

Israel



Falafel

Ingredients:

2 1/2 cups dried chick-peas, soaked overnight and drained - 625 ml
1 tsp. ground coriander seeds - 5 ml
1 garlic clove, chopped
1 tsp. ground cumin - 5 ml
1/2 tsp. cayenne pepper - 2 ml
salt
1/4 cup flour - 50 ml
oil for deep frying

Directions:

Grind the chick-peas fine in a blender or food processor, and mix them well with the coriander, garlic, cumin, cayenne pepper and salt.

Add the flour and mix thoroughly.

From the resulting dough, make small balls about 1 1/4 inches (3 cm.) in diameter.

Pour oil into a pan and heat it to 375°F. (190°C).

A few at a time, deep fry the balls for two to three minute until they are golden.

Stuff the Falafel balls into a pocket bread (pita) and garnish with a lot of imagination!

Burekas

(Pronounced buh-ray-kahs)

As the hot summer days bid farewell and the cold rainy days arrive here in Jerusalem, tastes often switch from glidah (ice cream) to hot burekas. Eager customers queue up to buy these pastries, which are filled with both sweet and salty fillings, and would remind you of a turnover. These tasty treats are a contribution of the Sephardic Jews, the descendants of those who settled and lived in the countries around the Mediterranean Sea and the Moslem world.

Ingredients:

1 pkg. prepared strudel dough or puff pastry
sesame seeds (optional)

Cheese Filling:

1 c. grated cheddar cheese
1 c. grated white salty cheese (feta or salty goat cheese)
1 egg
1 beaten egg yolk and 1 tbsp. water (to brush on top)

Directions:

Mix together the cheese and egg. Set aside.
Divide pastry dough in half.
Roll out and stretch to form a large rectangle.
Cut into 4-inch squares.
Place a heaping 'spoonful of cheese mixture in the center of each square.
Fold over to form a triangle.
Pinch edges together firmly; brush tops of each with egg yolk mix and sprinkle with sesame seeds, if desired.
Bake on lightly greased cookie sheet at 350 degrees for about 30 minutes, or until golden brown.
Makes about 20 burekas.
Serve hot.

These are delicious for breakfast or lunch. Made smaller they serve as tasty appetizers. I have given the recipe for cheese burekas here, but a great many other fillings are equally good. Be creative. To mashed potatoes add a dash of onion powder and some parsley flakes. Many people love spinach fillings or sauteed mushrooms. My own family likes a sweet cheese filling made with egg and sugar (to taste), added to cream cheese. Whichever filling you use - cheese, sweet cheese, potato, spinach or mushroom - your family will love this change-of-pace hot pastry!

Tabouli (Bulgur Wheat Salad)

This colorful, tangy dish, redolent with fresh herbs and flavored with fresh lemon juice and extra virgin olive oil, is a perfect party dish. Prepare it in the traditional way by steeping the bulgur in hot water to soften; or for a quicker method, follow the note at the end of the recipe.

Ingredients:

1 1/2 cups fine or medium bulgur wheat, soaked until soft and completely drained
3-4 tomatoes, diced
2 medium cucumbers, diced
1 cup parsley, chopped
2/3 cup fresh mint, chopped
4 green onions, sliced very thin including green tops
3-4 pressed garlic cloves or more, to taste
3 Tbsp. lemon juice, or more to taste
1/4 - 1/2 cup or more extra virgin olive oil, to taste
Salt (or garlic salt) and freshly ground black pepper

Directions:

Pour 5 cups boiling hot water over bulgur wheat in a large bowl and soak until it is completely cool.

Transfer to a strainer or colander and drain excess water.

Squeeze the wheat dry and transfer to a large bowl.

(I usually soak the bulgur over night, and the next morning, put it into a strainer and let it stand for a few hours until completely drained and dry. In this way, you can prepare it ahead of time before dinner and not get frustrated at the last minute waiting for the bulgur to soften.)

To the soaked bulgur, add and mix the diced tomatoes and cucumbers along with the chopped and chopped parsley, mint, green onions and garlic.

Add lemon juice, olive oil, salt and pepper to taste; the tabouli should be fairly tart.

Serve cold or at room temperature.

Makes about 8 appetizer portions or 4-6 main course servings and is actually better if prepared several hours, or even the day before eating. It lasts well for several days in your refrigerator.

NOTE: For quick tabouli, cook the bulgur instead of steeping it. In a medium saucepan, combine bulgur wheat and 2 1/4 cups boiling water. Cover and cook over low heat 15 minutes or until tender. Turn out into a strainer and let cool, drain, squeeze dry and place in bowl. Continue with second paragraph above.

Cholent

Cholent is a sort of stew which came into being through the ingenuity of Jewish housewives who wanted a hot meal on Shabbat, but were forbidden to cook on Shabbat itself. This stew is begun before Shabbat and cooked all night so it will be ready for unch the next day. In most cholents, everything is cooked together. In this one the meats, eggs, potatoes are cooked whole and may be served in separate dishes. This recipe serves four and is especially good on a cold, wintry day.

Ingredients:

4 servings of meat (chicken breasts, round steak, etc.)
4 eggs
4 potatoes
1 1/2 cups white beans
3 tbsp. catsup
2 tbsp. honey
4 or more cups of water
salt, pepper, & chicken bouillon to taste

Directions:

Place white beans in a big pot.
Add four or more cups of water.
Wash potatoes and eggs carefully and place whole on top of the beans.
Add all the other ingredients and bring to a boil.
After it begins to boil, cover and put in a slow oven (250 degrees) for 16-20 hours.
(You could also use a large crockpot on the slowest setting.)
Add water when necessary.
When done, cholent should be fairly dry and honey-colored.

Kitchri

Eaten before 9th of Ab fast and other times.

Ingredients:

2 cups rice_
1 cup red lentils_
4 cups water_
2 ground cloves of garlic_
1½ tsp. cumin seed_
½ tsp. turmeric_
2 tsp. salt_
5 tbsp. flour

Directions:

Wash the lentils and soak for 1 hour. Rinse the rice thoroughly and drain.
Warm the oil and fry the cumin seeds till sizzling, then add the turmeric and salt.
Add the rice and fry for a few minutes, turning over with a wooden spoon.
Add the drained lentils, ground garlic and water and salt.
Bring to the boil.
Turn the flame down and allow to simmer while covered, for about 45 minutes.
Kitchri is traditionally served with Yogurt.
Prior to the fast of Tish'ah Be Ab, however, while permitted, it is better not to add yogurt to the kitchri, as we wish to lessen our pleasures before the fast.

Curried Eggplant

One of the most prevalent and least expensive vegetables in Israel is the eggplant, known as hatzilim in Hebrew. In Israel, it is cooked in a variety of ways including salads, side dishes and as a main course. One recipe, though, stands out above the others. Even people who do not normally like eggplant, often come back for seconds of my curried eggplant.

Ingredients:

- 2 T oil
- 1-2 minced onions
- 1/2 tsp. minced garlic
- 1 1/2 tsp. curry powder
- 1 /4 tsp. ginger powder
- 1 cup water
- 2 T brown sugar
- 2 T lemon juice
- 1 1 /2 tsp. salt
- 1 large eggplant, peeled and cubed

Directions:

Heat oil over medium high heat.
Add onion and garlic and saute for 5 minutes, stirring often until lightly brown.
Heat oil over medium high heat.
Reduce heat to medium, add curry and ginger and cook for one minute.
Stir in water, brown sugar, lemon juice and salt.
When well mixed, stir in eggplant. Cover and cook 15-20 minutes,
or until eggplant is thoroughly cooked and soft.

Serves six as a side dish

Lentils and Rice

Ingredients:

1 c. lentils
1 c. rice
1 onion, chopped
4 tbsp. olive oil
2 tsp. chicken bouillon
salt, pepper, garlic powder to taste
water

Directions:

Fry lentils in 2 tbsp. oil for about 2 minutes, stirring constantly.
Add 3 c. water, salt, pepper and garlic powder.
Cover and let simmer for about 40 minutes.

Meanwhile, in another pan, fry rice in 2 tbsp. oil.

Add 2 1/2 c. water and 2 tsp. chicken bouillon.

Cover and simmer slowly about 20 minutes.

When both rice and lentils are done, mix together and add more seasoning if necessary.

For an added treat, fry another onion in a little oil or margarine and sprinkle over the top of lentils/rice just before serving.

Delicious.

Serves 6 normal people or 1 hungry teenager

Noodle Kugel

Ingredients:

250 grams (about 8 oz.) egg noodles
1 1/2 sticks butter or margarine
2/3 c. sugar
1/2 c. seedless raisins
1 /2 c. nuts (walnuts or pecans)
2 eggs, beaten
1 cup sour cream
1 tsp. vanilla
1 tsp. cinnamon
Dash salt

Directions:

Cook noodles in boiling water according to directions on package. Drain.
Add all other ingredients and mix well.
Pour into greased loaf pan and bake at 375 degrees F. or 170 degrees C.
about one hour or until golden brown.
Although this is a nice dessert anytime, it is especially suitable during Shavuot
(Pentecost), the dairy holiday.