



Traditional Afghan Recipes

MURSAL MURADI

About



I moved to the United States on December 29, 2021, with my husband and two kids after the Taliban took over Afghanistan.

After I graduated from high school, the Taliban took over the country, and I could not continue my education as girls were not allowed to get educated in Afghanistan.

We are happy that we are here in the United States, where there are so many opportunities available. We all can study and work, and our kids can go to school. However, it is really hard for us to leave our family and friends behind.

I have been very fortunate to have met Jewish family services where Ellie and Paige helped us so much and got us into Project Feast's program where I got my certificate. They also helped me to learn driving.

Kabuli Pulao

Kabuli pulao is a famous dish of Afghans and originates from the people of Mazar-I-Sharif in Afghanistan and is commonly cooked at weddings and special occasions. I remember as a child coming home to the smell of Kabuli pulao my mom was cooking.

Yields: 10-12 servings

Ingredients

Rice

4 cups sela basmati rice
16 cups water, divided

Meat

1 cup vegetable or canola oil
2 large yellow onions, thinly sliced
2 lbs lamb meat
1 tablespoon ginger paste
1 tablespoon garlic paste
1 tablespoon cumin seeds
6 green cardamom
2 black cardamom
1 tablespoon salt
8 cups water
2 garlic bulbs
1 teaspoon garam masala



Nuts

1 cup vegetable or canola oil
4 carrots, julienned
1 cup black raisins
3 tablespoons slivered almonds
3 tablespoons slivered pistachios

Kabuli Pulao

Directions

Rinse the rice 3-4 times and soak it in 8 cups of water and let it sit for 3 hours.

Meat

In a large pot, heat the oil on medium heat, add the onions and fry until they are golden brown, stirring occasionally. Put the ginger, garlic, cumin, green cardamom, black cardamom and sauté for 1 minute. Add the meat and salt and fry till it changes color. Add water, cover and let it cook on medium low heat until the meat is soft and liquid has cooked down and is thick. Transfer the meat to a bowl leaving any liquid in the pot.

Nuts

Line a baking sheet or platter with paper towels
In a large skillet, heat oil on medium high heat and fry the carrots, raisins, almonds and pistachios for 1-2 minutes, separately for best results, but can be mixed as well. Transfer to the paper towel and keep aside.

Cooking and layering the rice

In a large pot heat the remaining 8 cups of water on high heat and bring to a boil. Add the rice and let it cook for 4-5 minutes or until there is a bite to it. It should not be fully cooked. Immediately drain into a colander. Layer half the rice in the same pot as the meat liquid, top it with the meat and the two garlic bulbs and then another layer of the remaining rice. Spread out all the fried nuts on top and sprinkle with the garam masala. Cover the pot with foil and then with the lid and let it simmer on low heat for 30 minutes. Uncover and gently mix from the sides. Serve hot with fresh salad.



Salad

All Afghan meals consist of a fresh seasonal salad seasoned with pepper, salt and a drizzle of lime juice.

Yields: 6 servings

Ingredients

1 head romaine lettuce, washed, dried and chopped

1 large cucumber, small diced

2 medium tomatoes, small diced

1 medium red onion, small diced

¼ cup roughly chopped cilantro

10-12 fresh mint leaves

Juice of 2 limes

½ teaspoon salt, or to taste

½ teaspoon black pepper, or to taste.

Directions

In a large bowl toss together the lettuce, cucumber, tomatoes, onion, cilantro, lemon juice, salt and pepper. Serve immediately.

Yogurt Salad

Yogurt is eaten as a side with every meal in Afghanistan, especially in the warm weather, and adding vegetables to yogurt makes it healthier.

Yields: 8-10 servings

Ingredients

2 cups whole milk yogurt
1 teaspoon salt, or to taste
2 medium tomatoes, small diced
1 medium yellow onion, small diced
1 cucumber, small diced
1 cup, thinly sliced cabbage
1 cup boiled chickpeas
1 cup fresh mint leaves, torn into pieces
½ cup cilantro, finely chopped
1 serrano pepper, deseeded and finely chopped

Directions

In a large bowl whisk the yogurt and salt. Add the tomatoes, onion, cucumber, cabbage, chickpeas, mint leaves, cilantro and serrano and mix. Serve immediately.



Aay Khanum

Afghan cuisine is famous for a variety of dumplings, Ay Khanum being one of them. They are different in shape and made to look like a rose.

Yields: 8-10 servings

Ingredients

For Dough

- 1 egg, whisked
- 1 tablespoon vegetable or canola oil
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 1/2 cups warm water, more if needed
- 3 cups all purpose flour

Meat

- ¼ cup vegetable or canola oil
- 1 yellow onion, finely diced
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 lb ground beef
- 2 teaspoons salt, or to taste
- 2 teaspoons black pepper, or to taste
- 1 tablespoon ground coriander
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 1 large tomato, finely chopped
- 2 bell peppers, roughly chopped
- 1 1/2 cups fresh cilantro, roughly chopped, divided



Aay Khanum

Ingredients

Chickpeas

4 tablespoons vegetable or canola oil
2 garlic cloves, minced
2 tablespoons tomato paste
½ teaspoon salt
½ cup cooked chickpeas
½ cup water

Yogurt sauce

1 ½ cups whole milk yogurt
½ teaspoon salt
2 garlic cloves, minced
2 tablespoons dried mint

Method

Dough

In a large bowl whisk the egg, oil, salt and water. Gradually add in the flour and mix to form a dough. Add more water if needed to make a medium soft dough. Knead it for 3-4 minutes or until smooth. Cover and let it rest for 30 minutes on the counter.

Meat

Heat oil in a skillet on medium heat, add the onions and fry for 2-3 minutes till they start changing color. Add the garlic, stirring frequently. Add the beef and let it cook on medium high heat till it changes color. Turn the heat on medium low, add salt, pepper, coriander, paprika and tomatoes and let it cook for 10-12 minutes, stirring frequently. Add bell peppers, take off the heat and mix in half of the cilantro.



Aay Khanum

Making the dumplings

Once the dough has rested, flour a surface well and roll out the dough a little, before dividing it into balls around the size of a lemon. Then roll out each out into a flat oval shape.

Flour each oval well, before passing through a pasta machine, first at level 5, and then a second time at level 2. The pieces of dough should be around 30cm long, and 10-15 cm wide. Or using a rolling pin roll it out on the counter.

Take your rolled out dough and fill half with the meat mixture. Fold the other half over the top, making sure the filling is sealed within. Then roll the pastry lengthways like a cinnamon roll flipping and pressing down to look like a rose.

Brush a steamer with oil, before brushing the individual rolls with oil too and placing them in the basket. Steam them for about 45 minutes.

Chickpeas

As your rolls are steaming, heat oil to a saucepan on medium heat. Add the garlic and tomato puree with the salt, stirring well. Now add the chickpeas and mix, frying for 2-3 minutes. Finally add water and let it simmer for 5 minutes. Set it aside.

Yogurt sauce

In a small bowl, whisk the yogurt, salt, garlic, mint.

Plating

Remove the rolls from the steamer and serve on a plate, covering the rolls generously in the yogurt mixture and tomato and chickpea sauce. Sprinkle black pepper, chili flakes, and the remaining fresh cilantro on top to finish.

Afghani Doogh/lassi

Doogh is a refreshing, savory, salted yogurt drink from Afghanistan and is served cold, especially in the hot months of summer.

Yields: 4-6 servings

Ingredients

3 Cups whole milk yogurt
2 tablespoons fresh mint leaves, torn into pieces
2 tablespoons finely chopped cilantro
2 tablespoons green onion
2 teaspoons minced garlic
2 teaspoons dried mint
1 cucumber small diced cucumber
1 tablespoon salt
3 cups of cold water

Directions

In a large bowl whisk the yogurt and add mint, cilantro, green onion, garlic, dried mint, cucumber, salt, and water. Mix together and serve.



Qurma Chalau

There are many delicious Qurma recipes used across Afghanistan - this is one of the most traditional and includes meat, however this can easily be substituted for vegetables (or you can always use both!)

Yields: 4 servings

Ingredients

- ½ cup vegetable oil
- 1 large yellow onion, finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon ginger paste
- 1 teaspoon garlic paste
- 2 lbs mutton, lamb on the bone, beef or chicken cut into pieces (vegetables including potatoes, carrots, cauliflower, peas, green beans - if using both add after meat is tender and cook for 15 minutes)
- 1 cup tomato puree
- ¼ cup split chickpeas or red kidney beans, soaked overnight in water
- 1 tsp char masala (Afghan spice mix)
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- 1 teaspoon salt, or to taste
- 1 teaspoon black pepper, or to taste
- 1 teaspoon red chili powder
- 2 cups water

Charmasala (4 spice blend)

- ½ teaspoon black peppercorns
- ¼ teaspoon whole cloves
- ½ inch cinnamon stick
- 1 black cardamom



Qurma Chalau

Instructions

Chaar Masala (4 spice blend)

In a small pan on medium low heat toast the peppercorns, cloves, cinnamon and cardamom for 1-2 minutes or until they release aroma, change color and start to crackle. Set aside to cool and grind into a powder. Store in an airtight container.

For Meat

Heat the oil in a large pot and add the chopped onions. Fry over a medium heat, stirring frequently until golden brown and soft.

Add the ginger, garlic and fry for 3-4 seconds. Add the meat and fry until well browned.

Mix in tomato puree and continue frying for another minute or two.

Add split peas/kidney beans, char masala, coriander, salt, pepper, red chili powder and water. Bring to a boil and turn down heat to low and let it simmer until meat is cooked and split peas/kidney beans are soft. The sauce should be thick and oily (excess oil can be spooned off if desired). Boiled split peas/kidney beans can also be added after meat has softened.

Enjoy served with rice and naans.

Chicken Noodle Soup

We use it as our appetizer because it is a light and healthy food. Afghan people eat soup every day during Ramadan.

Yields: 6 servings

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons canola or vegetable oil
- 1 lb boneless chicken breast
- 2 tomatoes, roughly chopped
- 2 carrots, peeled and small diced
- 1 potato, peeled and small diced
- 1 teaspoon salt, or to taste
- 1 teaspoons black pepper
- ¼ teaspoon turmeric
- 6 cups water
- 1 cup spinach washed and chopped
- 1 cup boiled chickpeas
- 1 yellow bell pepper, small diced
- 1 orange bell pepper, small diced
- 1 cup corn
- 1 cup cilantro chopped
- 2 tablespoons corn flour slurry
- 500 grams spaghetti
- 1 cup cilantro chopped



Chicken Noodle Soup

Instructions

In a big pot, heat the oil, add the onions and fry on medium heat until translucent. Add Chicken and fry for 2-3 minutes. Add Tomatoes and fry for another 2-3 minutes. Add water, cover the pot and cook till the chicken is cooked.

While the chicken is cooking, boil the spaghetti and keep it aside.

Remove chicken, shred and add it back to the pot. Add carrots, potatoes, salt, pepper and cook for 10 minutes or until vegetables are soft. Add spinach, chickpeas, bell peppers and corn. Add slurry and cook while stirring.

Add the spaghetti and cilantro and serve immediately.



Achievements

My first speech in front of a large crowd



My first time talking in front of a camera



Graduation!