



Les Marmitons

NEW JERSEY

January 2025 Event

Chef Avi of Gryro Grill

First Course: Harira Soup

Second Course: Toboulli Salad

Third Course: Branzini with Chermoula

Fourth Course: Kunafa



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1st Course: Hariria Soup

Serves 36

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| Extra virgin olive oil | 3 teaspoon cayenne |
| 6 large yellow onion finely chopped | 96 - ounce cans crushed tomatoes |
| 12 celery stalks chopped | 18 tablespoons tomato paste |
| 6 carrot peeled and chopped | 6 cup packed chopped fresh cilantro |
| Kosher salt | 6 cup green lentils, rinsed |
| 25 garlic cloves minced | 6 cup red lentils, rinsed |
| 9 1/2 teaspoons black pepper | 90- ounce can chickpeas |
| 9 1/2 teaspoon turmeric | 10.5 qt vegetable or chicken stock, preferably low-sodium |
| 6 teaspoon cumin | 1.5 cup long grain rice, rinsed or 1/4 cup broken vermicelli |
| 3 teaspoon ground ginger | Lemon wedges, and Pita Bread for serving |
| 3 teaspoon ground cinnamon | |

Instructions

In a large Dutch Oven, heat 4 tbsp extra virgin olive oil over medium heat until shimmering. Add the onions, celery, and carrots. Season with kosher salt. Cook for 5 minutes, stirring regularly until softened.

Add the garlic and spices and cook for a couple of 1 to 2 minutes, stirring regularly.

Add the crushed tomatoes, tomato paste, cilantro, lentils (both green and red), and chickpeas. Add a dash more kosher salt and cook for 5 minutes, stirring.

Add the broth and raise the heat. Bring to a boil for 5 minutes, then turn the heat to low. Cover and let simmer for 45 minutes or until the legumes are fully cooked and very tender (check occasionally and plan to add more stock or water. The soup will be thick, but it should not be too thick that you cannot pour it. Make sure to adjust the salt as you add more liquid.)

Stir in the rice and cook for another 15 or until the rice is fully cooked.

Serve with lemon wedges and warm pita bread



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2nd Course: Tabouli

Serves 36

2 ¼ cup dry bulgar wheat, ([fine grain bulgar](#), [medium grain bulgar](#) or 1 cup cooked quinoa)

18 bunches flat-leaf parsley (or sub curly parsley), chopped fine (7-8 cups, or 10-11 ounces chopped) tender stems OK.

4 ½ cup mint leaves, chopped

1 - 2 cup dill, chopped (optional)

13 ½ medium tomatoes, diced small (3 cups)

5 -9 Turkish cucumbers, diced (optional)

18 scallions, sliced (or 4 ½ cup red or white onion- finely diced)

4 ½ tablespoon lemon zest

1 ½ cup lemon juice, more to taste

2 ¼ cup [olive oil](#)

4 ½ teaspoon salt

4 ½ teaspoon "7-Spice" (or sub 2 teaspoon [allspice](#) and 2 teaspoon [cinnamon](#))

7 Spice

1 teaspoon cumin

1 teaspoon cinnamon

1 teaspoon allspice

1 teaspoon coriander

1/2 teaspoon nutmeg

1/2 teaspoon ground cloves

1/2 teaspoon cardamom

Serve with Pita, [Hummus](#), [baba ganoush](#), and [falafels](#).

Instructions

1. If using med grain bulgar, pour 2 cup boiling water over the bulgar wheat in a small bowl. Cover with a plate, set aside. If using [fine grain bulgar](#), you can toss it right in the salad at the end (the same with cooked quinoa).

2. If making the 7 spice— mix all the spices together in a small bowl. (see notes)
3. See TIP below on washing Parsley. Chop the parsley as finely as you can, and some thin stems are ok to include. Place in a large bowl. You'll need about 7 cups chopped or 10 ounces. Chop the mint and optional dill. Dice the tomatoes finely, place in the bowl along with all their juices. Chop the cucumber and onion and place in the bowl.
4. Add the bulgar wheat- it should be al dente. Toss all to mix well. Add the lemon zest, lemon juice, olive oil, salt and 1 teaspoon **7-spice**. Give a good stir.
5. Place in the fridge for 1-3 hours and allow the flavors to meld. The parsley will soften and lose any bitterness, and the bulgar will soak up the flavorful juices, swelling.
6. Before serving, give a stir and taste for salt and lemon. Adjust both to your liking, along with the spices. You want just the faintest whiff of the spices, like a whisper.
7. Enjoy with Pita, Hummus, baba ganoush, and falafels.



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3rd Course: Branzini with Chermoula

Serves 36

14- 18 lbs Branzini

salt & pepper to taste

Chermoula Sauce Makes 9 cup

18 cups cilantro leaves (18 large bunches)

14 cups parsley leaves (14 large bunch)

36 garlic cloves (to taste), halved, green shoots removed

4 ½ to 6 ¾ teaspoon salt (to taste)

18 teaspoons cumin seeds, lightly toasted and ground

9 teaspoon sweet paprika

4 ½ teaspoon coriander seeds, lightly toasted and ground

1 teaspoon cayenne (more to taste)

½ to ½ cup extra virgin olive oil, to taste

1 ¼ cup freshly squeezed lemon juice

Instructions

Cheroula:

Coarsely chop the cilantro and parsley. A scissors is a good tool for this; point it tip down in the measuring cup and cut the leaves. Then place them in a food processor and chop very fine, or chop on a cutting board. You should have 1 cup finely chopped herbs.

Place the garlic and salt in a mortar and puree. Add a small handful of the chopped herbs, and gently but firmly grind until the herbs begin to dissolve. Add another handful. When all of the herbs have been mashed,

work in the spices, $\frac{1}{3}$ cup olive oil and lemon juice. Taste and adjust seasoning. Add more olive oil or salt if desired. Serve with grilled fish

PREPARATION

Step 1

Season the fish with salt and pepper.

In a large baking dish combine the fish with half the chermoula and toss together until the fish is coated.

If the chermoula is thick it may be easier to spread it onto the fish with a spatula.

Refrigerate for 15 to 30minutes while you preheat the broiler or prepare a grill.

Step 2

If using a broiler, line a sheet pan with foil and brush the foil with olive oil, or oil a shallow baking dish.

Place the fish in the pan in a single layer.

If desired drizzle on a little more olive oil or lemon juice. Place under the broiler, close to the heat (about $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches below) and broil 5 minutes.

Check the fish; the timing depends on how thick the fillets are; figure on 4 to 5 minutes per $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of thickness.

It is done when it is opaque and you can pull it apart with a fork.

Using a spatula, transfer the fish from the sheet pan or baking dish to a platter or to individual plates.

Tip the juices in the pan over the fish fillets.

Pass the remaining chermoula and lemon wedges at the table.



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4th Course: Kunafa

Serves 36

For the syrup

4.8 cup granulated sugar.
3 cup water.
5 oz honey.
2 ½ teaspoon lime juice.

For flavoring the syrup:

Use one of these:

2 ½ Tablespoon orange blossom water
2 ½ Tablespoon rose water.
2 ½ teaspoon of vanilla extract. Note1

For the cream filling (Ashta) :

5 cups whole fat milk.
8 Tablespoons corn starch. Note2
20 oz sweet cheese optional. Note2

For the knafeh:

2.4 lb pound knafeh Note3
2.4 cup ghee

Instructions

Make the Syrup:

In a saucepan over medium-high heat add sugar, water, honey and your flavors, stir to combine.

Bring to a boil then add the lemon juice. Turn heat down to low and let it simmer for 10 minutes.

Turn heat off and let it cool completely and come to room temperature. Note4

Make the filling:

In a saucepan whisk together cold milk and cornstarch until dissolved.

Place on your stovetop on medium, keep stirring the mixture until it bubbles and thickens.

Take off heat, let it cool completely, or pour the mixture in a bowl and cover directly with plastic wrap. Note4

Make the knafeh:

In a microwave-safe bowl or in a small saucepan melt ghee and let it cool so you can handle.

Take one quarter of the thawed knafeh and pulse in your food processor. Make sure **not** to turn it into powder.

Place shredded knafeh in a bowl and proceed with the other 3 quarters..

Pour $\frac{3}{4}$ of the melted ghee over the knafeh and massage with your hands to spread the ghee evenly.

Preheat your oven to 350F.

Brush a 10" round pan with some of the melted ghee. Note5

Place half the knafeh on the pan pressing hard with another plate or a measuring cup to spread evenly along the bottom and the sides.

Pour the pudding mixture topping it with the grated cheese if using.

Spread the filling evenly leaving about half an inch from the sides.

Top with the remaining half of the knafeh, spread evenly pressing lightly with your fingertips.

Pour the remaining ghee evenly on top.

Bake in the middle rack for 30 minutes until sides turn brown then move it up to brown the top for 10 to 15 minutes.

Pour cooled syrup over while hot and let it rest for 10 minutes.

If you want invert on a serving platter and garnish with crushed pistachios. Note6

Notes

1. Flavoring the syrup is optional also the amount is optional, these are just my suggestions. More or less depending on your taste.

2. I've found that if you are using only milk pudding as a filling then it is better to make it thicker so use 4 tablespoons otherwise use 3 tablespoons.
3. Place the frozen Knafeh in the refrigerator the night before and let it thaw.
4. It might help if you make the syrup and the pudding the day before so you are not in a hurry to cool both down.
5. You may also use a 9.5" pie pan or a 13x9 pan. If you want to double the recipe for a crowd use a half sheet pan like Nordic. I highly recommend it.
6. When inverting the knafeh sometimes some of the knafeh is stuck to the pan, do not worry. Scrape them out then place them back over your kunafa plate, no-one will ever notice anything.
7. I was asked if you can buy the phyllo dough and use a knife to finely shred them. Unfortunately although Kunafa is called shredded phyllo dough, you cannot buy normal phyllo and shred them yourself. I will try to make the dough on the blog soon.
8. My mom always shredded her knafeh while it is frozen, this works great for many people. I have found that letting the knafeh thaw and using the food processor is easier.
9. It is common practice in the Levant area to color the knafeh. Knafeh coloring can be found in Middle Eastern stores. I did not grow up to a colored knafeh threads so this is up to you.
10. **Make ahead tips:** make the syrup and the milk pudding, let them cool down then refrigerate. Pudding can keep up in the fridge for 5 days and syrup for months. Just make sure to cover the pudding directly with plastic wrap so it will not develop a skin. Refrigerate until you are ready to use it.