumber. The bowl sits on a wooden cutting board. In the background, a whole head of garlic and a slice of lemon are visible, suggesting fresh ingredients. A small piece of bread with the sauce spread on it is in the foreground.

SAUCES & DRESSINGS

GARLIC SAUCE

INGREDIENTS

2 cups cooked potatoes, mashed
6 garlic cloves, pressed
1/3 cup olive oil
juice of 1 lemon
2 tablespoons white vinegar
salt and pepper to taste
water, warm (if needed)

PREPARATION

1. Place warm potatoes and garlic in a blender. Pulse a few times to combine.
2. Turn blender to medium speed and slowly pour in the olive oil, lemon, vinegar, and water (if needed). Blend until smooth.
3. Season to taste.

USES

- Serve warm over fish, meat, and vegetables.
- Allow to cool and serve over vegetables.

MARINADE FOR GRILLED MEAT

INGREDIENTS

1 cup olive oil
3 garlic cloves, minced
3 sprigs fresh thyme
2 bay leaves
2 sprigs rosemary
2 shallots, sliced
salt and pepper to taste

PREPARATION

1. Combine all the ingredients in a glass container.
2. Place in refrigerator until ready to use.

USES

- Place the meat in a zip-top bag and pour marinade on top. Refrigerate overnight prior to grilling/cooking.

OLIVE OIL AND LEMON FISH SAUCE

INGREDIENTS

juice of 2 lemons
2 garlic cloves, mashed
½ cup olive oil
salt and pepper to taste

PREPARATION

1. Whip the ingredients in a small bowl with a wire whisk until they are incorporated and the mixture has thickened.
2. Season to taste.

USES

- Pour over hot fried or broiled fish and serve while hot.
- Be sure to shake well before using.

TZATZIKI SAUCE

INGREDIENTS

1 medium cucumber
1 garlic clove, minced
juice of ½ lemon
2 teaspoons olive oil
2 teaspoons white vinegar
2 cups halal yogurt
salt to taste

PREPARATION

1. Peel the cucumber, slice in half, and remove the seeds, then chop very fine.
2. Combine the cucumber, garlic, lemon juice, olive oil, vinegar, and yogurt.
3. Place in refrigerator and serve chilled.

USES

- Use as a topping for vegetables or as an accompaniment to lamb or beef.
- It is also great on gyro and kabobs.

EGG-LEMON SAUCE

INGREDIENTS

3 cups halal chicken stock
1 tablespoon cornstarch (see Chef's Notes on p.42)
2 eggs
juice of 1 lemon
2 tablespoons water, cold
salt and pepper to taste

PREPARATION

1. Bring chicken stock to a boil and remove from heat.
2. Stir in cornstarch.
3. Beat the egg in a separate bowl, then add lemon juice and water.
4. While continuing to beat the egg-lemon mixture, very slowly stir in the warm, thickened chicken stock.
5. Return the pot to very low heat until you have achieved a pudding-like texture, then salt and pepper to taste.

USES

- Serve over warm chicken with rice pilaf, grape or cabbage leaves filled with rice and meat, or lamb meatballs.

KREMA (GREEK BECHAMEL SAUCE)

INGREDIENTS

4 cups milk, scalded
6 tablespoons butter
6 tablespoons flour
1 teaspoon salt
pinch of nutmeg
pinch of white pepper
2 eggs, beaten
⅓ cup halal Parmesan cheese, grated

PREPARATION

1. Scald the milk in a pot, remove from heat, and skim the top.
2. Melt the butter in a separate pot, then stir in the flour until combined.
3. Stir in the hot milk, then slowly bring to a boil.
4. Reduce heat and cook for a few minutes, stirring constantly.
5. Remove the mixture from heat when it is smooth and thick.
6. Stir in the nutmeg and white pepper. Then, whipping vigorously, add the beaten eggs.
7. Whisk in the Parmesan cheese.

USES

- Use as a topping for moussaka and pastichio.
- Serve over baked or broiled white fish or even warm vegetables.
- If you substitute Parmesan cheese with shredded cheddar or Swiss, you may use it as a base for mac and cheese with leftover or freshly cooked pasta.
- Allow to cool and serve over vegetables.

A top-down view of a light-colored wooden bowl filled with numerous golden-brown meatballs. The meatballs are garnished with finely chopped green herbs and a light dusting of white cheese. The bowl sits on a dark wooden surface with a piece of light-colored, frayed burlap fabric underneath it. A semi-transparent, light-colored oval is centered over the bowl, containing the word "MEZZE" in a black, serif font.

MEZZE

BEATEN FETA AND ROASTED RED PEPPER

INGREDIENTS

½ Vidalia or Spanish onion, thick sliced rings
olive oil
salt and pepper to taste
1 cup feta cheese, crumbled
2 “fire-roasted” red bell peppers
2 pepperoncini, sliced
½ teaspoon oregano
¼ teaspoon grated lemon zest
2 pinches ground coriander
2 pinches ground cumin

PREPARATION

1. Brush the onion slices with olive oil and season *lightly* with salt and pepper, as feta is already salty.
2. Place in a very hot skillet and cook until slightly charred.
3. Place all the ingredients in a food processor and process until smooth.

VARIATIONS

- May also be used as a spread.

MARINATED ARTICHOKE HEARTS

INGREDIENTS

2 jars or cans (8 ounces) artichoke hearts
⅓ cup olive oil
3 tablespoons red grape vinegar
2 garlic cloves, crushed
½ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon pepper
1 teaspoon oregano, crushed

PREPARATION

1. If artichokes are whole, slice them in halves or quarters, depending on their size.
2. Combine all ingredients and place in a small pot. Heat to marinate.

USES

- May be served hot or chilled.
- Store in the refrigerator in a glass container for up to two weeks.

DRIED FRUIT WITH HONEY VINAIGRETTE

INGREDIENTS

½ cup almonds, sliced
¼ cup red grape vinegar
½ cup raspberry vinegar
3 garlic cloves, smashed
1 shallot clove, thickly sliced
1 tablespoon mustard
1 teaspoon oregano, crushed
1 sprig thyme
1 teaspoon honey
⅔ cup olive oil
⅓ cup vegetable oil
salt and pepper to taste
12 dried apricots, slivered
9 dates, slivered lengthwise
6 dried figs, slivered
6 dried pears, sliced lengthwise
¾ pound baby arugula leaves
6 hearts of frisée, coarsely chopped
4 ounces manouri cheese, coarsely grated, or
goat cheese, in chunks

PREPARATION

1. Pre-heat oven to 350°F.
2. Spread almonds on a cookie sheet and toast until golden.
3. In a blender add both vinegars, garlic, shallot, mustard, oregano, thyme, and honey. Process until smooth.
4. Slowly add the olive oil, then the vegetable oil.
5. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
6. In a serving bowl, add all the dried fruit, arugula, and frisée.
7. Pour the vinaigrette on top and toss to coat.
8. Spread the almonds and manouri or goat cheese over the top.

STUFFED FIGS

INGREDIENTS

10 ripe black Mission figs
3 ounces feta cheese, crumbled
a few thyme leaves
black pepper, cracked
olive oil

PREPARATION

1. Slice figs in half from the stem down.
2. Spoon a teaspoon of feta cheese onto the cut side over the pink part of the fig.
3. Insert some thyme leaves into the feta and crack some black pepper over each fig.
4. Drizzle with some olive oil.
5. In a hot sauté pan with a little olive oil, place the figs skin-side down on to the hot oil and sear.

VARIATION

- You make also place the stuffed figs on your grill and cook for about 45 minutes.

FETA CHEESE WRAPPED IN PHYLLO

INGREDIENTS

feta cheese
2 sheets phyllo dough (see Chef's Notes on p.43)
butter, melted
honey
sesame seeds

PREPARATION

1. Slice the feta cheese into pieces 3 x 5-inches by ½ inch thick, then pat with a paper towel to remove excess moisture.
2. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
3. Lay a sheet of phyllo dough on your work area and brush with a little melted butter.
4. Cover the buttered sheet of phyllo with a second sheet and butter the new sheet.
5. Place feta cheese slice in the center of the phyllo.
6. Fold the sides, then roll the phyllo with feta into packets.
7. Brush with butter and place on a buttered baking sheet.
8. Place in oven and bake for 10 minutes.
9. Remove from oven, place on plate or platter, and drizzle some honey and sesame seeds over each.
10. Serve warm.

MEATBALLS – COCKTAIL SIZE

INGREDIENTS

1 pound halal ground beef
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
½ teaspoon ground cumin
1 large onion, chopped finely
1 tablespoon parsley
½ teaspoon mint, crushed
1 garlic clove, minced
2 eggs
1 slice of bread, soaked and squeezed dry
salt and pepper to taste
flour
vegetable oil

PREPARATION

1. Combine all the ingredients, except for the flour and oil, in a large bowl.
2. Roll the mixture into small balls (a little smaller than a walnut).
3. Dust with flour.
4. Heat oil in a sauté pan.
5. Fry the meatballs until cooked throughout.

USES & VARIATIONS

- Serve warm and without sauce.
- Add to your favorite tomato sauce.
- You may substitute 1 pound ground beef with a mixture of ½ pound ground lamb and ½ pound ground beef.

YOGURT-MARINATED GRILLED LAMB CHOPS

INGREDIENTS

halal lamb chops, cut individually
halal yogurt

PREPARATION

1. Place lamb chops in a glass container or zip-top bag with yogurt covering the meat.
2. Refrigerate for 24 hours.
3. Pre-heat your grill on medium-high.
4. Remove lamb chops and allow some of the yogurt to flow off.
5. Place on hot grill for about 2 minutes on each side.
6. Serve immediately.

EGGPLANT TRIANGLES

INGREDIENTS

1½ pounds eggplant
½ pound onion
½ cup butter
1 halal beef bouillon cube, crushed
¼ cup bread crumbs
½ cup grated cheese, not sharp
½ cup milk
4 eggs, beaten
1 pound phyllo dough (see Chef's Notes on p.43)
additional melted butter

PREPARATION

1. With a grater, shred the eggplant and onion over a strainer.
2. Allow the mixture to sweat in the sink until all water is drained, then squeeze the water out with a large spoon or your hands. This step is very important.
3. Pre-heat oven to 325°F.
4. In a sauté pan, melt the butter and add the eggplant and onions. Cook for 5 minutes.
5. Add the beef bouillon cube, bread crumbs, cheese, and milk. Cook, stirring occasionally, then allow to cool slightly.
6. In a buttered baking dish, lay a sheet of phyllo and brush with melted butter.
7. Repeat with about 7 more sheets of phyllo, brushing each with butter.
8. Lay the cooked filling over the phyllo and smooth lightly until level.
9. Cover the filling with 10 layers of phyllo, buttering each layer.
10. Place in oven and bake for 50 to 60 minutes.
11. Allow to cool and cut into desired portions.

MARINATED OLIVES

INGREDIENTS

Kalamata olives
Moroccan sun-dried olives
green olives
black olives
garlic cloves, crushed
oregano, crushed
olive oil
crushed red pepper flakes (optional)

PREPARATION

1. Combine all ingredients in a glass jar or zip-top bag.
2. Refrigerate.
3. Serve cold.

USES

- May be stored for up to 3 months.
- These olives may be placed in a sauté pan, heated, and used as a topping over any steak.

GRILLED MARINATED LAMB CHOPS

INGREDIENTS

halal lamb chops, cut individually
marinade (see recipe on page p.6)

PREPARATION

1. Place lamb chops in a glass container or zip-top bag with marinade covering the meat.
2. Refrigerate at least overnight.
3. Pre-heat your grill on medium-high.
4. Remove lamb chops from marinade, allowing the marinade to drain away.
5. Place on hot grill for about 2 minutes on each side.
6. Serve warm.

A close-up photograph of a bowl filled with a fresh salad. The salad consists of sliced cucumbers, thin strips of radishes, and fresh dill leaves, all coated in a creamy white dressing. The bowl is placed on a rustic wooden surface. A semi-transparent white oval is overlaid in the center of the image, containing the word "SALADS" in a black serif font.

SALADS

CUCUMBER SALAD WITH YOGURT

INGREDIENTS

2 or 3 cucumbers
1 cup tzatziki sauce (see recipe on p.7)
salt and pepper to taste
1 small onion, sliced in thin rings
sprigs of dill

PREPARATION

1. Peel the cucumbers, then slice into rings.
2. Place the sliced cucumbers in a bowl and add the tzatziki sauce.
3. Mix well and season to taste.
4. Place on a decorative platter.
5. Place the onion rings on top.
6. Garnish with dill.

USES

- Serve warm over fish, meat, or vegetables.
- Allow to cool and serve over vegetables.

LENTIL SALAD

INGREDIENTS

1 pound lentils
1 garlic clove, minced
1 medium onion, chopped
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup olive oil
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup red grape vinegar
2 tablespoons salt
oregano

PREPARATION

1. Wash and pick over lentils, place in a pot, and cover with water.
2. Allow to boil for 15 minutes, then drain to rinse.
3. Place lentils back in a pot; cover with fresh, clean water; add salt; and cover pot.
4. Cook until tender, then drain.
5. Place in a bowl and drizzle with olive oil. Allow the mixture to cool.
6. Prior to serving, add the remaining ingredients and stir.
7. Serve with hard crusty bread or warm pitas.

VILLAGE SALAD

INGREDIENTS

2 cucumbers, peeled
4 tomatoes
½ cup olive oil
salt to taste
8 ounces feta cheese
Kalamata olives
1 onion
1 teaspoon oregano

PREPARATION

1. Peel the cucumbers, slice into quarters lengthwise, and cut into 1-inch cubes.
2. Slice tomatoes into wedges (about 6 to 8 wedges each).
3. Place cucumber and tomatoes into a bowl. Drizzle with the olive oil and some salt, then toss to coat.
4. Slice or crumble the feta cheese.
5. Place the feta cheese and Kalamata olives on top.
6. Slice the onion into rings and place on top.
7. Sprinkle with oregano.

USES & VARIATIONS

- May be made earlier and refrigerated until ready to serve.
- Add anchovies on top.
- If you are plating individual salads, slice the tomato and cucumber into rings, slice the feta cheese, and add rings of green pepper. Stack them on top of each other, alternating flavors. Then drizzle with olive oil and oregano. Garnish the plates with Kalamata olives for an upscale presentation.

A close-up photograph of a white ceramic bowl filled with a hearty soup. The soup contains gnocchi, diced carrots, and potato chunks. It is garnished with fresh green herbs and a small red cherry tomato. The bowl sits on a rustic wooden surface with some spices and a spoon nearby. In the background, there are blurred green leaves and a yellow object.

SOUPS

AVGOLEMONO - CHICKEN EGG-LEMON SOUP

INGREDIENTS

2½ pounds whole halal chicken
3 quarts water
2 tablespoons salt
1 cup rice or orzo
1 tablespoon cornstarch
¼ cup water, cold
3 eggs, separated
2 lemons, juiced
white pepper

PREPARATION

1. Boil chicken in about 3 quarts of water with salt for 1 hour.
2. Remove chicken from water and set aside.
3. Strain broth and bring back to a boil.
4. Add the rice or orzo, simmer, and cover for 20 minutes.
5. In the meantime, debone the chicken and shred the meat.
6. When the rice or orzo is done, remove the pot from heat.
7. In a large bowl, whip the egg whites until stiff. Beat the egg yolks in a small bowl.
8. Combine the cornstarch with the cold water.
9. Slowly add the beaten egg yolks to the whipped egg whites, then slowly add the cornstarch and lemon juice.
10. Slowly and in small quantities, scoop and whisk chicken broth from the pot into the egg-lemon mixture until the bowl is full. Then pour the remainder back into the pot with the broth and rice/orzo.
11. Sprinkle some white pepper and serve.

Note: Be certain to continually whisk the warm soup into the egg-lemon mixture or it may break.

CHICKPEA SOUP

INGREDIENTS

3 large carrots, chopped
2 celery stalks, chopped
2 large cans chickpeas
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups olive oil
3 large onions, sliced thinly
1 can (8 ounces) tomato sauce
1 can (16 ounces) whole tomatoes, loosely crushed
salt and pepper to taste

PREPARATION

1. Place all ingredients in a pot and bring to a boil.
2. Simmer until carrots are cooked, occasionally adding water if needed.
3. Season to taste.

Note: If using dried chickpeas, soak them overnight and drain twice before proceeding with the steps above.

FISH SOUP

INGREDIENTS

$1\frac{1}{2}$ pounds firm white fish such as halibut, haddock, or sea bass
 $1\frac{1}{2}$ quarts water
 $\frac{1}{2}$ stalk celery, sliced
2 green onions, finely chopped
12 small white onions
12 small fingerling or new potatoes
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup lemon juice
 $\frac{1}{3}$ cup olive oil
2 tablespoons parsley, finely chopped
salt and pepper

PREPARATION

1. Place the fish in a large saucepan and add the water.
2. Cover and simmer for 20 to 30 minutes until the fish is tender.
3. Remove fish from the broth and remove skin and bones. Set aside on a heat-proof platter and keep warm.
4. Strain the broth and return to a boil.
5. Add celery, green and white onions, and potatoes. Cover and simmer for 20 minutes or until tender.
6. Blend the lemon juice and olive oil, then add salt and pepper.
7. Sprinkle half of the lemon/olive oil mixture over the fish and add the remainder into the soup.
8. Sprinkle the fish with the chopped parsley and serve as a side accompaniment to the soup.

LENTIL SOUP

INGREDIENTS

1 pound lentils
1 large onion, chopped
½ cup olive oil
2 carrots, chopped
3 stalks celery, chopped
2 garlic cloves, minced
2 tablespoons tomato paste
2 bay leaves
1 teaspoon oregano
water
½ cup red grape vinegar
salt and pepper to taste

PREPARATION

1. Wash and pick over lentils, place in a pot, and cover with water.
2. Allow to boil for 15 minutes, then drain and rinse.
3. Place lentils back in a pot and cover with fresh, clean water. Add salt and cover pot.
4. Cook until tender, then drain.
5. Heat a sauté pan. Add the olive oil, then add the onions.
6. Add the carrots, celery, garlic, and tomato paste.
7. Move the sautéed vegetables to a pot and add the cooked lentils, tomato paste, bay leaves, and oregano.
8. Add enough water to cover the mixture, bring to a boil, stir, and reduce heat.
9. Simmer and cover for 45 minutes, checking twice to see if additional water is needed.
10. When the lentils are tender, remove them from heat, add red grape vinegar, and season to taste.

Note: If using dried lentils, soak them overnight and drain them twice before proceeding with the steps above.



BREADS

SWEET BREAD

INGREDIENTS

4 yeast cakes
2 cups whole milk, lukewarm
3 pounds all-purpose flour
½ teaspoon salt
6 eggs, beaten
2 cups sugar
½ cup vegetable oil
½ teaspoon finely ground mahlepi
½ teaspoon finely ground masticha crystals,
also called mastic
1 stick butter, melted
1 egg, beaten (for brushing the top of the cakes)
sesame seeds

PREPARATION

1. Dissolve yeast in lukewarm milk.
2. Sift flour and salt into a large bowl.
3. In a different small bowl, cream the eggs and sugar.
4. Make a well in the center of your bowl and pour in the yeast-milk mixture.
5. Add the creamed egg-sugar, oil, mahlepi, mastic, and melted butter to the well.
6. Mix and knead the contents of the bowl until the dough is smooth.
7. Cover with a towel and allow to rise in a warm place for about 2 hours or until it has doubled in size.
8. Punch down the dough with lightly oiled palms. Cover and allow the mixture to rise again until it doubles in size.
9. Remove from bowl and turn it down on your table. Divide into 3 or 4 loaves.
10. Grease your pan(s) and place dough into them.
11. Brush the top of the dough with beaten egg and sprinkle with sesame seeds.
12. Cover and let the dough rise again until it has doubled.
13. Bake in a pre-heated 350°F oven for 45 minutes or until golden.

VARIATION

- If you divide the dough into three pieces, you can roll out the individual loaves into long ropes, and then braid the three pieces into one large braid loaf.

Note: Mahlepi and mastic are available in most eastern Mediterranean specialty food stores. As of writing this piece, mastic is very difficult to find. Therefore, I recommend substituting vanilla extract.

OLIVE ROLLS

INGREDIENTS

Bread

2 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
4 teaspoons vegetable oil
1 cup halal yogurt
1 egg, beaten (for brushing)

Filling

1 cup pitted Kalamata olives, chopped
1 onion, chopped
1 teaspoon dry mint, crumbled
1 tablespoon fresh mint, chopped
1 cup fresh coriander, finely chopped

PREPARATION

1. Combine flour, baking powder, and oil.
2. Add yogurt and mix into a pliable dough.
3. Set aside and allow to rest for 10 minutes.
4. Combine the filling ingredients, mix well, and set aside.
5. Pre-heat oven to 350°F.
6. Cut dough into 4 equal pieces, then roll out each piece to about ¾-inch thickness.
7. Spread ¼ of the filling over each piece and roll each as if a jelly roll.
8. Place on a baking sheet and brush each piece with the beaten egg.
9. Place baking sheet in oven.
10. Bake for 45 minutes: the first 30 minutes at 350°F or until golden, then at 300°F for the final 15 minutes.

VARIATIONS

- For a more colorful presentation, substitute pimento-stuffed green olives and black olives for the Kalamata olives.
- As an alternative, slice each loaf into roulades or pinwheels after baking and cooling.

CAUTION: May contain pit fragments.



CHICKEN, FISH, & MEAT

GREEK BAKED CHICKEN

INGREDIENTS

olive oil
oregano, crushed
lemon juice
salt and pepper to taste
1 halal chicken

PREPARATION

1. Combine olive oil, oregano, and lemon juice in a container and shake well.
2. Wash chicken and place in a roasting pan. Pour olive oil mixture over it.
3. Place in refrigerator for about 4 hours and turn the mixture over to marinate both sides at least three times.
4. Pre-heat oven to 375°F, then place the roasting pan with chicken skin-side up in the oven.
5. Bake for 75 minutes, basting often.
6. Season to taste.

VARIATION

- You may split the chicken by cutting out the backbone and laying the pieces flat. This will reduce the cooking time.

LAMB SHANK, CYPRIOT-STYLE

INGREDIENTS (PER SERVING)

halal lamb shank
russet potato
salt and pepper to taste
1 bay leaf
water, warm

PREPARATION

1. Wash russet potato and cut in half.
2. Pre-heat oven to 375°F.
3. With two layers of aluminum foil, wrap the lamb shank with halved potato.
4. Sprinkle with salt and pepper and add a bay leaf.
5. Wrap tightly and place in a roasting pan.
6. Pour enough water into the pan to submerge half of the wrap.
7. Bake for 3 hours.

CHICKEN IN CINNAMON SAUCE

INGREDIENTS

1 chicken, cut in 8 pieces
 salt and pepper
 dash of ground cinnamon
 4 tablespoons butter, divided
 1 teaspoon sugar
 2 cups canned tomatoes
 1 can (6 ounces) tomato paste
 ¾ cup water
 3 cinnamon sticks
 3 onions, minced
 3 garlic cloves, minced

PREPARATION

1. Sprinkle chicken pieces with cinnamon, salt, and pepper.
2. In a stew pot, melt 2 tablespoons butter and brown the chicken on all sides.
3. In a separate bowl, combine sugar, tomatoes, and tomato paste with water, then pour over the chicken.
4. Separately sauté the onion and garlic in 3 tablespoons butter until onion is transparent, then add to the stew pot.
5. Add the cinnamon sticks and stir. Bring to a boil, cover, simmer, and cook until chicken is tender.

Note: As the chicken is cooking, you may prepare orzo or rice pilaf and serve it as a side.

LEG OF LAMB WITH GARLIC

INGREDIENTS

1 leg of halal lamb (about 7 to 8 pounds)
 2 garlic cloves, in slivers, sliced lengthwise
 2 lemons, cut in half
 4 garlic cloves, minced
 salt
 fresh ground pepper
 oregano, crushed
 about ½ cup water

Optional:

potatoes, sliced lengthwise
 onions, sliced lengthwise

PREPARATION

1. Pre-heat oven to 350°F.
2. Insert the tip of a paring knife in various locations around the leg of lamb.
3. Insert the slivers of garlic into the pierced locations.
4. Squeeze and rub the lemons all over the lamb, then place the lemon in the bottom of the roasting pan.
5. Rub the lamb with minced garlic.
6. Place in the roasting pan and add enough water to cover the bottom of the pan.
7. Bake in the center of the oven for 2½ hours until done. In the last 30 minutes of baking, you can add potatoes and onions to the liquid in the roasting pan.
8. Remove from oven and allow to sit for 20 to 30 minutes before slicing.

WHOLE LAMB ON A SPIT

This is a great family experience. It is fun when the adults and children take turns rotating the spit.

INGREDIENTS

1 whole halal lamb
8 to 10 lemons, some halved and some quartered
5 large onions, cut in quarters
salt and pepper
2 whole garlic heads, peeled and crushed
oregano, crushed

For Basting

1 quart of vegetable or olive oil
½ pound butter, softened
4 garlic cloves, minced
oregano, crushed
juice of 2 lemons

ADVANCE PREPARATIONS

- You can skewer the lamb the evening before if you have a location to refrigerate the skewered lamb overnight.
- If you are building a fire pit for the first time, clean an area of grass about 2 to 3 feet farther away from the pit itself and have fire extinguishers handy.
- In addition to the long skewer, you will need wire (see below), as well as about 5 bags of hardwood charcoal.
- Have a spray bottle of water on hand to extinguish small flame flare-ups.

PREPARATIONS

1. Wipe the lamb inside and out with a damp towel.
2. Lay the lamb on its back and rub the cavity with lemon. Sprinkle with salt and pepper.
3. Push the rod/skewer through the center between the back legs, along the spine, and through the neck.
4. Pull the front legs forward and tie them on the skewer with wire.
5. Cross the back legs over the skewer and secure them with wire
6. In the chest cavity, place the onions, garlic, oregano, and lemons. Then take the wire and seal the chest cavity closed to keep the contents from falling out.
7. Prepare the basting liquid by combining all the ingredients and whisking them together. Do not refrigerate.
8. If you prepared the lamb on the skewer the night before, you can start the charcoal that morning or start the charcoal as you are preparing the skewer. Prepare your charcoal at least an hour before placing the skewer over the pit. It is important not to cook the lamb over flames, only charcoal.
Note: Personally, during cooking, I light the charcoal in a kettle-type grill, and when the charcoal is totally started (i.e., has turned completely grey), I add the charcoal to the pit with a shovel.
9. Place the completed skewer over the charcoal. As you continually rotate the spit, baste the lamb with the basting liquid using a long brush or mop at least every half-hour.
10. Cook/roast the lamb for 4 to 6 hours, depending on size and weight.
11. Remove from pit and carefully remove the wire with one or two pairs of pliers prior to slicing or cutting up and serving.

VARIATIONS

- You may substitute thyme leaves for the oregano.
- You can skewer one or two legs of lamb the same way over your BBQ grill.

BROILED OR GRILLED FISH

INGREDIENTS

full fish (scales removed, washed, and clean)
such as bronzini, flounder, porgy, red
snapper, sole, or trout

OR

fish steaks such as halibut, salmon, swordfish,
or tuna

salt and pepper

olive oil and lemon sauce (see recipe on p.7)

parsley, chopped

lemon wedges

PREPARATION

1. After washing the fish with cold water, use paper towels to dry it.

If broiling:

2. Pre-heat oven to BROIL.
3. Place on cooking sheet and sprinkle fish with salt and pepper.
4. Baste with olive oil and lemon sauce and broil for approximately 5 to 6 minutes on each side.

If grilling:

2. Light and heat oven to approximately 400-450°F.
3. Brush the grill grates with olive oil before placing the fish on the grates.
4. Place the fish on the grill grates and grill for approximately 7 to 10 minutes on each side, basting frequently with olive oil and lemon sauce.
5. Remove from heat source, place on platter, and garnish with parsley and lemon wedges. You may also drizzle some olive oil and lemon sauce.

USES

- Allow to cool and serve over vegetables.

BAKED FISH WITH AROMATIC TOMATO-ONION SAUCE, PLAKI-STYLE

INGREDIENTS

2 pounds flaky white fish fillets such as cod,
haddock, halibut, or pollock
½ cup olive oil
2 onions, sliced lengthwise
3 garlic cloves, chopped
2 bay leaves
1 can crushed tomatoes
1 can tomato sauce
1 tablespoon tomato paste
water, warm (if needed)
4 tablespoons ground cinnamon
2 tablespoons ground cumin
salt and pepper to taste
parsley, chopped (for garnish)

PREPARATION

1. Prepare the sauce by placing olive oil in a pot.
2. Sauté the onion until transparent, adding the garlic and bay leaves.
3. Add the crushed tomato (with the liquid), tomato sauce, and tomato paste, then combine well.
4. Adjust moisture by adding additional water if needed. Sauce should not be very thick.
5. Mix in cinnamon and cumin. Taste and adjust flavor with salt and pepper.
6. Pre-heat oven to 375°F.
7. Rinse the fish with cold water and pat dry with paper towels, then slice into desired portions.
8. Scoop some of the tomato-onion sauce onto a baking dish so that it covers the bottom of the dish.
9. Position the sliced fish on top of the tomato-onion sauce, then pour the remainder of the sauce around and over the fish.
10. Place the baking dish into the oven and bake for 17 to 20 minutes until the flakes separate when the fish is tested with a fork.
11. Remove from oven, garnish with parsley, and serve.

A close-up photograph of a white bowl filled with a hearty vegetable soup. The soup has a rich, orange-brown broth. Visible ingredients include large chunks of yellow potatoes, sliced carrots, and green beans. A sprig of fresh green parsley is placed on top of the soup as a garnish. A semi-transparent white oval is centered over the image, containing the word "VEGETABLES" in a black serif font.

VEGETABLES

STEWED ZUCCHINI

INGREDIENTS

1 white onion, coarsely chopped
1 tablespoon olive oil
½ teaspoon basil, crushed
1 garlic clove, chopped
fresh mint, chopped
½ teaspoon oregano, crushed
2 pounds zucchini
dash of cinnamon
1 teaspoon sugar
water
1 can (6 ounces) tomato paste
salt and pepper to taste

PREPARATION

1. In a pot, sauté onion in olive oil until tender.
2. Add the basil, garlic, mint, and oregano.
3. Slice the zucchini and add to the pot.
4. Add the cinnamon and sugar.
5. Cover the contents of the pot with water and stir.
6. Dilute the tomato paste with some water, add to the pot, and stir.
7. Simmer for 15 minutes until the zucchini is tender.
8. Season to taste.

PICKLED VEGETABLES

INGREDIENTS

8 peppers, a mix of red and green
1 head cauliflower
18 small green tomatoes, whole
4 to 5 celery stalks
4 to 5 carrots
8 small cucumbers, whole
⅓ cup salt
4 garlic cloves
2 cups white vinegar
1 teaspoon mustard seeds
water

PREPARATION

1. Wash all vegetables.
2. Remove stems from peppers and cut into desired strips. Remove seeds.
3. Separate cauliflower into florets.
4. Peel and cut carrots and celery into desired lengths.
5. Place vegetables in a ½ gallon jar or large slow cooker.
6. Fill half the container with vinegar, add the salt and mustard seeds, and add enough water to cover the vegetables.
7. Seal and set in a cool location for a period of 2 to 3 weeks.

VEGETABLE MEDLEY

INGREDIENTS

celery, eggplant, leek, mushroom, tomato, and
zucchini, cut into 1- to 2-inch pieces (the
amount is up to you)
potato, cut into $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch cubes (or in half, if using
fingerlings)
white onion, coarsely chopped
olive oil
oregano and thyme, crushed
salt and pepper to taste

PREPARATION

1. Pre-heat oven 375°F.
2. Line a baking sheet with aluminum foil and brush some olive oil over it.
3. Place the vegetables on the foil.
4. Drizzle some olive oil over the vegetables, then sprinkle the herbs, salt, and pepper on top.
5. Place in oven and bake for 35 minutes or until the vegetables are tender.

VARIATIONS

- You do not have to use all these vegetables; two or three is fine.
- If using carrots or dense vegetables, boil them in hot water after chopping them, as they take longer to cook.
- You may also add chopped garlic.



STARCH

RICE PILAF

INGREDIENTS

5 cups hot water or halal beef or halal chicken stock
4 tablespoons butter or vegetable oil
2 bay leaves
1 white onion, chopped
2 cups rice
3 tablespoons butter or vegetable oil
2 tablespoons thyme

PREPARATION

1. In a pot, heat the water/stock to a boil.
2. In a separate pot, melt the butter or heat the oil, depending on which you are using.
3. Add the bay leaves and onions and cook until the onions are transparent.
4. Add the rice and coat the onion and rice with the butter or oil mixture. The mixture will become transparent as the rice absorbs the butter/oil.
5. Pour in the hot water or stock and reduce heat to a simmer.
6. Stir so that the all rice “floats” off the bottom and is not stuck on the bottom of the pot.
7. Cover and cook for 20 minutes.
8. Remove from heat and fluff the rice with a fork.

VARIATIONS

- You may add spinach leaves in step 4 above.
- You may also add peas to the finished rice pilaf.

LEMON POTATOES

INGREDIENTS

2 pounds russet potatoes, peeled
oregano, crushed
salt
olive oil
juice of 2 lemons
water
additional olive oil for drizzling

PREPARATION

1. Pre-heat oven to 400°F.
2. Peel and cut the potatoes into long wedges.
3. In an oven-safe baking dish, arrange the potato wedges and season with salt and oregano.
4. Drizzle with olive oil and add the lemon juice.
5. Pour enough water to cover the potatoes.
6. Bake until the water has been absorbed and/or evaporated.
7. Drizzle additional olive oil over the top of the potatoes and return to the oven to brown.

ORZO

INGREDIENTS

4 quarts water
1 pound orzo
olive oil
salt and pepper to taste

PREPARATION

1. In a large pot, bring water to a rolling boil.
2. Add orzo and stir gently.
3. Boil for 5 to 6 minutes, stirring frequently.
4. Remove from heat and pour in 1 cup of cold water to stop the cooking process.
5. Drain well, drizzle with olive oil, and toss.
6. Serve warm and season to taste.

USES

- Refrigerate and then add sliced cucumber, green pepper, and chopped tomatoes. Drizzle with olive oil, toss, and refrigerate to cool. Serve as a pasta salad.
- Add warm, shredded, cooked halal chicken or halal lamb. Combine and serve warm.
- Add tomato sauce, toss, and serve warm.



DESSERTS

SESAME BUTTER COOKIES

INGREDIENTS

1 pound butter, room temperature
8 eggs
3 cups sugar
juice of 2 oranges
3 teaspoons vanilla
6 teaspoons baking powder
11 to 12 cups flour, sifted
sesame seeds

Egg Wash

1 egg
2 to 3 tablespoons milk

PREPARATION

1. In a mixer, cream the butter until soft and fluffy.
2. Add the eggs one at a time and beat until whipped. Your batter will appear lumpy.
3. Add sugar and whip again until fluffy.
4. Add orange juice, vanilla, and baking powder.
5. On low, slowly add the flour one cup at a time. When batter becomes too thick, transfer it to a large bowl and whip by hand.
6. Pre-heat oven to 350°F.
7. You may either roll out the dough into long strings and braid or roll it out with a rolling pin and using cookie cutters, cut into desired shape(s).
8. Place on a cookie sheet.
9. Combine the egg and milk into egg wash and brush each cookie.
10. Sprinkle with sesame seeds.
11. Place cookie sheet into oven and bake for 25 to 30 minutes until golden.

YOGURT AND HONEY

In Greece, most dinners end with a refreshing bowl of yogurt.

INGREDIENTS

halal yogurt
honey

PREPARATION

1. The yogurt must be very thick with the consistency of Greek yogurt or *labneh*.
2. If it is not, place a piece of cheesecloth (available at the supermarket) in a strainer, add the yogurt, and set in the refrigerator for several hours to release its whey (water).
3. Spoon the yogurt into a bowl and drizzle honey over the top.

VARIATION

- Add chopped walnuts.

CHEF'S NOTES

When utilizing **cornstarch** in salad dressings, sauces, soups, or stews, always dilute the cornstarch with cold water prior to adding/mixing into your recipe. This will prevent clumping.

When using **dry herbs**, such as dill, oregano, rosemary, and thyme, it is recommended that you place the quantity in one palm and crush the leaves with your other palm. This will allow the herbs to become more fragrant and release their oils.

Phyllo dough (also called “fillo”) is usually found in the frozen food section of your supermarket or specialty food store. Before using the dough, there are several steps that one must follow:

1. The night before you use the phyllo dough, move the unopened package to the refrigerator.
 2. The next day, remove from refrigerator and leave unopened on your counter.
 3. Do not open package for about two hours.
 4. When ready to work with the phyllo, open the package, unfold, and work with one sheet at time. Keep the remainder of the dough covered with a damp-dry towel.
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