



PERSIAN SPICED FISH

Persian Food Experience

with Susan Barocas

Serves 4

Ingredients

About 1 1/2 pounds salmon or firm white fish (cod or halibut), either one large piece or 4 individual servings
1-2 lemons, sliced thinly
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
1 teaspoon tumeric
1 teaspoon ground coriander
2 teaspoons finely crumbled dried fenugreek leaves
1/2 teaspoon sea salt or to taste
1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
2 tablespoons olive oil
1/2-1 cup chopped fresh herbs such as parsley, dill, cilantro and/or chopped chives (optional)

Method

Preheat the oven to 425° degrees. Cover a rimmed sheet pan with parchment paper. Lay the lemon slices on the sheet pan to cover the area needed for the fish, then lay the fish on top of the lemon slices, making sure none of the fish is touching the pan. Leave any extra uncovered lemon to roast as the fish cooks.

In a small mixing bowl, stir together the spices, garlic powder through pepper. When well blended, add the oil and stir to mix well, forming a thick paste. Spoon the oil and spice mixture over the top of the fish and spread out to cover all of the top and sides evenly.

Bake for 20 to 22 minutes for one large piece of fish, 12-14 minutes for smaller pieces.

Carefully move the cooked fish and cooked lemon slices to a serving platter. Scatter chopped fresh herbs on top or, more traditionally, serve with a plate of fresh herbs to pass around so everyone can add their own. Serve with wedges of fresh lemon if desired.

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CAULIFLOWER KUKU

Persian Food Experience
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Persians cuisine is full of egg dishes, a favorite being kukus of all kinds. A kuku is the Persian version of a frittata or eggy kugel, but with a higher ratio of vegetables and herbs. Serve this as a main, side dish or cut into small squares as an appetizer. Good hot or at room temperature.

Serves 4-6

Ingredients

1 medium yellow onion	1 teaspoon salt
1 head cauliflower	1/2 teaspoon black pepper
3 tablespoons olive oil	1/2 cup chopped fresh flat leaf parsley, basil or cilantro, or a mixture
2 cloves garlic, finely minced	4 large eggs
1 teaspoon ground cumin	1/2 cup crumbled feta or shredded parmesan (optional)

Method

Preheat oven to 400° degrees.

Peel and dice the onion. Wash the cauliflower and pat dry. Cut into florets and then coarsely chop. Chop any extra stems.

Heat 2 tablespoons of oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the onion and cook, stirring occasionally, for about 10-12 minutes until the onion becomes soft and translucent, but not browned. Add the cumin and garlic powder, stirring about one minute as the spices become fragrant. Add the chopped cauliflower and mix well. Cook until cauliflower is softened, about 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add salt, pepper and chopped herbs and mix well. Remove the pan from the heat.

In a medium mixing bowl, use a fork or whisk to beat the eggs until just starting to foam. Add the cauliflower mixture, and cheese if using, and mix well.

Put 1 tablespoon olive oil in the bottom of an 8x8 or 9x9 pan and swirl the oil to cover the bottom and sides of the pan. Place pan in the preheated oven for 3 to 4 minutes. Pull out the hot pan and quickly add the cauliflower-egg mixture, spreading it evenly. This will help create a good crust on the bottom and sides of the kuku. Gently brush the remaining 1 tablespoon of oil over the top of the mixture.

Bake for 20-25 minutes until the center is firm and the edges are lightly brown. Serve hot or at room temperature. The cooked dish can be refrigerated for up to 4 days or frozen. To reheat, defrost and heat in a 350-degree oven, uncovered, for about 10 minutes or until heated through.

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JEWELLED RICE—Javaher Polo

Persian Food Experience

with Susan Barocas

Serves 4-6

Ingredients

4 tablespoons olive oil	1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1 medium onion, diced	2 1/2 cups water
1 teaspoon salt	1/3 cup currants
1 1/2 cups basmati rice	1/3 cup dried apricots, chopped small
1/2 teaspoon ground cardamom	1/3 cup dried cranberries, chopped
1/2 teaspoon ground allspice	1/2 cup toasted pistachios, chopped*

Method

Heat the olive oil in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add the onion, sprinkle with 1/2 teaspoon salt, stir and cook about 20 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the onions begin to turn golden brown.

In the meantime, rinse the rice in a wire mesh strainer under cold water until the water runs clear.

When the onions are ready, add the rice, cardamom, allspice, cinnamon and remaining 1/2 teaspoon salt to the pan, and stir to blend the spices and totally coat the grains of rice with the mixture.

Cook for about 3 to 4 minutes, stirring often, to cook slightly toast the rice and open the spices. Add water and turn the heat to high. Bring the rice to a boil, cover and reduce heat to low. Simmer until the rice has absorbed the water, about 16 to 18 minutes. Uncover, fluff the rice and either stir in the dried fruit and pistachios, saving a little of each for garnishing, or mound the rice on a platter and then scatter the dried fruit and pistachios all over it.

Pile the rice onto a rimmed serving platter. Sprinkle with reserved fruit and toasted pistachios.

*To toast the pistachios, place them in a single layer on a baking sheet and toast in the oven at 350° degrees for about 10 minutes until fragrant and beginning to turn golden. Shake the pan once or twice while in the oven. Alternatively, spread the nuts in a dry pan over medium heat and toast for 10 minutes, shaking the pan several times.

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HERBED PERSIAN SALAD

Persian Food Experience

with Susan Barocas

A great way to use up leftover herbs, although it's worth buying plenty just to make this flavorful salad, which is a perfect side accompaniment for nearly any dish including eggs, fish, chicken and beef. Exact measurements aren't really so important and you can vary the herbs used. Go for a flavor combination you like.

Makes about 3 cups

Salad Ingredients

1 bunch fresh dill, fronds and small stems

1 bunch fresh parsley, leaves and small stems

1/2 bunch fresh cilantro, leaves and small stems

3/4-1 cup mint leaves, not packed tightly

3 or 4 radishes

1/2 cup finely diced red onion

Dressing

1/2 cup freshly squeezed lime juice (about 3 larger limes)

1/3 cup olive oil

1 teaspoon salt or to taste

1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper or to taste

Pinch or two of Aleppo pepper or cayenne to taste (optional)

Method

Wash and chop all the herbs. Add to a large mixing bowl. Cut the radishes in half from top to tail, then slice each half into thin half moons. Add to the herbs along with the onion.

In a separate small bowl, whisk together the dressing ingredients until emulsified. Another option is to put the dressing ingredients in a jar and shake vigorously until emulsified. Toss the dressing with the salad just before serving. Taste and adjust seasoning.

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SHIRAZI CUCUMBER- POMEGRANATE SALAD

Persian Food Experience, *with Susan Barocas*

Adapted from *Silk Road Cooking: A Vegetarian Journey* by Najmieh Batmanglij

Serves 4

Salad Ingredients

½ small red onion

1 tablespoon salt

2 long seedless (European) cucumber or 6 Persian cumpers, well washed

2 medium pomegranates, seeded (about 2 cups)

1 cup pitted green olives

4 cups chopped romaine lettuce, arugula or frisee, or a mixture

Dressing

1 clove garlic, peeled and crushed

1 tablespoon fresh lime juice

1 tablespoon pomegranate molasses

2 teaspoons honey

1 teaspoon toasted sesame oil

1/2 cup olive oil

1 teaspoon salt or to taste

1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper or to taste

¼ teaspoon Aleppo pepper, cayenne pepper or red hot pepper flakes (optional)

Garnish (optional)

1/2 cup walnuts, toasted and coarsely chopped

1/2 cup feta cheese, crumbled

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SHIRAZI CUCUMBER- POMEGRANATE SALAD

Persian Food Experience, *with Susan Barocas*

(continued from previous page)

Method

Peel and very thinly slice the onion into long strips. Put the slices in a colander or strainer, sprinkle with about 1 tablespoon salt and leave for 10 minutes as you compile the salad. This removes the sharp tang from the raw onion. Rinse with cold water, blot dry and set aside.

If using a long seedless cucumber, peel it and cut it in half down the length, then cut each half into thin half-moon slices. If using the Persian cucumbers, slice them thinly.

Combine the onion, cucumber, pomegranate seeds and olives in a medium mixing bowl.

In a separate small bowl, whisk together the dressing ingredients until emulsified. Another option is to put the dressing ingredients in a jar and shake vigorously until emulsified.

To serve, pour the dressing over the cucumber mixture, toss well and adjust the seasoning to taste. Spread a bed of salad greens around a large shallow bowl or rimmed platter or 4 individual salad plates. Top with the cucumber mixture and garnish with walnuts and cheese as desired.

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RICE FLOUR COOKIES WITH POPPYSEEDS AND ROSEWATER

Persian Food Experience, *with Susan Barocas*

Nan Berenji

These flaky, gluten-free cookies are eaten for Norouz, the Persian new year, and by Persian Jews for Purim also. The rose or orange blossom water evokes the floral-scented air of the palace of King Ahasuerus where our heroine, the beautiful Esther, lived in the king's harem as she worked to save the Jewish people from the evil villain Haman's plan to destroy them. Instead, we think of the name of Haman being destroyed as the poppy seeds are crushed by our teeth. These cookies, poppy seeds and all, are even better with a cup of strong coffee.

Makes about 4 dozen cookies

Ingredients

2 large eggs

3/4 cup sugar

1 cup grapeseed, avocado, safflower or other good vegetable oil

2 tablespoons rosewater or orange blossom water

3 1/2 - 4 cups white rice flour

1/4-1/3 cup poppy seeds

Line cookie sheets with parchment paper, which is important for these somewhat delicate cookies. Beat the eggs with a whisk or electric mixer until they are lighter in color and frothy, Add the sugar and beat until the mixture is pale yellow. Beat in the oil and rosewater. Using a wooden spoon, add the rice flour about a cup at a time, blending well after each cup, just until the dough is still soft, but easy to handle and firm enough to make into balls. Cover and refrigerate the dough for at least an hour or even overnight.

Preheat oven to 350. Shape the chilled dough into small balls of about 1 inch. Use your thumb to make a slight indent in the top of each cookie and fill with a good pinch of poppy seeds. Try to keep the seeds in a circle shape in the center of each cookie.

Bake for 15 minutes, until just barely starting to brown on the bottom. Let cool completely before moving from the cookie sheets to racks to cool.

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GRANTED AND FULFILLED

Persian Food Experience *with Susan Barocas*

Adapted from jewishboston.com

This cocktail represents Esther's grand idea of holding a wine feast for the king so that she might tell him of Haman's plan and plead for her people's lives. Great for a group gathering, this drink is similar to a sangria.

Serves 15-20

Ingredients

One apple, diced

One pear, diced

3 bottles inexpensive red wine (if you have some open already, feel free to use it)

32 ounces pomegranate or blueberry-pomegranate juice

Juice of 1 orange (about 1/2 cup)

6 ounces maple syrup

6-8 ounces peach whiskey

1 tablespoon vanilla extract

1 tablespoon cinnamon

1 whole orange, sliced into half moons no more than 1/4 inch thick, for garnish

Place all the ingredients except orange slices in a pot or crockpot and stir to mix. Warm on medium heat and then simmer for about 20 minutes to blend flavors. Serve hot or cold. If serving hot, you can leave the pot on low, which will result in a wonderful smell in the air. Garnish each glass or mug with half an orange slice.

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