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Huddles in the Kitchen

A COLLECTION OF STORIES FROM MULTI-CULTURAL WOMEN



THIS BOOK IS A
CUMBERLAND WOMEN'S HEALTH CENTRE INITIATIVE
DEDICATED TO ALL THE WOMEN
WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE WORKSHOP

Title: *Huddles in the Kitchen: A collection of stories from multi-cultural women*

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Preface

The tales in this book: *'Huddles in the Kitchen: A collection of stories from multi-cultural women'* originated from the stories presented in the *Cooking Culturally* program presented by Cumberland Women's Health Centre during 2023. The *Cooking Culturally* program was well attended each week by a minimum of twelve participants. This program consisted of two parts: a narrative therapy part of six sessions; and a cooking part of six sessions. During the narrative therapy part of the program, the women from various cultures were interviewed about their cultural cuisines and a personal story of interest that they remembered and chose to share with the group. The interviews stimulated a lot of lively discussions. The women often resonated with similarities across cultures despite their linguistic differences, and were respectfully intrigued by their diversity.

The stories that emerged from the narrative therapy sessions were first written in a documentary style. These stories are featured on the Cumberland Women's Health Website 2023-2024. Based on elements from these stories, are the tales found in this book.

The cooking part of the program featured the women who presented their stories, cooking their chosen cultural dish for the rest of the participants to enjoy. The photographs of these dishes in this book are a testament to the food that was cooked during the program. The recipes were also provided by the women who had cooked them.

The *Cooking Culturally* program was an opportunity for the women to: share and affirm their own cultural traditions; develop their social skills and form friendships; build their self-esteem; and contribute to their mental and emotional well-being. Everyone who had participated in the *Cooking Culturally* program had learnt about the culture, cuisine, and lives of others, and thus had expanded their horizons of knowledge and experience. Appreciation and positive feedback to the women who presented their stories and their cooked dishes occurred continually throughout the program. Overall it was a very validating experience for all who attended.

Hope you enjoy reading the following tales, and cooking the various recipes included in this book.

Adriana Volona
Counsellor and Narrative Group Facilitator





"No one is larger than bread"

The Bulgarian Kitchen



Gratitude

Based on a story from Violet Amelia Acker

At the kitchen table, women from different cultures listened attentively to a story told by Violet from South Africa.

It was the last day of the school term. Violet, a school teacher of many years was preparing to leave for Australia. She loved teaching and she loved her students, and they loved her. It was a sad day for them all.

With nostalgia Violet remembered happy days in South Africa, prior 1949 when people of all cultures lived harmoniously together. With a heavy heart, she recalled how this all ended with apartheid when people were segregated and racism became rampant. Ever since, Violet did everything she could to stand up against discrimination and bigotry, especially in the school where she taught. Her African students and their parents who were very, very poor, appreciated the kindness, respect and compassion she showed them. Violet was diligent in her teaching and

encouragement of her students. She had dedicated extra time to their learning, believing that a good education could lead them out of extreme poverty.

In South Africa food was very expensive, and spicy stews served with rice, such as a green beans stew called Bredie, and a curried bean stew, were popular meals that were cooked because they catered for many people. Violet especially loved the 'Bobotie' dish she had once learnt to cook from her mother. She was always grateful for what she had because she knew that many people in South Africa were not so fortunate. Her parents worked very hard to put food on the table when she was growing up. Her father would often say to her and her siblings at the dinner table: *"I worked very hard for that plate of food, so eat it all up!"* As an adult, even though Violet was not a wealthy person, she shared what she had with those who had nothing. Violet knew that the majority of her students were starving most of the time, so she would give them chores to do in her own home in exchange for food to eat and to take home to their families.

Violet had told her students about her departure a long time before this day. She wanted it to be as gentle a parting as it could possibly be. Her students were heart-broken that she was leaving them, and even though they had nothing, somehow they managed to buy her a special gift to show their gratitude. The students felt so proud to present Violet with their gift. When Violet opened the wrapping, she was speechless. It was an exquisite white lace dress! She felt so humbled by the enormous sacrifice that went into buying such a precious gift! Her repeated 'thank you' was mingled with copious tears. Her students cried with her. Violet knew she would always treasure this dress wherever she went for the rest of her life. It would remind her of her teaching days and her grateful young students in South Africa.

Violet now invites you to taste a flavour from South Africa.



Bobotie

© Photo by Paris Hobbs

Bobotie

INGREDIENTS

1kg of mince
2 onions, diced
1 tbsp apricot jam
2 slices of bread
Bay leaves

2 cloves of garlic, crushed
1 tsp coriander
salt and pepper to taste
2 eggs beaten
2 tbsp of cooking oil

METHOD

Soak bread in a bowl of water and squeeze water out lightly and set aside. Heat oil in large pan and fry the onions and the crushed garlic and saute until they are soft. Add apricot jam, coriander, salt and pepper. Mix well, then add bread and mince. Cook and stir mixture over low - medium heat for approximately 20mins. When cooked remove from heat and put in a baking dish. Preheat oven on a low temperature and bake for 15mins. Remove from oven and spread the beaten egg mixture on top. Put in the oven for a further 15 mins to set. When set, remove from oven, garnish with the bay leaves and serve.



"Enjoy it, because we have nothing from this world"

The Maltese Kitchen



The Healing Power of Dill

Based on a story from Duaa Alamin

At the kitchen table, women from different cultures listened attentively to a story told by Duaa from Iraq.

One day, Duaa asked her mother why her own cooking did not turn out like hers. Duaa's mother was aware of Duaa's very busy life-style, and she gently shared her cooking secret with her: "You don't cook well without love. It doesn't work. Don't rush. Don't stress! If you're stressed, things get out of control. It's not gonna work. So just take it easy, taking one step at a time, and it will work. Cook with a giving spirit-love. Not as if you are forced to cook." These words have stuck in Duaa's mind, and she has tried to remember them every time she cooked.

Duaa's mother took pride in her cooking, and she took the time and diligent care required for her dishes to be perfect. Now Duaa's father loved his food, and so it was fortunate that his wife, Duaa's mother, was such a very good cook. The aromas coming from her cooked food were too enticing to resist. Delicious spiced eggplant dishes were particularly popular. But alas, being well-fed on rich and spicy food sometimes has its downfalls.

One day, Duaa's father felt sick and went to the doctor. Blood tests were taken, and they showed that Duaa's father had high cholesterol. The doctor was concerned and suggested that he take medication to treat his cholesterol problem. However, when Duaa's father came home and told Duaa's mother what the doctor had told him, she was very adamant. "No" she said, "we are first going to try to reduce the high cholesterol naturally, and if that doesn't work, we will then consider prescribed medication." Duaa's father had no objections to wife's treatment plan. Instinctively Duaa's mother believed in the power of dill to cure her husband's high cholesterol. So for one month, Duaa's mother included dill into almost everything her husband ate. When Duaa's father went back to the doctor a month later for a check-up, the doctor was astonished: "Wow, what did you do? It's just not there anymore! You don't have cholesterol". With joy, Duaa's father returned home and told his family the astonishing good news that he was cured. Duaa's mother was not overly surprised by this news. She smiled with great satisfaction for trusting her conviction in the healing properties of dill. However, unlike her mother's reaction to the news, Duaa was stunned. Even now, she continues to be amazed at the long last healing effect of dill. "To this day, dad does not have a cholesterol problem" said Duaa. She is still so thrilled, that she tells anyone who wants to know about dill as the wonder cure for high cholesterol.

From the day Duaa discovered her father's restored health, her interest in the healing properties of herbs was sparked. Duaa began to learn about other traditional Iraqi healing remedies. She learnt about the herbal tea called 'noomi basra' made from dried lemon, which was and is used to clear headaches. She learnt about another herbal tea made from 'a purplish looking flower' called Echium Amoenum, which was used for relief from stomach pain, bloating, cramps, coughs and colds. Garlic was praised too, known for opening the body's blood vessels! Duaa's learning in natural remedies still continues to this very day.

Duaa now invites you to taste a flavour from Iraq with dill in it.



Temmen Bakella (تمن باقلاء) Broad Bean, Dill Rice with Lamb Shoulder/Shanks

© Photo by Paris Hobbs

Temmen Bakella (تمن باقلاء) Broad Bean, Dill Rice With Lamb Shoulder/Shanks

INGREDIENTS For Rice

2 frozen broad bean bags
2 small bunch dill leaves
3 cups Basmati rice
2 tsp salt
1 tsp black pepper
1 tsp saffron
2 tsp oil/butter

INGREDIENTS For Lamb Shoulder/Shanks:

2 kilo lamb shoulder/shanks
2 onions
2 tsp turmeric
1 tsp ground black pepper
1 tsp ground cloves
5 cardamom pods
5 bay leaves

METHOD

Start with the lamb shoulder/shanks first. In a pan add olive oil then add chopped onion and the lamb shoulder/shanks. Add turmeric, black pepper, cloves, cardamom, bay leaves and salt. Mix well and let it sizzle for a minute, then add water until the meat is covered. Lower the heat and let it cook for about 1½ hours.

Start preparing the rice separately. Dissolve the saffron in little bit of cold water. Clean the beans from shells and chop the fresh dill and keep aside. Soak the rice in water for an hour then wash and add it to boiling water on the stove with a teaspoon of salt. When the rice is cooked halfway (NOT soft and fluffy) get a strainer and remove all the water. Wash rice with cold water. Add chopped dill, broad beans, saffron water,

black pepper and salt. Mix the rice with all these ingredients and keep aside.

In a separate large pot, add oil and the lamb shoulder pieces. Add the rice that is already mixed with all the ingredients on the top of the liquid stew from the shoulder that was cooked earlier. Add a tablespoon of butter on the rice and leave it to simmer and cook on low heat for 30 minutes. Once cooked, flip the pot on a round tray (the aim is to get a nice golden lamb shoulder when flipping the pot on a tray). Decorate with roasted almonds. Serve with a salad and plain Greek style yogurt.

Note: You can use chicken instead of lamb shoulder.



“Cracked wheat are the screws for the knees”

The Lebanese Kitchen



Dad is Coming Home

Based on a story from Salwa Albaz

At the kitchen table, women from different cultures listened attentively to a story told by Salwa from the Gaza Strip in Palestine.

It was early morning, and everything was quiet except the gentle sound of waves lapping on the seashore. As usual, Salwa's mother was sitting on the verandah, sipping her cup of coffee and looking at the palm trees bathed in sunlight in the park across the road. Little Salwa woke up early, excited that her father was coming home that day. The family looked forward to him coming home as he was away a lot for work. Salwa peeked behind the door to the verandah, watching her mother and wondering what she was thinking. Perhaps it was all the chores that had to be done before dad came home.

Soon all the children in the house woke up, and after breakfast began to help their mother with the cleaning and the cooking. Normally Salwa would consider doing chores to be boring and a drudgery, but on this day, the excitement of her father coming home made it easier to do them.

Salwa's father usually came home by early evening. On his way home, he would first go to Nablus, a town in the West Bank, just to buy the family's favourite sweet called *Knafeh Nabulseyeh*. Salwa and her two younger brothers would sit on the steps outside the house patiently waiting for their father to bring home this treat for all to share.

They could see from afar on the winding road leading to their house, their father driving home in his orange Volkswagen. "He is here! He is here!" shouted Salwa and her brothers jumping up and down with joy. When he arrived home, Salwa and her brothers ran down to the car to hug their father, and to get their hands on the *Knafeh Nabulseyeh*. The irresistible smell of this sweet wafted in the air, but it was unreachable, because it was close to the engine of the car to keep it nice and hot. In front of the sweet there was a lot of heavy stuff that dad needed for his work in fixing bikes. "First we need to move all of these spare bike parts to the garage, and then we can enjoy some *Knafeh Nabulseyeh*" said Salwa's father. Dad's work stuff was too heavy for Salwa and her younger brothers to carry, so Salwa quickly ran to get her older sisters to help unpack their father's car.

When everything was done, Salwa's father took the special treat from the engine and brought it to the dinner table, with everyone following him. Despite his long journey home, the fresh *Knafeh Nabulseyeh* was still hot enough to be eaten. There was sweet silence, as Salwa and her family enjoyed the treat. Everyone was happy. As Salwa grew up, she always treasured this special memory of the days when her dad came home.

Salwa now invites you to taste a flavour from Palestine.



Kunafa (كنافة)

INGREDIENTS

500gm Kataifi pastry dough, shredded
 300gm of mozzarella cheese, shredded (you could use Ricotta cheese also or a combination of both)
 1 cup of butter or ghee or a combination of both
 1 cup sugar syrup
 Rose water (optional)
 Pistachios coarsely chopped (optional)

METHOD

- To make your sugar syrup, add 1 cup of sugar to 1½ cups of water in a pan under medium heat. Let it simmer, and keep stirring occasionally until the sugar completely dissolves. This should take you roughly 5 minutes. Add a teaspoon of rose water if you're using it.
- Prep your shredded mozzarella with about 2 tbsp of sugar and set aside for a while till you finish the next step.
- Next comes your pastry dough which is usually frozen. Once the pastry is at room temperature, shred it with your hands till it's thin. Coat the dough with 1 cup of butter or ghee and mix.
- Preheat oven to 200 degrees.
- To line your baking container, first, coat it with butter or ghee and then add half of the dough into the container.
- Line the sides of the container with the dough so that it can hold the cheese.
- Add your shredded cheese and make sure to cover the whole container evenly.
- Last comes the other half of your dough to cover up the kunafa.
- Bake in the oven for about 40-45 minutes until the surface is golden brown.
- Drizzle with the sugar syrup (Note: the syrup needs to be cool). Set aside for 15 minutes till it cools.
- Once cooled, flip your kunafa onto a serving dish (you could drizzle more syrup optional)
- Garnish with pistachios (optional)

Kunafa (كنافة)

© Photo by Paris Hobbs



“Every guest should be treated like God”

The South Indian Kitchen



A Saint's Festa

Based on a story from Grace Camilleri

At the kitchen table, women from different cultures listened attentively to a story told by Grace from Malta.

It is a Saint's Festa Day. A Festa is a religious festival that happens often in Malta to celebrate a Catholic saint. During these Festas the streets are packed with people in colourful dress following in procession behind a huge statue of the saint in whose honour the Festa is held. The statue is carried by eight to ten men parading through the streets. You can feel the excitement of the crowd praying, singing, and dancing. Grace loves Festas. It is an opportunity for her to do what she loves best – to sing her heart out before large applauding crowds. As a talented singer, Grace is often asked to sing at Festas. Today she is dressed in a colourful costume, standing in a decorated horse and karozzin (carriage) drawn through the streets behind the statue and singing passionately popular Maltese songs. When Grace sings, she is in her element. Words cannot describe her happiness when she is entertaining others. She has a really good time, and so do all the people who listen to her. After a while, Grace takes a break from performing. She is feeling hungry and is drawn by the wafting aromas of cakes, sweets, and pastizzi sold everywhere to delight the crowds.

Apart from her love of singing, Grace also loves sweets! "Luckily I don't have diabetes!!!" thought Grace, wanting to get to the sweets as soon as she could! Her father and mother help her off the decorated karozzin and they make their way through the crowds to the closest vendor of sweets. "Yum, yum" said Grace in between bite-fuls of deliciousness. Whilst enjoying eating her sweets, Grace overhears some people having a discussion about miracles that have occurred to people they know. "Malta is a place where lots of miracles happen" said someone loudly. Grace thought to herself: "One day I hope I have a miracle happen to me."

A Festa is a time when people catch up and talk about all sorts of things. As Grace walked back to her performance karozzin to sing more songs, Grace suddenly stopped to hear people talking about lots of treasure being buried in Malta. "Wow", thought Grace, "I wonder where this treasure is" she asked her parents. They waited to hear for any clues to be mentioned. The gossipers said that they read in the papers that during World War II people from Europe brought their valuables to Malta by boat and buried them there for safe-keeping. The people who owned the valuables had hoped to return to Malta after the war to retrieve their buried treasures. "There is still unclaimed treasure buried in Malta", said someone very excited. "Perhaps we should look into joining those who are digging for it" said another person. "Interesting, but nothing specific to go on" said Grace's father nudging the family to move on.

Grace and her family arrived back to the performance karozzin for Grace to finish the Festa with some closing songs. She invited the crowds to sing along with her. The crowds cheered loudly. They appreciated her lovely voice singing songs they all knew so well. It had been a wonderful day, and everyone began to head home happy and tired, looking forward to a light meal before bed. Grace and her family were looking forward to having a traditional Maltese egg soup which Grace helped her mother make early in the morning before going to the Festa. Grace loves this egg soup called the Widows Soup. It always reminds her of her mother teaching her how to make it.

Grace now invites you to taste a flavour from Malta.



Widow's Soup (Soppa Tal-Armla)

© Photo by Paris Hobbs

Widow's Soup (Soppa Tal-Armla)

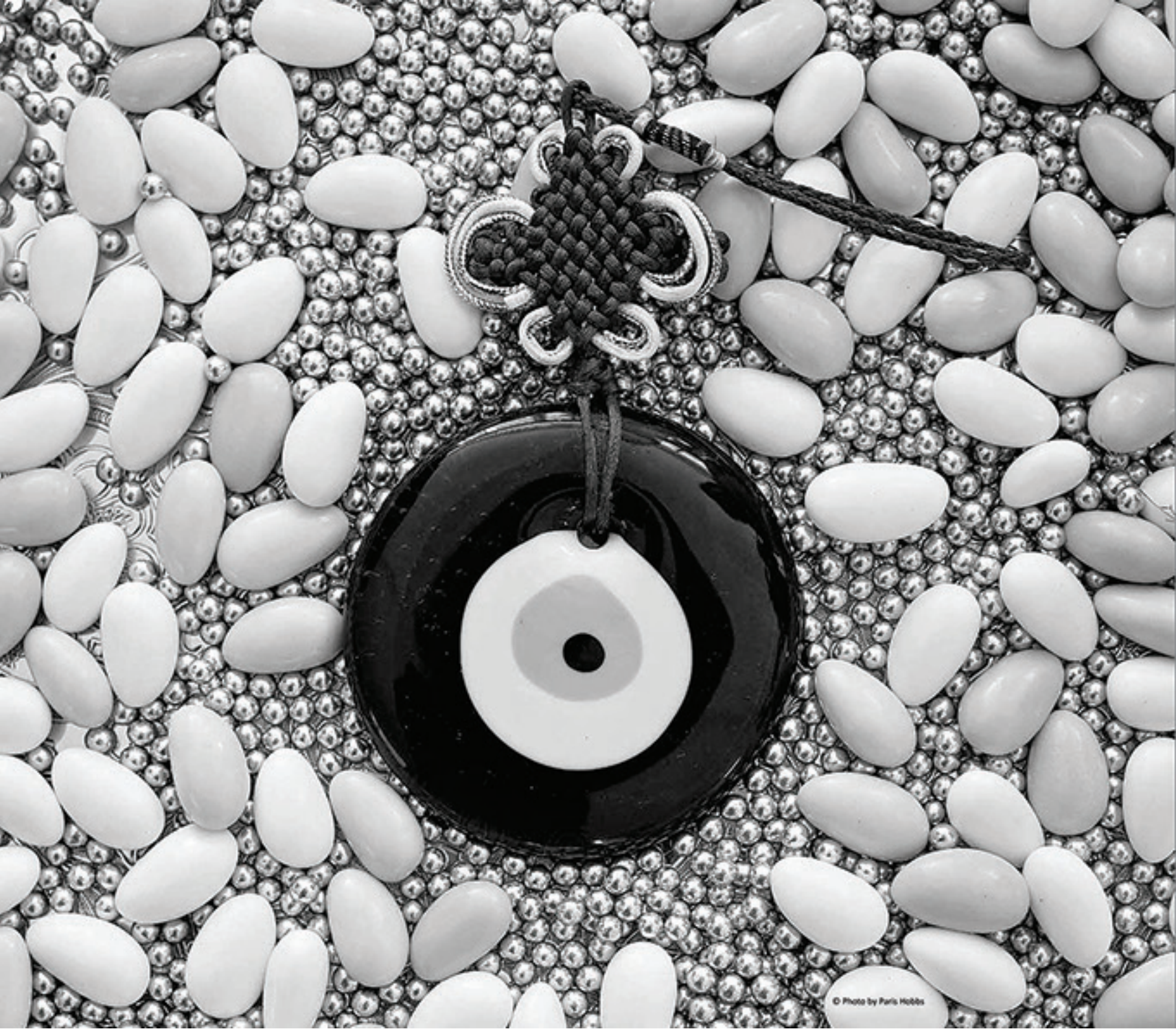
INGREDIENTS

1 onion chopped	3 potatoes chopped
2 cloves of garlic sliced	2 tomatoes (large) chopped
1 courgette chopped	4 gbejniets (Maltese cheeseleets) or 400g of firm ricotta
3 carrots chopped	2 vegetable stock cubes
4 celery sticks	2 tbs tomato paste
150g broad beans	Olive oil for frying
½ cauliflower chopped	4 eggs (optional)
½ cabbage shredded	

METHOD

In a large saucepan add a little olive oil and fry the garlic and onion for five minutes until they have started to soften. Add carrots and celery, fry for another five minutes, then add the cauliflower, courgette, shredded cabbage, broad beans and potatoes. Fry all these vegetables for ten minutes. Stir in the tomatoes, tomato paste and crushed stock cubes. Stir until ingredients are well combined. Add warm boiled water to cover all the vegetables and bring to the boil. Simmer for 45 minutes. Add the gbejniets or ricotta and cook for a further fifteen minutes.

Note: If adding eggs, crack and add on top ten minutes before soup is cooked.



“When filling the stomach, the eyes get blind”

The Iraqi Kitchen



Chinese New Year

Based on a story from Jane Chung

At the kitchen table, women from different cultures listened attentively to a story told by Jane from Malaysia.

It was Chinese New Year! Everyone got up early, not to go to work, but out of sheer excitement. It was a time to relax and have some fun with family, relatives, friends and neighbors from diverse cultural and religious traditions. Jane was so looking forward to wearing her brand new red dress and shoes. She wanted to show them off to her cousins, who were coming to celebrate with the family. Weeks before, she pleaded with her father to take her shopping for her new shoes. He kept making excuses! He was too busy or too tired and Jane was getting anxious she wasn't going to get new shoes to match her beautiful new red dress. Eventually her father gave in, when Jane threw a tantrum, crying and threatening she was not going to do her chores or eat until she got her new shoes!

Jane's father began playing his beloved traditional Chinese New Year songs on his tape recorder. Guests were arriving, and the dinner table was fully laden with mouth-watering dishes and desserts like: rice puddings and cookies. The food was loaded with symbols to wish everyone a happy year ahead: fish and meat dishes for prosperity and abundance;

noodles to wish everyone a long and happy life; dumplings to wish everyone a financially successful new year; and sweet and sticky rice balls for family togetherness. Many of these special delicacies were prepared by Jane's mother and aunts many weeks before this day. In the middle of the table, there was a very big bowl full of 'love letters'. Jane had helped her aunts bake these yummy small wafer biscuits especially for this day. They were so moreish, everyone couldn't eat enough of them! Sharing 'love letters' was a way of wishing harmony and good relations in the family, amongst relatives, friends and neighbours. So everyone was encouraged to eat as many 'love letters' as they liked.

Looking around the house, it was sparkling clean and very colourful, decorated with New Year Greeting Cards, and red and gold paper decorations. Everyone was wearing something new and something red for good luck.

When Jane's cousins arrived, it was fun time. They ran out of the house and into the courtyard with pots and pan lids, banging them together, making lots of noise to scare off 'evil spirits' and to dance. Jane's uncle was a very clever craftsman. He had made the children gorgeous dragon and lion outfits for dancing, to entertain everyone gathering around to watch their performance. Some of the cousins kept making music using the pots and pans as drums, whilst Jane and one other cousin put on the costumes and danced around. Jane's father lit some fire crackers, which delighted the children to dance even more, whilst everyone clapped and smiled. With so much joyful sounds, if there were any 'evil spirits' around they would have certainly disappeared!

After eating and dancing, it was time for the presents. Grandma was sitting in her special chair holding lots of red packets with money in them called "Ang Pow". All the children line up, all excited to get their red packet. The boys were particularly happy because they would get the bigger packets with more money in them. So Jane and the girl cousins decided to try tricking Grandma to get the bigger packets. "Grandma", they cried, "It's not fair. You are doing it wrong. You should start from the front packet not the last one!" But Grandma was a shrewd business woman. She wasn't so easily tricked.

By the end of the day everyone had laughed, sung, danced, ate and talked together so much that they felt so full and happy.

Jane now invites you to taste a Nyonya flavour from Malaysia.



Malaysian Curry Laksa Noodles

© Photo by Paris Hobbs

Malaysian Curry Laksa Noodles

INGREDIENTS

1xpkt 150gm Rice vermicelli or Egg Noodle
1 kg seafood mix (frozen Asian Steamboat Combo)
240gm Osha Curry Laksa Paste
240ml Coconut Milk

For garnish: (optional)
beansprouts/spring onions/coriander or mint leaves

METHOD

1. Blanch the noodles as per instruction.
2. Pour the jar of Curry Laksa paste into 1700ml boiling water.
3. Add packet of seafood and bring to a boil.
4. Stir in 240ml Coconut Milk and simmer on low heat.
5. Pour hot soup into bowls of blanched rice vermicelli or egg noodles.
6. Top with seafood and garnish with bean sprouts/spring onions/coriander/mint leaves (optional).
7. Enjoy while the soup is hot.



“Wake up your taste buds”

The Northern Indian Kitchen



Grandma's Letters

Based on a story from Daphina Dixon

At the kitchen table, women from different cultures listened attentively to a story told by Daphina, an Australian woman with cultural roots in Bulgaria.

One morning when Daphina went to check the postbox for mail there was a letter from Grandma in Bulgaria. Daphina was so excited. She looked forward to receiving letters from grandma, because her letters told exotic stories from far away. Daphina ran into the house and quickly gave the letter to her father to read. Grandma's letters were such a treat for Daphina's father who missed his beloved mother so much. He missed his home country too. He had to escape Bulgaria to avoid becoming conscripted into the Communist army.

Daphina's father opened grandma's letter and began to read it as Daphina sat close beside him and listened with

wonder. Grandma wrote about having recently celebrated Baba Marta Day (Grandmother March) on the 1st of March. There were red and white interwoven yarn bracelets known as the *Martenitsi* included in the letter for Daphina, her mother and father. It was the Bulgarian custom to give these bracelets to family and friends during this day to bring them good luck. Grandma wrote how spectacular it was to see all the trees with these red and white bracelets tied to them, to welcome springtime. As Daphina imagined the scene her grandma described, her father became nostalgically sad, remembering when he had experienced this event many times before. Feeling homesick, Daphina's father went into the kitchen and soaked some dried beans. He needed a taste of his mother's cooking and was going to cook the Bulgarian *bob chorba*, commonly known as 'the monastery soup' with beans, vegetables and chicken in it.

A month later, another letter came from grandma. Daphina and her father loved to smell Grandma's letters. This letter, like all the other letters Grandma had sent, smelt of roses. As Daphina's father read this letter, Daphina was visualizing what grandma had written, like a movie in her head. Grandma described the Rose Festival she attended in the Valley of the Roses. It was a very colorful event, with dancing girls wearing traditional costumes and rose garlands in their hair. There was also a choir singing cappella Bulgarian folk songs, with their unique guttural sounds. Rose perfumes and oils, and red rose petals everywhere. The picture in Daphina's mind was so beautiful.

After reading grandma's precious letters, Daphina felt she had been to another magical world of colour. Everything was so different in Bulgaria to the life she knew in Australia. Even though Daphina had never been to Bulgaria, grandma's letters made her feel as if she had been there.

Daphina now invites you to taste a flavour from Bulgaria.



Bob Chorba - Bulgarian Bean Soup

© Photo by Paris Hodos

Bob Chorba - Bulgarian Bean Soup

INGREDIENTS

300g of dried white beans (cannellini or butter beans), or substitute with canned variety of white beans 400g can (it is important to rinse beans when removing from can)
100g celery diced
1 onion diced
1 carrot diced
100 gms of celery diced
2 red capsicum diced
6-8 tbsp of olive oil or sunflower oil

1 tsp of sweet paprika
2 tbsp plain flour
1 tsp of salt
1 teaspoon of Vegeta or vegetable stock powder
½ tsp of Bulgarian chubritsa spice (substitute with thyme or oregano)
2-3 tsp finely chopped fresh Bulgarian mint (substitute with parsley). (Dry ½-1 tsp)
Bulgarian goats cheese to taste
Black pepper to taste
2-3 dried red peppers or chilli (optional)

METHOD

Note: If using dried beans they must be soaked in cold water overnight. After soaking the beans, drain and put them in a saucepan. Add cold water to cover them. Bring to a boil and then drain them again. Put beans back in the saucepan and add cold water to cover them. Cook until the beans are semi soft (do not over cook).

Using a medium size saucepan, add oil, diced onion, carrot, celery and cook them on a low heat for approximately three to five minutes. Remove the saucepan from the heat and mix in the paprika, Vegeta and flour. Add the beans and enough water to cover all the ingredients. Add the salt, pepper, Bulgarian mint and/or parsley. Stir and mix all the ingredients well. Place saucepan on a medium heat and cook until beans are soft. Serve the bean soup with a sprinkle of parsley and goats cheese to taste, and some crusty bread.



"To the Ruler, the people are heaven.
To the people, food is heaven."

The Malaysian Chinese Kitchen



The Water Pitcher

Based on a story from
Halem and her daughter Haley Girgin

At the kitchen table, women from different cultures were being served Turkish coffee, water and some Turkish Delight which had been made by Halem with Haley's help. One woman said: *"This is not that strong. I thought Turkish coffee is so thick and strong that it is almost undrinkable."* Haley smiled and replied: *"That's right. It's a common misconception. You may notice that I have served you the coffee with a glass of water. You are supposed to drink the water after the coffee, and you are not supposed to drink the residue of coffee at the bottom of your cup."* Another woman piped up: *"Turkish coffee is definitely not as strong as Italian coffee."* The women then began to listen attentively to a story told by Halem, and translated into English by her daughter Haley. Haley began to tell her mother's story.

It was a hot summer's day in the wheat fields of rural central Turkey. All the men from Halem's family were working hard cutting hay and bundling it up for selling it to livestock farmers in the eastern parts of the country.

Meanwhile, Halem was busy looking for dried cow dung patties to fill her bucket and take home. In those days, electricity in the villages was not commonly used. Cooking and keeping warm was done by the fireplace, and cow dung patties made excellent fuel for a blazing fire.

It was approaching midday, and everyone was becoming thirsty. It was so hot they had drunk all the water in the pitcher. Halem's uncle went to have a drink and was annoyed: *"What? No Water! Can someone please fetch some water! The pitcher is empty"* he said holding the empty water pitcher, waiting for someone to take it. *"I will!"* said Halem, putting down her bucket of dung patties, and running to take the water pitcher from her uncle's hand. Even though the clay pitcher was empty it was heavy and almost as big as Halem herself. Halem was surprised at how heavy the pitcher was in her arms. *"Are you sure you can do it?"* asked her uncle. *"Sure I can"* replied Halem, eager to please her uncle. *"There is a fresh water creek just over there"* pointed her uncle. Halem thought to herself that it didn't seem to be that far, and off she went with the water pitcher.

After walking a while she soon got tired and had to stop for a rest. The empty pitcher was very heavy to carry, and she wondered how she was going to manage carrying it back full of water. This task was not as easy as she had first thought. She kept walking hoping to spot the fresh water creek sometime soon, but 'soon' seemed to never come. She had to drag the water pitcher up and down a few slopes before she reached her destination. At last dropping herself and the pitcher by the edge of the water creek, she could have a cold drink and wash her face to cool down. Halem filled the pitcher, and with determination she bravely made her way back, moving the full pitcher of water a few steps at a time. It took five hours for Halem to bring back the full pitcher of water. When she finally arrived, everyone clapped and laughed about how long it took for Halem to bring back the water. Halem did not think it was funny. *"Never again"* she thought as she finally sat down to rest and eat some late lunch of freshly made cheese and spinach pastry. To this day everyone in Halem's family remembers Halem's five-hour journey for a pitcher of water under the hot sun.

Halem and Haley now invite you to taste a flavour from Turkey.



Turkish Chicken Kebabs (Tavuk Şiş)

© Photo by Paris Hobbs

Turkish Chicken Kebabs (Tavuk Şiş)

INGREDIENTS

1 kilo chicken breasts or thighs (remove skin and bones)
4-6 cloves garlic
1/2 cup whole milk or Greek yogurt
3 tablespoons olive oil
2 tablespoons tomato paste or ketchup
1 onion
1 teaspoon black pepper
1 teaspoon paprika
1 teaspoon kosher salt, or more to taste
For garnish: Sumac, dried oregano, and paprika (optional)
4-6 metal skewers or bamboo skewers (Note: if using bamboo skewers soak in water for 30 minutes so that they will not catch fire when grilling)

METHOD

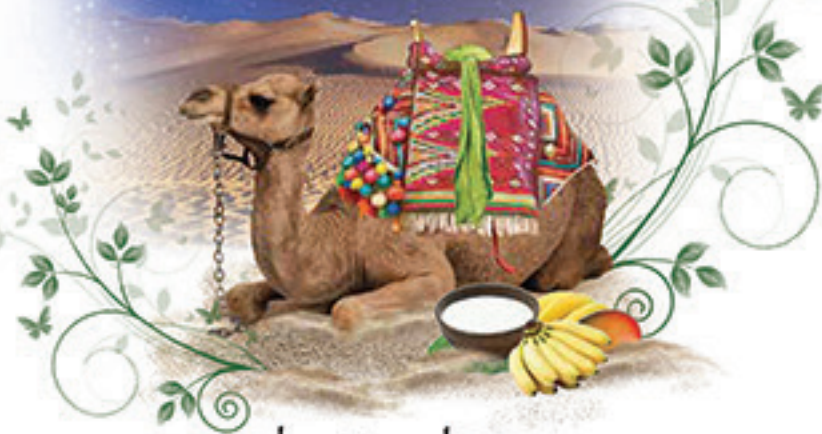
Pat dry the chicken breasts or thighs with a paper towel. Cut the meat into 3cm pieces and set aside. In a bowl, finely grate the onion and garlic cloves into a pulp and juice. In another bowl press the mixture through a sieve using a wooden spoon. Once juice is completely strained, throw out the remaining onion/garlic pulp. Add the yogurt, oil, tomato paste, black pepper, paprika, and salt to the onion/garlic juice and stir. Add the chicken pieces and coat them thoroughly on all sides. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and refrigerate for a minimum of 4 hours or overnight.

Preheat an outdoor grill on medium-high heat and lightly oil the grate. Thread the marinated chicken pieces onto skewers, not pressed together too tightly, so that they can cook evenly. Sprinkle the kebabs with salt and place on pre heated grill. Grill evenly on all sides for about 12 minutes or until thoroughly cooked. When kebabs are ready, you can garnish them with dried oregano, sumac or paprika to taste and serve.



"Carrots are good for your eyes"

The South African Kitchen



The Camel Trip

Based on a story from Najma Osman

At the kitchen table, women from different cultures listened attentively to a story told by Najma from Somalia

It was the day Najma and her brother were going to visit their grandfather in Somaliland. Najma's grandfather had a farm where he grew bananas and mangos as well as vegetables and spices. His place was at a distance to where Najma and her family lived .

That morning, Najma's father prepared the camel for the trip, with water bottles and some food that Najma had prepared for the journey. Meanwhile Najma and her brother were getting dressed. Najma wrapped one of her colourful scarves around her head and face to protect her from the scorching sun and gusts of sand. The family camel was on its knees in a sitting position, and Najma's father helped her and her brother mount it. Mounting and riding a camel is a learnt skill. Najma remembered how hard it was to mount and

ride a camel when she did it for the first time. But now she was confident and at ease. Once mounted, Najma's father motioned the camel to stand up. Najma and her brother held onto the camels' saddle very tightly. Camels stand up with their back legs first. So Najma and her brother had to lean backwards to avoid being thrown face first into the camel's neck. Up and away, they left early at dawn, because it was cooler then. With Najma's father leading the camel by the reins, it was a slow ride through sandy country. By midday, it was time for a rest, a drink and some lunch. Opening up the lunch packets, Najma's brother, sniffed his: "Is this a toxic thing?" he said with a dissatisfied look on his face. Unimpressed, Najma replied: "Well if you are going to die one day, you are going to die anyway. So just eat!" They all ate their lunch of rice, camel meat and banana in silence, as they listened to the sound of drums and other Somali instruments being played in the distance. "Someone is having a party" said Najma's father. The relaxed camel hummed as if agreeing with him. Camels are very important in Somalia. Most families have camels as a means of transport, for their rich milk, and for food. Camel meat and camel milk is very much a part of a Somali diet.

When they eventually arrived to see grandfather, they were thirsty. After a cool drink, something to eat, and a leisurely chat with grandfather, it was late afternoon and it was time to head back home. The camel was given a drink of water and was loaded up with bananas and other supplies from grandfather's farm. Riding back home, it was cooler and dark. You could see a spectacular night sky studded with billions of bright stars. Najma gazed in wonderment into the night sky. Her name means 'star'. She felt blessed to be called after such a beautiful body of light in the heavens!

Najma now invites you to taste a flavour from Somalia.



Bariis Iskukaris - Spiced Somali Rice With Chicken or Meat

© Photo by Fanni Hobbs

Bariis Iskukaris - Spiced Somali Rice With Chicken or Meat

INGREDIENTS For The Meat

¼ cup olive oil
2 tbsp xawaash spice blend divided
1 kilo meat of choice: chicken, beef, lamb, goat or camel

1 green chilli pepper (optional) minced
2 tomatoes diced
12 tbsp tomato paste
2 tbsp xaawash spice blend
1 cinnamon stick whole
8 whole cloves

INGREDIENTS For The Bariis

2 tbsp olive oil
1 large white onion chopped
4 cloves garlic minced

5 whole green cardamom pods
1 tsp saffron threads (optional)
¾ cup of raisins
2 cups basmati rice rinsed
5 cups Chicken Stock

METHOD For The Meat

Add the olive oil to a large pot or Dutch oven. Stir in the xawaash spice blend, and then heat over medium-high heat. Add the meat in a single layer and stir immediately to coat in the spice mixture. Sear one side of the meat (about 1-minute) and then flip to the other to sear as well. Turn the heat down to medium-low and let the chicken or meat cook fully. Set aside on a plate with paper towel to drain any excess oil.

METHOD For The Bariis

Add the olive oil, onion and garlic to the same pot used for the meat. Combine well and cook over medium heat until the onions are translucent, about 5 minutes. Add the green chilli (optional) and tomatoes. Combine and cook for about another minute. Add the tomato paste, xawaash spice blend, all other spices, and raisins. Stir well to combine. Stir in basmati rice. Add the chicken stock and combine well. Bring to a boil on high heat, stir and cover, and reduce the heat to low. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the rice is cooked through and the chicken stock is absorbed, about 10 minutes. Serve the bariis accompanied by the meat with extra raisins to garnish.



“Do good and throw it in the sea”

The Palestinian Kitchen



Sharing Bread

Based on a story from Savina Malhotra

At the kitchen table, women from different cultures listened attentively to a story told by Savina from Northern India.

Looking out of the window from her beautiful house, Savina watched her friend Zeenat helping her mother make some Roti outside their house on a little farm nearby.

Her friend was poor and Savina's aunts forbade Savina to spend time with Zeenat because they were from two different social casts. Savina's aunts were always watching Savina, reprimanding her for keeping the company of people they did not approve. "Don't you dare go out with them. They are not your class" they would say to her. However, Savina thought like her father, who taught her that all people are equal and should be treated with respect. She hated the Caste System of dividing people into inferior and superior, and was ashamed of her aunts' snobby attitude.

It was a sunny day, and Savina was determined to spend some time in the sun with Zeenat. Before this day, Savina had bought a friendship bangle, and this was going to be the opportunity to give it to her friend. Whilst her aunts were busy chatting amongst themselves, Savina quietly snuck out of the house and ran to her friend's place. Zeenat and her mother were pleased to see her. "So good to see you" said Zeenat. "I wanted to see you too" said Savina. "I bought you this friendship bangle, so you will always remember me as your friend" said Savina. "It is beautiful. I will always wear it. Thank you" said Zeenat. Savina smiled and watched Zeenat and her mother cook the roti bread over an open fire. This was very different to the way her father cooked roti in their big family restaurant. He used a tandoor oven. The smell of the roti was very enticing. 'It would probably taste different' thought Savina.

Zeenat offered her some of the freshly baked bread. Without hesitation, Savina received their offering and enjoyed eating the bread with her friend and her mother. She knew it was forbidden for her to eat bread that was kneaded by the hands of the poor. It had been so ingrained in her. Zeenat and her mother also knew that it was taboo for Savina to eat their bread. However, Savina's love for Zeenat, and her conviction in the equality and dignity of all people, gave her the courage to act in defiance to the traditional Caste laws of segregation.

"Yum. This tastes good" said Savina. Zeenat and her mother felt pleased that Savina accepted the bread that was made by their hands.

Savina now invites you to taste a flavour from Northern India.



Palak Paneer
© Photo by Paris Hobbs

Palak Paneer

INGREDIENTS

6 tablespoons olive oil, divided	2 teaspoons ground cumin
2 onion, diced	1 teaspoon salt
6 cloves garlic, crushed	2 kg packages of frozen/ fresh chopped spinach, thawed and drained
5 tablespoons of crushed ginger	3 tomatoes, diced
2 teaspoons ground coriander	1 cup water
2 teaspoons ground turmeric	2 tablespoons grated fresh ginger root
2 teaspoons garam masala	(1.5 kg) 6 cups cubed paneer (cottage cheese)
2 teaspoons red pepper flakes (optional)	
2 teaspoons curry powder	

METHOD

Heat 4 tablespoon olive oil in a skillet over medium heat; cook and stir onion in hot oil until slightly tender, about 10 -15 minutes. Add garlic, coriander, turmeric, garam masala, red pepper flakes, curry powder, cumin, and salt; cook and stir until fragrant, about 1 minute. Mix spinach, tomatoes, water, and ginger into onion mixture; simmer for 45 minutes. Remove from heat and cool slightly, about 5 minutes. Transfer spinach mixture to a blender and blend until smooth. Set aside. Heat remaining 4 tablespoon olive oil in the same skillet over medium heat; cook and stir paneer in hot oil until lightly browned, about 10 minutes. Stir in pureed spinach mixture and cook until heated through, 5 to 7 minutes.



"A coffee with friends offers 40 years of friendship"

The Turkish Kitchen



Friends

Based on a story from Brinal Petrovic and Sridevi Poona

At the kitchen table, women from different cultures listened attentively to a story told by two friends from South India – Brinal and Sridevi. Sridevi and Brinal came from two different villages, but they went to the same high school as teenagers. It was there that their friendship grew, despite coming from different religious backgrounds. Brinal grew up as an Anglo-Indian Catholic Christian and lived a very western lifestyle. On the other hand, Sridevi grew up as a devout Hindu, as the daughter of a guru. The two friends began to tell their story.

Brinal's Story

It was Christmas Eve, and Brinal and her family were making their way to the church for midnight mass. At that time when most people were usually asleep, the excitement of Christmas kept Brinal and her family awake. The church was packed with people singing along with a choir that sang Christmas carols and hymns. A sense of hope and of a new beginning was in the air. You could feel the bonds of family and community as everyone prayed together and exchanged greetings of peace to one another. After mass, everyone cheerfully exchanged Christmas greetings again. Needless to say, everyone got little sleep that night. The next morning, on Christmas day, everyone was busy getting ready for the family relatives and friends to visit. The festive table was set and laden with delicious sweets and savoury dishes which Brinal helped her mother to prepare. Everyone looked forward to the prawn biryani, pork vindaloo, meatball curry, and the coconut rice. After feasting, the whole

family were excited to open their Christmas gifts, which they had bought or made for each other. Hugs and kisses of gratitude criss-crossed the room. Leading up to Christmas, shopping for Christmas gifts for the family was a serious business that took time and effort. For Brinal, the fun part for her was secretly wrapping the gifts in her room, while listening to songs from *The Beatles*, *The Monkeys*, and *Elvis Presley*.

Sridevi's Story

On weekends, Sridevi would often attend the Hindu Temple with her father to pray and to listen to his teachings. During one weekend, it was Sridevi's birthday. Her house was crowded with family, friends, and lots of people from the village. The house was decorated with cut mango leaves, which were usually used when there were parties with lots of guests. Everyone from Sridevi's village knew that mango leaves were used as organic air purifiers that released lots of oxygen. In the dining room, there were lots of traditional Indian food dishes served for all to enjoy. One special dish, which was also used in the Temple, was the bright yellow rice called 'lemon rice' which is offered to God as 'Prasadham'. At some time during Sridevi's birthday party, there was a special honour to be presented to her. Sridevi's father escorted her to the front door of the house, where she was greeted by a beautiful white cow, decorated with a garland of bright yellow and orange flowers around its head. For the Hindus, the cow is considered to be a source of great blessing for everyone present. Sridevi bowed to the cow in thanksgiving and encircled it a few times to receive the cows' positive vibrations. Everyone standing around also bowed with reverence, receiving blessings that the cow's peaceful presence emitted. When the cow left the house, everyone made their way back into the house for feasting on the wonderful banquet that was prepared. After finishing their meal, Sridevi and some of her guests went into the courtyard and sat under Holy Basil tree called *Tulsi* for a quiet chat, and to take in the positive calming energy that the tree exuded. "Its so peaceful here" remarked a few of her guests at the end of her party. At school, Sridevi and Brinal would often share these and other stories about their cultural customs, which were so vastly different. Their friendship inspired their classmates because it showed how people can live in harmony and peace despite their differences. Sridevi and Brinal now invite you to taste a flavour from South India.



Lemon Rice - Chitranna/Nimmakaya Pulihora

© Photo by Paris Hobbs

Lemon Rice - Chitranna/Nimmakaya Pulihora

INGREDIENTS

5 tablespoons cow ghee (add more if required)	½ cup roasted unsalted peanuts
1 teaspoon mustard seeds,	1 teaspoon turmeric powder
1 teaspoon cumin seeds	Juice of 2 medium size lemons or according to taste.
1 teaspoon chana dal (split chickpeas),	2 cups cooked rice
1 teaspoon Urad dal (black gram)	Salt, to taste
3 - 4 curry leaves	
2 medium green chillies, slit lengthwise	

METHOD

1. In a large saucepan, add the ghee, mustard seeds, cumin seeds, chana dal and urad dal. Cook on a medium heat until the seeds begin to splutter.
2. Add the curry leaves and chillies, saute for 1 minute, then add the peanuts. Mix all ingredients well.
3. Add the cooked rice and stir in the turmeric and salt to taste.
4. Add the lemon juice and mix until evenly combined. Remove from the heat and place in a bowl ready to serve.



"One shares milk not talks"

The Somali Kitchen



The Cake Shop

Based on a story from Betty Speros

At the kitchen table, women from different cultures listened attentively to a story told by Betty from the Greek tradition.

It was an afternoon in the 1960's. Betty's father and mother were serving customers in their cake shop, which was in the downstairs front part of their home. Betty had just returned from school and was looking forward to eating a hot sausage roll straight out of the oven. For her, it was one of the few advantages to working in the cake shop. As she was running upstairs to get changed, her mother yelled after her: "Hurry up and get changed. There are a lot of customers waiting to be served". Betty was not happy. She was tired of working so much in the cake shop. She worked there for six days a week, missing out on Saturday sporting activities which she would have loved to attend with her school friends. Now, coming home from school, all she wanted to do was to quietly read, rest and do her homework. But that was not possible without an argument from her mother who had told her that reading was a waste of time. Betty sighed – at least her father believed in her. His words stuck in her head: "Don't work with your hands, work with your head". But for now, reading and homework had to wait till the cake shop closed for the day.

Betty quickly changed out of her school uniform, and put on her white apron and hat. After a long walk from school she was thirsty, so before entering the cake shop she went to the fridge and sculled a cold drink. The hot sausage roll had to wait till she finished with the long line of customers. Some of the customers waiting in line were on their way home from work, while others had just picked up their children from school. They were all wanting to buy bread and sweet pastries for afternoon tea, dinner and for lunches the next day. As Betty's mum took the orders and wrapped the bread and pastries in bags for the customers, Betty calculated costs, and provided the customers with their change. One customer began questioning Betty's sums: "Are you sure this is the right price" argued a customer? Betty showed the customer the slip of paper with her calculations, and explained the cost of each item and the total amount. The other customers on the line listened in and were amazed. The customer calmed down. It was correct. Then another customer complained: "I think you have given me the wrong change?" Betty was confident that she had given the customer the right change, and again explained her calculations. This customer felt embarrassed for his questioning, but then Betty was young, and he could easily be forgiven for checking it out. At first Betty felt annoyed when customers did not trust her calculations. Despite Betty's quiet nature, she was a 'smart cookie', and excelled in mathematics. As the line of customers was shortening, another customer was having difficulty with the new decimal currency that had just been introduced in Australia. This customer was one of many people who were so use to the old metric system, that they had trouble understanding how to convert money values to the new system. Again, Betty patiently and humbly explained decimal currency to this customer, till she understood it. Indeed, Betty was able to teach decimal currency to many customers who came to the cake shop. She had made such a positive difference in many people's lives, even though she was not aware of it.

At last there was a lull in customers entering the cake shop and Betty was able to enjoy her hot sausage roll. Her father taught her to make sausage rolls to perfection, and for years whenever there was a family function Betty was always asked to bake her sausage rolls.

Betty now invites you to taste a flavour from Greece.



Moussaka
© Photo by Paris Hobbs

Moussaka

INGREDIENTS

Parmesan cheese
2 large eggplants
3 large potatoes *substitute or can add sweet potatoes as well
1kg minces (lamb or beef)
1 onion (chopped up)
4 cloves of garlic (crushed)
1 tablespoon of cumin powder
1 jar of passata (250mg)
1 teaspoon of sugar
2 teaspoons of salt
1 tablespoon of olive oil
Salt & Pepper to taste

Foil tray approx. 30cm x 24cm

INGREDIENTS for Bechamel Sauce Topping

125mg butter
½ cup of plain flour
2 cups of milk

METHOD for Bechamel Sauce:

Melt butter in a pan. Add flour and stir well to make sure that there are no lumps. Slowly add milk and continue to stir mixture (stir until custard consistency)

Note: If it's too watery, add cornflour to thicken. If it's too thick, add more milk.

METHOD

- Preheat oven at 180°C
- Slice eggplants into approx. 5mm thick circles. Place slices into a colander and sprinkle with salt and set aside.
- Shallow fry chopped onions in olive oil
- Add crushed garlic and mince
- Stir until brown and break up any large lumps. Once completely brown, add passata sauce, sugar, salt, pepper, and cumin powder and continue to stir through. "Taste" Add any seasonings to taste and set aside until mixed well
- Cut potatoes in 5mm slices and pat dry
- Place potatoes on a tray with baking paper flat and spray with oil. Place potatoes in oven for approx. 20 minutes
- Cut eggplants in 5mm slices and pat completely dry.
- Place eggplant slices on a separate tray with baking paper flat and spray with oil
- Place eggplant tray in oven for approx. 20 minutes. Once in oven for 20 minutes, take them out.
- On a separate tray, layer potato slices on the bottom, covering the whole base of the tray. Add eggplant slices layer on top of potato layer. Add mince on top of eggplant by spreading it evenly across the tray. (Can add another layer of eggplant or potatoes if there are leftovers).
- Cover on top with Bechamel sauce evenly
- Grate parmesan or any choice of cheese on top.
- Bake in oven for 180oc for approx. 20-30 minutes till the top browns slightly (as everything inside is already cooked)
- Serve



“Eggplants are the monsters of the pan”

The Iraqi Kitchen



Hunting for Snails

Based on stories from Najat Zeait, Patricia Dandan, and Rouwaida Bahe

At the kitchen table, women from different cultures listened attentively to a story told by three sisters from Lebanon - Patricia, Najat and Rouwaida. They began to tell their story:

One evening, as usual, the family was sitting at the dinner table. They were peacefully having their meal of stuffed zucchini called Koosa Mahshi. The family ate a lot of zucchini, because zucchini grew plentifully in their garden. As they were quietly eating and talking about what was happening in their local community, Patricia suddenly motioned everyone to be quiet. "Shhhh!" she said. Everyone stopped. "It's raining!" said Najat. Patricia, Najat and Rouwaida left the dinner table and ran to the window to watch the rain coming down in 'buckets'. "Come back to the table and finish your dinner" said their mother. But the girls were entranced by the sound of the dancing rain outside. "If you do what you are told, and finish your dinner, you can go snail hunting later", said their father. The girls certainly heard this enticing offer and went back to the table to finish their

dinner quickly. "Rouwaida, do you remember when you first learnt about snail hunting?" asked her mother with a smile on her face. Rouwaida stopped eating for a moment. Her mother continued: "Do you remember when you were little, and we were walking to Church. It was raining that morning. You saw a nun with an umbrella outside the convent looking everywhere and picking up things and putting them into her bucket? And you asked me very curiously: What is she doing? And I said to you: She is looking for snails". Rouwaida smiled: "Yes mum".

Having finished their dinner, the girls ran to put on their raincoats and rubber boots. Patricia fetched the umbrellas, buckets and the kerosene lamps. 'Lets go snail hunting' said Patricia. "Be careful. Its slippery out there" said their mother as the girls went out the door. 'We will' said Najat.

It was dark. With their kerosene lamps lighting the way, Najat and Rouwaida followed Patricia who was the expert in snail hunting. She had hunted for snails with her father many times before. He had taught Patricia to look for snails along the stony walls and bushy hedges. The girls looked and looked till they could not see another snail. They had each filled half a bucket. It was so much fun. This catch of escargot was not for some fancy French restaurant. It was for a hearty homemade meal. Looking into the buckets Patricia said: "Putting all our snails together we have enough for mum to make a delicious dinner."

When the girls got back home, their mother and father were pleased with their catch. "Now before we cook them we have to make sure they are clean from all the soil and yucky gunk they ate" said their mother. The girls watched their mother put all the snails in a container. "To purge them we have to starve them for seven days, and then we put them in salted water and vinegar before they are ready for cooking" continued their mother. "So much work" the girls thought. Then they remembered how they used to have fun using toothpicks to get the cooked snails out of their shells and dip them in Tahini sauce, and they thought: "Yum, It's worth it".

Patricia, Najat and Rouwaida now invite you to taste a flavour from Lebanon.



Koosa – Stuffed Lebanese Zucchini

© Photo by Paris Hobbs

Koosa – Stuffed Lebanese Zucchini

INGREDIENTS

Stuffing:
1kg silver green lebanese zucchini (squash)
½ cup rice raw
250g ground lamb or beef mince
1 tsp salt
1 tsp dried mint
1 tsp mixed 7 spice
¼ tsp cumin

Tomato Paste:
2 tbsp tomato paste
4 garlic cloves
1 lemon (juiced)
¼ tsp dried mint
2 litres water
50g olive oil

METHOD

Wash the zucchini then cut the tips off both ends. Using a corer, carefully remove the flesh keeping the outside intact. Once all zucchinis have been hollowed out wash and place in a drainer to drain. In a bowl mix by hand the ground lamb or beef mince with 1 tsp mixed 7 spice, 1 tsp dried mint, butter, salt and ¼ tsp cumin and rice. Start filling zucchini one by one ¾ of the way leaving space for the rice to expand when its cooked. Heat 2 litres of water in a medium sized pot on high heat add tomato paste. When it starts to boil add zucchini to the pot and cook for 30 minutes. Whilst the zucchini is cooking, smash 4 garlic cloves and add ¼ tsp dried mint, 1 lemon juiced, salt and stir together. Add this to the pot and cook for another 10 minutes.



“There is room at the table for everyone except the devil”

The Greek Kitchen



Violet Amelia Acker
SOUTH AFRICA
Gratitude



Salwa Albaz
PALESTINE
Dad is Coming Home



Grace Camilleri
MALTA
A Saint's Festa



Daphina Dixon
BULGARIA
Grandma's Letters



Najma Osman
SOMALIA
The Camel Trip



Sridevi Poona
SOUTHERN INDIA
Friend



Duaa Alamin
IRAQ
The Healing Power of Dill



Rouwaida Bahe
LEBANON
Hunting for Snails



Patricia Dandan
LEBANON
Hunting for Snails



Halem Girgin
TURKEY
The Water Pitcher



Haley Girgin
TURKEY
The Water Pitcher



Brinal Petrovic
SOUTHERN INDIA
Friends



Jane Chung
MALAYSIA
Chinese New Year



Savina Malhotra
NORTHERN INDIA
Sharing Bread



Betty Speros
GREECE
The Cake Shop



Najat Zeait
LEBANON
Hunting for Snails



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