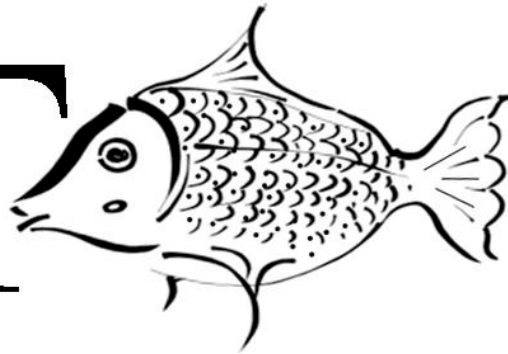




A SILVER JUBILEE PUBLICATION OF THE FEDERATION OF ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATIONS OF NORTH AMERICA

EAT



LIVE

PRAY



**A celebration of Zarathushti  
culture and cuisine**

*Eat, Live, Pray: A celebration of Zarathushti culture and cuisine*  
© 2012 Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA)  
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# CONGRATULATIONS, FEZANA

The Federation of the Zoroastrian Association of North America (FEZANA) was registered in the State of Illinois, USA, on June 2, 1987 as a non-profit, religious and charitable organization. In the twenty-five years since then FEZANA has had many accomplishments. In July 1996, we undertook a "Strategic Planning" exercise (*FEZANA Journal*, Fall 1996) which identified four collective goals for the community and the organization. One of the goals was "a thousand points of light" aimed at preserving our community's religious and cultural entity. This publication, "Eat, Live, Pray: A celebration of Zarathushti culture and cuisine" upholds this goal.

Food plays a very important role in our Zarathushti psyche. We create all varieties of food for different occasions; special food for happy occasions and we also have food for the dead in our religious ceremonies. In the Summer, 2011 edition of the *FEZANA Journal*, Sarosh and Benafsha Khariwala together with Arnavaz Chubb, all in Melbourne, Australia, explored the concept of "Food as Our Identity". They did a superb job in soliciting articles for the meaning of food in our various rituals, of finding Zarathushti chefs from around the world who graciously shared their prize recipes. Farishta Murzban Dinshaw took their work to the next level, collecting recipes from *Journal* readers and using her love of history to add the cherry on the top. We thank Farishta for undertaking this project with such dedication and love.

We offer the gift of this book to all Zarathushtis who are interested in good food as we celebrate FEZANA's silver jubilee this year. We invite you to relish the experience and the taste as you read the articles and try the recipes.

*Dolly*  
*Montreal, Canada, 2012*

**Dolly Dastoor**, the Editor of *FEZANA Journal*, has been involved with FEZANA from its inception twenty-five years ago. She served as FEZANA's President from 1994-1998.



# ZARATHUSHTI CULINARY TRADITIONS - FOOD FOR THE MIND, BODY AND SOUL

EDITORIAL, *Fezana Journal*, Summer 2011



Besides prayer, food is the greatest bond that binds and brings Zarathushtis together. Whether we live to eat or eat to live, food and all that goes with it, from the preparation to consumption, is an integral part of our culture and way of life as Zarathushtis. From lavish celebratory feasts to solemn liturgical rituals, food and the enjoyment of Ahura Mazda's bounty surely defines the Zarathushti ethos more than anything else. Zarathushti philosophy and theology may be cogitated in ivory towers, but it is in the family kitchen that a big part of our culture and traditions have been kept alive.

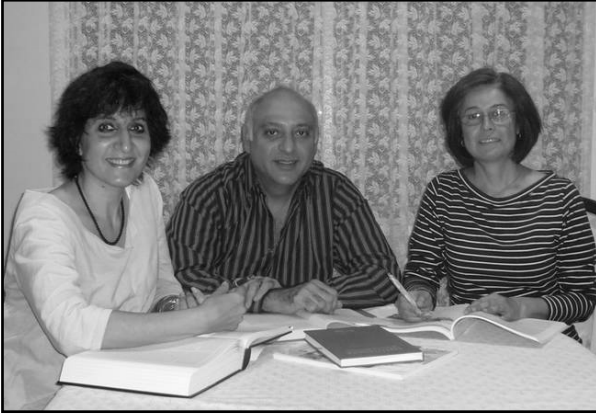
To the Zarathushtis of the Diaspora, memories of home are often linked to food and returns to the motherland almost always involve gastronomic indulgences that are long remembered despite or because of the sometimes violent protestations of the digestive tract. We live in times when coronary conditions, diabetes and other insidious lifestyle diseases threaten to stand between the Zarathushti and the enjoyment of their culinary birthright. Or so we are given to understand. Our forebears however were celebrated for their longevity and vigor. What was their secret? Come, let us sniff and savor our way through the delights of our Zarathushti culinary heritage and discover how and why we nourish our minds, bodies and souls.

Within these pages, foodies from all walks of life record and revive the favorite and the forgotten delicacies that make up our culinary heritage. Academics and priests give us an insight into historical, nutritional and religious aspects of food, while chefs and passionate cooks share their recipes and stories. Our thanks and appreciation goes to all the contributors for their efforts and the friendships forged along the way. We all have to eat to live, so in what better way can Zarathushtis participate and share in preserving and perpetuating our traditions than through cooking and eating.

When Dolly Dastoor first approached Sarosh Khariwala, President of the Zoroastrian Association of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia and his wife Benafsha to guest edit this issue of *FEZANA Journal* [Summer, 2011], the task was taken on with enthusiasm and some trepidation. Sarosh, a chef, and Benafsha, a pharmacist involved in the production of professional pharmaceutical journals, co-opted Arnavaz Chubb, a student of the Zarathushti religion and one time Associate Editor of *Parsiana* to join the team. Rashna Tata, erstwhile President of the Zarathushtrian Association of New Zealand, and Jehangir Mehta, self-confessed foodie and past President of the Zoroastrian Association of Western Australia, have assisted and contributed to this *Journal*, making it a truly Down Under effort. Our thanks to Dolly Dastoor and Behram Pastakia for their invitation to guest edit and for their guidance, patience and faith in us while we gathered, prepared and eventually plated up this tribute to our gastronomic heritage.

“Befar moid” and “Jamvaa chaalaji”.

*Arnavaz, Benafsha and Sarosh  
Melbourne, 2011*



L to R: Benafsha Khariwala, Sarosh Khariwala, and Arnavaz Chubb, Melbourne, Australia

**Arnavaz Chubb** has a Master's degree and a gold medal in Avesta and Pahlavi from Bombay University, Mumbai, India. She has been Editor of the Zoroastrian Association of Victoria (ZAV) newsletter, *Ratheshstar*, and has been a past President and a long standing committee member of the association. She also conducts religious classes for ZAV,

**Benafsha Khariwala** is a pharmacist by profession and is currently the Managing Editor of a professional pharmaceutical journal published in Melbourne, Australia.

**Sarosh Khariwala**, is a graduate from the Institute of Hotel Management, Catering Technology and Applied Nutrition in Mumbai, India. Sarosh has worked in the hospitality industry for over 30 years both in India and in Australia. He is now as an Executive Chef, and also consults for the hospitality industry. He is the President of the Zoroastrian Association of Victoria.

## ANOTHER COOK ENTERS THE KITCHEN

I read the articles in the food-themed issue of the *Fezana Journal* (Summer, 2011) with avid interest, and thought to myself that it would be a pity if all the work that Arnavaz, Benafsha and Sarosh put into it did not reach a wider readership. I presented Dolly Dastoor, editor, *Fezana Journal*, and Behram Pastakia, chair of the FEZANA publications committee, with the idea to expand the information into a publication that would celebrate Zarathushti culture and cuisine. My vision of it was that it would be available on the FEZANA website for people to download for free and print out at home so that people across the globe would have access to it. FEZANA is celebrating its silver jubilee in 2012, and a publication to share with the world would be a fitting way to commemorate the milestone. Dolly and Behram were supportive of the idea, and we sent out a call for recipes to FEZANA members and *Journal* readers.

This book has 72 recipes, which is just a sampling of Parsi and Persian dishes. The recipes have been contributed by readers from Australia, Britain, Canada, India, Iran, Pakistan and the United States of America. Some recipes have been edited to fit the page, but I have tried to maintain the voice of the contributor as far as possible. For this reason, you may see that spellings of non-English terms vary and have not been italicized. Some people might wish that there had been photographs to accompany the recipes. It was a conscious decision to make this a text-based publication so that it would be faster to download and save toner ink when printing. For more recipes, including quintessential ones like *Patra ni Machi* (Fish in Banana Leaves) or *Khoresht Fesenjan* (Pomegranate and Walnut Stew), visit websites like [www.parsicuisine.com](http://www.parsicuisine.com) and [www.mypersiankitchen.com](http://www.mypersiankitchen.com).

The hardest task in putting this book together was providing comparable conversions for imperial and metric measurements. To keep things simple, I have rounded off the measurements. Complicating the issue is that metric measurements specify the quantity of many ingredients by weight instead of volume, and dry ingredients have different textures and particle size so measurements are not uniform. For instance, one cup each of all purpose flour, chopped nuts, and sugar when converted to weight in grams have different values – 110 g, 150 g and 200 g respectively. Standard measuring utensils vary greatly in different countries. For example an Australian tablespoon is 20 ml while an American one is 15 ml. I referred extensively to *The Metric Kitchen*

(www.jsward.com) while converting the measurements. This book has family recipes that have been cooked multiple times with embellishments and adaptations in household kitchens rather than an institutional kitchen so you might need to experiment with them to find what measurements work best for your taste.

Selected articles from the *Fezana Journal* Summer, 2011 issue on food and Zarathushti culture along with features that I researched complement the recipes. The information and recipes have been categorized in three sections: *EAT* traces the various social and geopolitical influences on Zarathushti cuisine over a span of three thousand years; *LIVE* describes some of the celebratory occasions in our lives and the accompanying foods that make them special; and *PRAY* contains information about our rituals and holy days.

It is commonly held that too many cooks spoil the broth, but this particular broth would have tasted quite bland without the support of other cooks, particularly Dolly Dastoor, Minoo Mehrayin, and Diana Katgara.

This publication is dedicated to my father, late Murzban Nadirshah Dinshaw, whose appetite for good food was as large as his heart – Daddy, I miss you every time I have rumble tumble on toast.

*Farishta*  
*Toronto, 2012*



**Farishta Murzban Dinshaw** has a Masters degree in institutional food management from the University of Karachi, Karachi, Pakistan. She enjoys eating more than cooking, and revels in the diverse ethnic cuisines available in Toronto, Canada, where she lives. Her interest in Zarathushti history and religion began at age fifteen when she started volunteering at the Friday School for Little Zarathushtis, Karachi. She has presented papers on Zarathushti religion at several congresses, including the World's Religions after September 11 Congress, Montreal in 2006. Farishta is a regular contributor to the *Fezana Journal* and *Hamazor*. She is also the author of *Discovering Ashavan*, a story set in ancient Iran about a young boy befriended by Zarathushtra.

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# GLOSSARY

Gujarati	English
<i>aadoo</i>	ginger
<i>achaar</i>	pickles
<i>adgmo/ajwain</i>	oregano
<i>badam</i>	almonds
<i>barak/varak</i>	edible silver paper
<i>besan</i>	chick pea flour
<i>bhaaji</i>	spinach
<i>bheeda</i>	lady's finger/okra
<i>charoli</i>	Indian almonds
<i>chamno</i>	pomfret (fish)
<i>channa</i>	chick peas
<i>channa dal</i>	split chick peas
<i>chawal</i>	rice
<i>daar</i>	pulses
<i>dahi</i>	yoghurt
<i>dalchini</i>	cinnamon
<i>dhana</i>	coriander seeds
<i>doodh</i>	milk
<i>eedu</i>	egg
<i>elaichi</i>	cardamom
<i>gajar</i>	carrot
<i>garam masala</i>	mixed spices
<i>gaur</i>	jaggery
<i>ghee</i>	clarified butter
<i>haldi</i>	turmeric
<i>hing</i>	asafoetida
<i>jaiphal</i>	nutmeg
<i>jeera</i>	cumin
<i>kaanda</i>	onions

Gujarati	English
<i>kaju</i>	cashew nuts
<i>kera</i>	banana
<i>kesar</i>	saffron
<i>khan</i>	sugar
<i>khopra/khopru</i>	coconut
<i>khus khus</i>	poppy seeds
<i>laal masoor</i>	red lentils
<i>lasun</i>	garlic
<i>lavang</i>	cloves
<i>limbu</i>	lemon
<i>makhan</i>	butter
<i>malai</i>	cream
<i>masala</i>	spices
<i>mava/mawa</i>	caramelized milk
<i>methi</i>	fenugreek
<i>mewa/mewo</i>	dried fruits and nuts
<i>moong</i>	green gram
<i>paneer</i>	cottage cheese
<i>papeta</i>	potato
<i>phudina</i>	mint
<i>rava</i>	semolina
<i>sambhar</i>	mixed spices
<i>sooji</i>	semolina
<i>takmaria</i>	basil seeds
<i>tamota</i>	tomato
<i>til</i>	sesame
<i>toor/tuver ni daar</i>	pigeon peas
<i>uradh ni daar</i>	black gram
<i>vaal</i>	dry split beans

# RECIPE ABBREVIATIONS

Imperial	
tsp	teaspoon
tbsp	tablespoon
C	cup
oz	ounce
lb	pound
inch	inch
F	Fahrenheit

Metric	
g	gram
kg	kilogram
ml	milliliter
L	liter
mm	millimeter
cm	centimeter
C	centigrade

## OUR-LEGGED AND FEATHERED FRIENDS

*In ancient times, Zarathushtis were pastoralists, and dogs played an important role in keeping herds and households protected. The “herd dog” and the “house dog” are mentioned in the scriptures as worthy of gratitude, and in the ecclesiastical code, the Vendidad (13.28) it is said that a dog should be fed milk, fat, and meat, which was the staple diet of humans in ancient times. The primary principle behind this edict is to acknowledge the interdependence of Ahura Mazda’s creations, and to recognize human beings’ ecological responsibilities.*

*In the Sassanian times, the tradition of “chom-e-swaa” evolved where it was obligatory, as a gesture of thanksgiving, to save a bit of the meal and feed it to stray dogs. Many Zarathushtis living in urban areas where stray dogs are uncommon choose to feed birds to maintain the tradition.*

*Zarathushtis also feed cows or, in urban situations, give money to buy feed for the cows, as a gesture of thanksgiving on special occasions. This is in honor of Geush Urvan, the mythological bovine that had both milk and semen, and was, therefore, the progenitor of all beneficent animal life.*

*Farishta Murzban Dinshaw*

# IN GRATITUDE

Before and after any meal the thanksgiving prayer used to be recited by the head of the family at the dining table in Zarathushti households of old. The following is the traditional prayer of grace with its translation.

BA NAAMEE YAZADE BAKHSHAAYANDEHE  
BAKHSAYASHGARE MEHRBAN  
ITHA AT YAZAMAIDE AHUREM MAZDAM  
YE GAMCHA ASHEMCHA DAT  
APASCHA DAT URVAOSCHA VANGHEUSH  
RAOCHAOSCHA DAT BOOMEMCHA VISPACHA VOHU

In the name of the Lord Benevolent, Gracious, and Kind  
Here we worship Ahura Mazda  
The Giver of The Righteous Earth  
The Giver of The Good Waters And Plants  
Giver of Luster to The Entire Earth

It is concluded with the Ashem Vohu prayer (recited three times):

ASHEM VOHU VASHISTEM ASTI,  
USHTAA ASTI,  
USHTAA AHMAAI  
HYAT ASHAAI VAHISHTAAI ASHEM

Righteousness is best,  
it is happiness;  
happiness is to the person  
who is righteous for the sake of being righteous.

*Rusi Sorabji*

# EAT



A cuisine of any group is a complex cultural product shaped by climate, geography, the pursuit of pleasure, and the desire for health. In all cultures food is imbued with meaning - it can nourish, entertain and give pleasure. It can also be a source of political conflict and social debate.

Traditionally, cooking was the domain of women. Men were the 'breadwinners' while the women stayed at home and looked after the home, passing on their skills and tips to their daughters and daughters-in-law. Nowadays, men have embraced the art of cooking, and some of the world's best known chefs are men.

The issue of healthy eating has long been an important concern to individuals and cultures. Vegetarianism is encouraged by some societies to increase longevity and health. In others, various forms of fasting are part of their lifestyle and spiritual beliefs. The Zarathushti community is better known for the sensual appreciation of food. Their golden rule for health is the one that the Sassanian sages advocated, *patmaan* or the path of moderation.

This section traces the various social and geopolitical influences on Zarathushti cuisine over a span of three thousand years.

*The fish is an auspicious symbol of protection, good luck and prosperity in Zarathushti tradition. Legend has it that when the mighty King Jamshed fled the avenging forces of the evil King Zohak, a mythical guardian fish, Kar Mahig, swallowed his crown and kept it safe till the rightful ruler of Iran, Faridun, was returned to the throne. In a bas relief of Cyrus the Great at Pasargade, his crown is decorated with a symbol of a fish.*

*The fish motif is used as an auspicious symbol in chalk decorations that adorn doorsteps of Parsi homes; a fish made of silver is placed in the ses, the ceremonial tray; a sweet dessert called mawa ni boi is molded in the shape of a fish and distributed at weddings. In Yazd, Iran, brides have a symbol of a fish embroidered on their bridal trousers as a mark of prosperity and good fortune in their future life.*

**ZARATHUSHTIS**

Zarathushtis are the followers of a visionary messenger named Zarathushtra Spitama who lived in what is now Iran about 2,000 years before Christ.

Zarathushtra was his given name and Spitama was the family name. Very little is known about his life as he lived before the introduction of written records. At the age of twenty years, he went to Mount Ushidaren to meditate. After ten years of self-study, he received the revelation that there is only one universal source of wisdom whom he named Ahura Mazda (Lord Wise), and that the aim of human life is to strive to be perfect like Him. It took Asho Zarathushtra many years of struggle before the superstitious people accepted his message, which happened largely through the patronage of Kai Vishtasp, the ruler at that time.

Zarathushtis comprise two main groups of people (1) Parsi-Zarathushtis, descendants of Zarathushtis who sought refuge in the Indian sub-continent after the Arabs invaded Iran in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, and (2) Persian-Zarathushtis, who remained in Iran after the conquest.

There are 110,000 or so Zarathushtis scattered throughout the world, the largest numbers remaining in Iran and India. There are approximately 21,000 Zarathushtis living in North America. Famous North American Zarathushtis include symphony conductor, Zubin Mehta, and award-winning authors, Bapsi Sidhwa and Rohinton Mistry.

F.M.D.

**TIMELINE**

<b>Pishdadian Dynasty</b>	Prehistoric
<b>Kianian Dynasty</b>	Birth of Zarathushtra
<b>Achaemenian Empire</b>	559 - 330 BCE Macedonian conquest under Alexander
<b>Seleucids</b>	305 – 225 BCE
<b>Parthian Empire</b>	247 BC – 224 CE Christ born during the reign of Phraetes IV
<b>Sassanian Empire</b>	224 – 651 CE Last Zarathushti king - Yazdgard III (632-651)
<b>Arab conquest of the Sassanian Empire</b>	651 CE
<b>Exodus to India</b>	7 century CE Exact year unknown
<b>British rule in India</b>	1858–1947 CE
<b>Exodus from the homelands</b>	Circa 1970s CE



# MEAT OR VEGETABLES?

Anthropology informs us that humans first started as hunter gatherers and then advanced to settled agrarian communities. For the early Aryans, this transformation seemed to have happened sooner than later. In the archaeological finds along the northern slopes of the Kopet Dag mountains that form the modern border between Iran and Turkmenistan (Parthia or Parthava), we find evidence of what may be some of the oldest settled agrarian communities known to humankind. Early Aryans also developed a system of water irrigation using the *karez* underground water supply system.

Legend informs us that during the Pishdadian era and the age of King Hushang, the concept of agriculture and domestication of animals were further developed. Domestication of animals had first started during the preceding age; the Age of Gaya Maretan (Gayomard, Kaiumars) or the Aryan Stone Age.

According to anthropologists, humans were generally hunter gatherers during the Stone Age. But were the Aryans of prehistory, hunters and meat eaters or were they vegetarian? Dr Pallan Ichaporia states that the only direct reference in a Zarathushti text to vegetarianism is a sentence in Book 6 of *Dinkard*, the 9<sup>th</sup> century CE Middle Persian text written by High Priest Atrupat-e Emetan. Based on Ichaporia's translation: 'They hold this also: O you people (*mardoman*), be plant eaters (*urwar khwarishn* - vegetarian) so that you may live long. Keep away from the body of animals (*tan-i goshpand* - body of sheep; Ichaporia 'meat of cattle'), and deeply reckon that Ohrmazd, the Lord has created plants in great number for helping living creatures (Ichaporia 'cattle and men').'

*Frashogard* (journal of the Ilm-e Khshnoom movement) states that at *frashogard* (Avestan *frasho-kereti* - making anew or the final renovation), death of any kind will be no more. The connotation here is that humankind will then become vegetarian. Today, other than individuals or a sub-group such as the *Parsi Vegetarian & Temperance Society*, we have no consistent tradition of community-wide Zarathushti vegetarianism.



K.E. Eduljee

## TEMPTING ZOHAK

*There is a tale of how meat was introduced in the Persian diet. Zohak was a handsome and clever Arab prince, but his character was weak, and one day he was swayed by the words of the devil, Iblis, and murdered his father to become king. With Iblis's help he defeated Jamsheed Pishdadian and took over his kingdom.*

*Iblis then took on the guise of a cook and entered the King's palace, serving him sumptuous dishes made with meats of birds and animals, the likes of which the King and his court and never eaten before. Zohak was so pleased that he promised the cook a gift of his choosing. The evil Iblis asked to kiss the King's shoulders. After being granted the honor Iblis vanished, but snakes sprang up from each of Zohak's shoulders where his lips had rested. Zohak's horrified courtiers tried to hack them off, but each time they were killed, they sprang back, angrier and more vicious, biting the King's cheeks and hissing at all those who came near.*

*Once more Iblis returned, this time disguised as a physician. He told Zohak that the snakes could not be removed, but that they would sleep sated if fed a diet of two young children's brains every day. As children were snatched from the arms of their weeping mothers to feed the snakes' hunger, darkness and desolation fell on the land. It was only when Kaveh, a blacksmith, rose up in protest at the kidnapping of his seventeenth child that a revolution took place and Zohak was finally imprisoned within Mount Demavand. Legend says that Zohak still lives in the mountain, licking at his chains to wear out the links. At daybreak, just as the chain is about to wear thin, the rooster crows and the chains become strong again. This is the reason Zarathushtis abstain from killing roosters.*

*In one version of the story, a cook in the King's kitchen was so haunted by the killing of innocent children that he mixed sheep brain with one child's brain and helped the other to escape into the mountains. According to the story, the Kurds are descendants of those children.*

F.M.D.

## THE KING'S TABLE

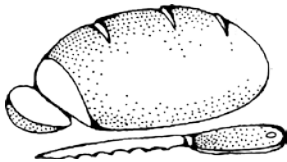
*In Deipnosophistae (dinner of the sophisticates), Athenaeus remarks that cleanliness at the king's table was paramount. 'All who attend upon the Persian kings when they dine first bathe themselves, spend nearly half the day on preparations for the dinner and then serve in white clothes.'*

*From Aelian's Varia Historia (2.17) the vision of how the Persians ate is that of a knife held in the right hand and a piece of bread held in the left hand. The food (presumably held in place by a piece of bread) was cut with the knife and then placed on the piece of bread. The combination of bread and morsel was then placed in the mouth.*

*The British Museum states that 'Dining in Achaemenid Persia must have been a spectacular affair. Gold and silver vessels seem to have been plentiful... The craftsmen who made them were highly skilled and came from as far away as Egypt and India'.*

*'Ancient Persian cuisine was highly developed, with specialty cooks, armies of servants, and elaborate dining etiquette. Seating plans were complicated and banquets were typically composed of several different courses. Fruit, nuts and saffron are among the classic Iranian ingredients which originated in the Achaemenid period and are still used today.'*

K.E.E.



# ACHAEMENIANS

c. 550-330 BCE

The Achaemenian Empire sometimes known as First Persian Empire, was founded in the 6th century BCE by Cyrus the Great. They called themselves the Parsa after their original Aryan tribal name Parsua, thus leading them to be called the Persians. The empire stretched from the Indus Valley in the east all the way till Egypt, and was ruled by a dynasty of monarchs who unified its disparate tribes and nationalities.

According to Greek authors, the early simplicity of Persian fare gave way to exotic cuisine in the Achaemenian era. The level of sophistication of Persian cuisine was at its highest at the king's table during a feast. Several Hellenic writers attest to the amazement at the food served at the Persian king's table. 'For just as all other arts are developed to superior excellence in large cities, in that same way the food at the king's palace is also elaborately prepared with superior excellence.' (Cyropaedia 8.2.5.) Xenophon wrote, 'Again, whatever sorts of bread and pastry for the table had been discovered before, none of all those have fallen into disuse, but they keep on always inventing something new besides; and it is the same way with meats; for in both branches of cookery they actually have artists to invent new dishes.' (Cyropaedia 8.8.16.) Athenaeus of Naucratis in Letter of Parmenion (8.8.16) mentions cooks who specialized in dairy dishes and that different dishes were brought to the table in courses.

An account by Macedonian writer Polyaeus (2nd century CE) lists the ingredients for the king's dinner as 'sweet grape jelly, candied turnips and radishes prepared with salt, candied capers with salt, from which delicious stuffing are made, *terebinth* (pistachio nut) oil, Ethiopian cumin and Median saffron' (Strategemata 4.3.32). In this and other references mentioning the use of dates, pomegranates, figs, apples, raisins, and almonds, as well as the planting and use of quince and pear. In Persepolis' inscriptions, we see that fruit and nuts are classic ingredients in Persian cuisine and the list of ingredients is long and varied.

K.E.Eduljee



# Candied Turnips

2 lb	small to medium (2-inch/5 cm) turnips or parsnips	900 g
1 ½ C	water, plus more 3 tablespoons/45 ml	350 ml
2 tbsp	butter smen or brown butter	30 ml
1 tbsp	brown sugar	15 g
3 tbsp	honey to drizzle	45 g
½ tsp	salt	2 g
to sprinkle	cinnamon powder	to sprinkle
for garnish	chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley	for garnish

Smen is butter that has been brought to a boiling point, then skimmed and strained.

1. Peel turnips or parsnips, then halve horizontally and quarter the halves.
2. Arrange turnips or parsnips in one layer in a 12-inch/30 cm heavy skillet and add enough water (about 1 ½ cups or 350 ml) to reach halfway up the vegetables.
3. Add half the smen or browned butter, and boil over moderately high heat, covered, stirring occasionally, for about 10 minutes. Check that vegetables are almost cooked and uncover, add the rest of the smen or brown butter and continue to cook till all of the water is evaporated, about another 8 minutes.
4. Sauté turnips over moderately high heat, stirring, until golden brown, about 5 minutes more.
5. Drizzle the honey all over, sprinkle with chopped fresh parsley, a dash of cinnamon powder, and serve warm.

Serves 4

*Niloufer Adil Mavalvala, Canada*

### CHAI KHANAS ON THE SILK ROUTE

*The culinary traditions of the Irani cafés are embedded in the tradition of the old Parthian chai khanas (tea houses) - an adjunct of the Aryan and Zarathushti trading tradition. The chai khanas could be found all along the Aryan trade routes, otherwise called the Silk Roads, and were used by travelers and locals alike. They even shared the same Persian name 'chai khana', regardless of the language spoken in that country.*

*The Silk Roads' chai khanas served the local and travelling public. That very feature required them to be welcoming to people from different cultures. But it also meant that their food had to have broad appeal. The food needed to be simple, nutritious and comforting. Individuals came to the chai khana to sip a cup of tea and meet friends, to eat a simple meal, or even conduct some business.*

K.E.E.



## PARTHIANS

247 - 224 CE

The second of the three major Persian empires, the Parthian dynasty, founded by Arshak I, considered themselves as heirs to the Achaemenian empire. The Parthian kings styled themselves as the "King of Kings", and at its peak, the Parthian Empire stretched from what is now south-eastern Turkey to eastern Iran.

Strategically located on the Silk Road trade route between the Roman Empire and Han Empire of China, Parthia became a centre of trade and commerce. The Parthians adopted the cuisine of their culturally heterogeneous empire, which spread across the empire, carried by traders and soldiers. Roman legions were familiar with 'Parthian bread' and Pliny the elder claimed that it would keep for centuries. The bread was hard and crisp similar to a cracker. It was probably twice baked since double baking improves keeping qualities [similar to Italian biscotti].

One of the ancient spices that travelled across the Parthian empire was asafoetida. Ammini Ramachandran [www.peppertrail.com] writes, "The ancient Sanskrit text "Kashyapa Samhita", (circa 200 BCE) mentions about the import of asafoetida from Afghanistan. Asafoetida's use as a tenderizer and preservative for meat was known centuries ago. Iranian cuisine uses it for flavoring meatballs and in Afghanistan it is used in the preparation of dried meat."

*Farishta Murzban Dinshaw*

# Eshkeneh

## onion soup

2	large dense yellow onions, thinly sliced	2
2 cloves	garlic, thinly sliced	2 cloves
½ tsp	turmeric	2 g
1 C	fresh fenugreek leaves, chopped (substitute ½ tsp lightly crushed fenugreek seeds)	150 g
to taste	salt and pepper	to taste
2-3	eggs	2-3
	water	
	oil for sautéing	
	croutons optional for thickening soup	

## SOLDIERS' SOUP

*During campaigns, soldiers of the first Parthian king, Arshak I, reportedly supped on an onion soup, a predecessor of today's eshkeneh soup made with sautéed onions, fresh fenugreek and eggs (as in an egg swirl soup).*

*K.E.E.*

1. In a large pot add the sliced onions to hot oil and sauté over medium heat until golden brown. Add turmeric, mix and cook for a minute or two.
2. Add the chopped fenugreek and sauté for five minutes, mixing all the ingredients.
3. Add four cups of water, salt and pepper to taste. Bring to a boil, then reduce to medium-low heat and cook for 40-50 minutes.
4. If you want thick soup, add croutons (or even pieces of bread) to soak up the soup. Skip this step if you prefer a thinner consistency.
5. Whisk the eggs in a small bowl.
6. Just before serving add to the egg mixture into the soup to let them look like strings. If necessary add more water.

Serves 4

*Khorshed Irani, Canada*

# Parthian Lamb

## MODERN SUBSTITUTIONS

- Many of the original ingredients of the original recipe may not be widely available. Some substitutions are:
- Pitted prunes instead of Damsons (oval, bluish-black, juicy plum from a Eurasian plum tree cultivated since ancient times).
  - Garum, a fish sauce, replaced with Vietnamese nuoc mam in modern recreations of ancient recipes. Garum was a common flavoring sauce, and necessary to several Parthian recipes. The cheapest form of garum was liquamen, made using fish entrails instead of whole fish or fish blood.
  - Instead of rue or savory, ground coriander along with salt and pepper may be used.
  - Laser refers to a now-extinct plant called silphium. An alternative is the spice asafoetida (heeng) used in Indian cuisine. This recipe uses garlic instead.

[www.parthia.com](http://www.parthia.com)  
[www.cookbookarchaeology.com](http://www.cookbookarchaeology.com)

10 lbs	lamb or kid (baby goat) with bone	5 kg
1 ½ lb	pitted prunes - plumped in warm water or wine	750 g
4	large onions, chopped	4
2 tsp	Vietnamese nuoc mam (fish sauce)	10 ml
4 tbsp	olive oil	60 ml
2 tbsp	rue and savory (chopped)	20 g
3 cloves	garlic (2 chopped, 1 pureed)	3 cloves
1 glass	white wine	240 ml
	pepper to taste	

1. Score the lamb and chop through the bones (but not all the way through the meat) approximately every 2 inches (this makes it easier to portion up after cooking).
2. Rub lamb with olive oil, chopped garlic and salt and pepper.
3. Roast lamb slowly at 335°F/170°C for approximately one and a half to two hours, basting with the white wine after half an hour.
4. Meanwhile, take the chopped onions and sauté in a little olive oil. Cook over low heat for 10 minutes (do not allow to burn) add the salt, pepper and herbs.
5. Then add the prunes (they should be soft) and the pureed garlic. Cook until the fruit has nearly disintegrated into a puree. Add the garum and stir. Take off the heat.
6. Remove the cooked lamb from the oven. It should be crisp outside and well-cooked, but not dry or burnt (neither ancient Romans nor their modern descendants eat 'pink' lamb).
7. Sprinkle the lamb carefully with a little white wine vinegar to degrease.
8. Chop the lamb through the cuts you made before cooking, a couple of pieces should make about a portion.
9. Place in an oven-to-table dish (terracotta's good) and pour over the sauce. Return to the oven for about 10 minutes.
10. Remove and serve with a hearty sprinkling of ground black pepper.

Serves 20

*Adapted from [www.parthia.com](http://www.parthia.com)*

# SASSANIAN

224 to 652 CE

The Parthian Empire was succeeded by the Sassanian Empire. Iran, the modern name of Persia dates back to Sassanian times when they called their empire, Iranshahr. The Sassanian rulers were the last of the three great Persian Empires, and their cultural influence extended beyond the empire's borders, outreaching Western Europe, Africa, China and India.

A Sassanian era (224–652 AD) book translated by Jamshedji Maneckji Unvala, *King Husrav and His Boy* (P Geuthner, Paris, 1921) contains references to Sassanian cuisine. In the text, Khosrow II (580/591-628 CE) interviews a young man of noble birth named Vashpur for a position as his page. King Khosrow poses 13 questions to Vashpur to test his nobility. In one of his questions, Khosrow asks Vashpur which dish was the finest and most savory. Vashpur describes a preparation made from the organ meats of a 2-month-old lamb fed on its mother's milk and also cow's milk, rubbed with olive juice, marinated with herbs, cooked in a beef broth and drizzled with whey (*kashk*).

The fifth question is “Which pastry are the finest and the best?” Vashpur answers: “In summer: the almond-pastry, and the walnut-pastry, and the walnut-bun, and the bun made with fat, and the finger-pastry..., that they fry in walnut-butter. But with the fruit-jelly that is squeezed out and filtered from the juice of the apple and the quince, no pastry can stand the contest!” Today in Iran, a marmalade made from quince juice is called *mojassameh-ye beh*. In jams and preserves the peel of balang, a large citrus fruit, is still popular in Fars and Gilan provinces. Cucumber and walnut jams and pickles are popular in Qazvin.

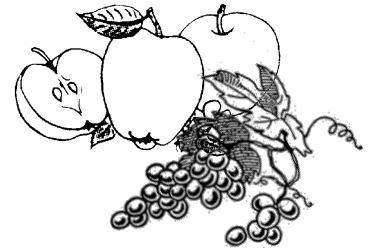
K.E. Eduljee

## FRUIT JELLY

*Jelly is a clear fruit spread made from sweetened fruit or vegetable juice and set using pectin.*

*Pectin is a natural substance found in fruit that enables fruit juice to set into jelly. Nowadays, cooks use commercially bought pectin to set jellies, but in Sassanian times fruits containing sufficient natural pectin within them were used to make jelly.*

*Grapes, when ripe, contain less pectin so some unripe grapes were added along with the ripe grapes, usually in a one-fourth to three-fourth ratio.*



**SASSANIAN CASSEROLE**

Today, in Yazd, Kerman, and Azerbaijan, a preparation called boz ghormeh is served that is similar to what was served in Sassanian times.

**Boz Ghormeh****lamb casserole**

3 pounds	shoulder of lamb, cut into stewing pieces	1.3 kg
4 tbsp	butter	60 g
1 C	beef broth	250 ml
¼ C	water	60 ml
1 tsp	saffron	5 g
¼ tsp	salt	1 g
¼ tsp	pepper	1 g
3	medium onions, chopped or sliced	3
1 C	whey (or yoghurt)	240 ml
3 cloves	garlic, grated	3 cloves
½ C	coarsely ground walnuts	60 g

1. In 2 tbsp/30 g of butter sear the lamb pieces in the onions till brown on all sides
2. Add the beef broth, water, saffron, salt, and pepper.
3. Cover and simmer for 1½ -2 hours till meat is tender.
4. Sauté the onions in the butter until golden brown and sprinkle over the meat.
5. Mix some of the gravy with the liquid whey (or yogurt) in a cup.
6. Make sure it is mixed properly, then pour the mixture over the meat; cover and simmer for 15 minutes.
7. Add sautéed grated garlic and ground walnuts on top before serving.

Serves 6-8

*Azardokht Kermani, USA*

# WINE

*I could drink much wine and yet bear it well.*

Darius the Great, King of Persia (6th BCE), Athenaeus 10.45

The history of wine making and wine drinking is an old one in Persia, and today the Dariush vineyard in the Napa Valley, which has become renowned in the art of wine making, is attempting to revive this tradition in the United States. Wine connoisseurs today may be familiar with the word Shiraz, the name of a town in southwest Persia famed for its grapes. Whether or not the Shiraz grape was the source of the Medieval Syrah, brought to France from Persia in the 13th century CE by the knight, Gaspard de Sterimberg is not central to the issue.<sup>1</sup> What is important is that the mere fact that Shiraz is alleged as the source of the Rhone Valley grapes in Avignon, makes it clear that the prestige of the town and its grapes was fabled in antiquity and the middle ages. It was the Shiraz grape, again, which was brought to Australia in the 19th century CE, and which has become well known in the United States.

But the history of wine making in Persia is much older. How old, one may ask? Archaeological investigations have shown that it was in Persia that the earliest wine was made in world history.<sup>2</sup> At Godin Tepe in Western Persia the earliest evidence for wine making and wine points to the 4th millennium BCE.<sup>3</sup> The jars found there have yielded evidence of wine residue and it is thought that they were used for storing wine as its funnel for the wine makers.<sup>4</sup> The location of Godin Tepe along the east-west trade route also plays along with the story of Shiraz grape having been taken to the West, and the evidence here suggests that wine making may very well have had its diffusion from this location.

It is with the first Persian dynasty, the Achaemenid Empire (550-330 BCE), that we find the culture of wine drinking in the form of long drinking vessels known as *rhython*. We hear that the Persian court was most elaborate place of feasting that the Greeks knew. The existence of *rhytons* and the mention of wine filters (Greek *oino th toi*) in the antique literature from Persia, all suggest the importance of the drink.<sup>5</sup> Herodotus tells us that the Persians were very fond of wine (Old Persoan *batu*) and that they made important decisions in the following manner. First they became drunk, since they believed that only when you are drunk do you tell the truth. Then, the next day when they were sober they reconsidered the matter.<sup>6</sup> Of course Herodotus has it wrong. The reason the Persians made decisions over wine was because it was believed that wine made one's mind sharp and alert. Still, they waited

## LIQUID GOLD

*Darius Karani, with his wife Homai and two daughters, Ryna and Fiona, arrived in New Zealand in 2008.*

*New Zealand with its rich soil, crisp climate and clean, green image was fast becoming famous the world over as a wine growing paradise. Connoisseurs of wine were wowed by the premium wines produced in New Zealand. Small boutique vineyards were making award winning products and taking the world by storm. The wine industry in New Zealand was going from strength to strength and for Darius, venturing into a new business with great growth potential seemed the perfect career move.*

*He started Exotica Enterprise Ltd to help create and market a unique blend of natural liqueurs. Their first product is the world's first honey liqueur - Manuka Gold. This natural and health enriching product is made from the honey of blue borage flowers which grow wild in New Zealand's South Island high country. It is infused with grape brandy and distilled extracts of highly beneficial Manuka honey. Manuka honey is synonymous with New Zealand, and the honey's amazing healing properties have always been known to the indigenous people of this land. Darius could well have created a product that is 'worth its weight in gold'. Manuka Gold has captured the huge Chinese market and the response from Europe is extremely encouraging.*

*A Sauvignon Blanc liqueur, Malbrouk, is another winner in their expanding list of offerings and will soon also include a Crayfish liqueur - Ecrevesse - a tribute to New Zealand's abundant and unique marine life.*

Rashna Tata

to rethink the decision the next day to make sure that it was not done over excessive drinking. Pliny states that wine was also used with drugs for collecting information. The type of drug used with wine was called Achaemenis which had the following effect: 'when it is drunk in wine, criminals confess to everything'.<sup>7</sup>



This interest in wine in Ancient Persia is manifest not only in material culture such as jars, plates and cups but is also documented in the written sources. A Middle Persian text from the Sassanian Empire (224-651 CE) entitled *(King) Husraw and Page* mentions the best foods and drinks that are fit for a king. It is really a royal menu which is rarely noticed by food historians. The text was composed at the court of the King of Kings, Khosraw I in the 6th century CE, one of the greatest of the Sassanian monarchs who ruled Persia. What this text demonstrates is that, just as today when we identify wines with regions such as France, Australia, Italy and California, the Persians also were interested in wines from all regions. By this time the various kinds of wines were distinguished, by their color and filtering technique.

#### NOTES

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5. Ph. Gignoux, "matériaux pour une histoire de vin dans l'iran ancien," *Matériaux pour l'histoire économique du monde iranien*, eds. R. Gyselen and M. Szuppe, *Studia Iranica*, Cahier 21, Paris, 1999, p. 39.
6. Herdotous, I. 135.
7. Pliny, *Natural History*, 23.17
8. Monchi-Zadeh D. *Xusrov i Kavatan ut Retak Monumentum Morgensterni*, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1985, p. 75.

In this passage from the text the king asks what are the best wines and the Page answer: "May you be immortal, these wines are all good and fine, the wine of Transoxania, when they prepare it well, the wine of Herat, the wine of Marw-Rud, the wine of Bust and the must of Hulwan, but no wine can ever compare with the Babylonian wine and the must of Bazrang."<sup>8</sup>

The taste for various wines included *may i sepid* (white wine) and *may i suxr* (red wine). These wines had different qualities such as *may i wirastag* (clarified wine) or *badag i abgen* (crystal wine) and were served in a *dolag* (tong). For information on the daily usage and consumption of wine we look at the papyri or letters between Persian officers in the 7th century CE which mention Papyri 8809: 'With the coming of Islam the consumption of wine and other alcoholic beverages was deemed *haram* (illicit) but Medieval Persian texts, especially the genre known as 'Mirrors for Princes', demonstrate the continuing love of wine. Persians throughout history have been able to compartmentalize their contradictory habits and mores. Thus, while Islam became an important facet of the Persian culture and, in turn benefited from that culture, 'wine' remained a constant motif in Persian literature.'

*Daryoush Tourabie*



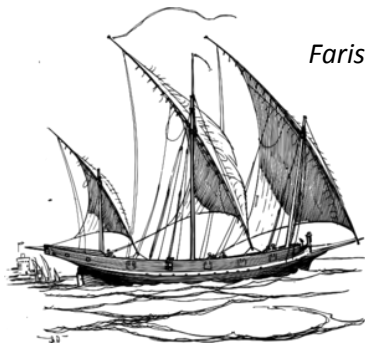
# LAND OF MILK AND SUGAR

According to folklore, when boatloads of refugees fleeing Iran first landed in Gujarat, India, Jadiv Rana, the ruler was reluctant to give them asylum and commanded that a bowl brimming with milk be presented to the group before him to indicate to them that there was no place in the kingdom. The priest who was leading the asylum seekers took a fistful of sugar and poured it into the milk. The priest said to the king that as the sugar dissolves in the milk, so will we, and as sugar makes the milk sweet, so will we make your land sweet. The response so pleased the king that he welcomed the newcomers and let them prosper in peace.

The arrival date is disputed, but is generally thought to be circa 716 CE. The first 300 years after the arrival of Parsis is not recorded in detail, but it is known that by the 10<sup>th</sup> century Parsis had spread north and south of Sanjan to Anklesahvar, Bharuch, Khambat, Navsari, Surat, Vankaner and Variav. By the 11<sup>th</sup> century, Parsis were well established in Gujarat and were frequently mentioned in the travel accounts of Arab, Portuguese, French and English travelers to India who mentioned them as a separate ethnicity that originated from Iran.

Currently, Parsis in India number less than 0.02 percent of the total population, but their contributions to India's economy, politics, educational institutions, science and the arts has been monumental. In 1944, Beverley Nichols wrote in *Verdict on India*, "India without the Parsees would be like an egg without salt. And without a good deal of its yolk too."

The Parsi cuisine that evolved in India is a fusion of Persian and Gujarati influences with use of nuts and fruit in food, for instance carrot and date pickle or *jardalu ma marghi* (chicken with apricots). The Parsis also adapted to the much hotter climate of India, and one of the staples was a cooling accompaniment with meals called *kachumbar* made of sliced onions and tomatoes in vinegar.



Farishta Murzban Dinshaw

## QISSA E SANJAN

*After the fall of the Sassanian empire to Arabs in 651 CE, groups of Zarathushtis left Iran and sought refuge in other places. Many groups lost their identity, but a group of refugees that travelled to India not only survived but flourished in their new home. They came to be known as Parsis, or the people from Pars.*

*Ervad Bahman Kaikobad Hamjiar Sanjana wrote the tale of the exodus of a group of Zarathushtis in 1600 CE. It is known as the "Qissa e Sanjan" or The Story of Sanjan and it tells the tale of the first landing of Zarathushtis on Indian soil and their encounter with the Gujarati ruler, Jadiv Rana. Fearing the strangers who asked for asylum, the ruler first asked their priest to explain their beliefs, and then made four stipulations for granting asylum, which the Zarathushtis readily accepted.*

- *adopting Gujarati, the local language*
- *adopting the local dress*
- *ceasing to carry weapons*
- *performing marriage rituals after sunset*

*The Qissa continues with the establishment of a new settlement named Sanjan after the place they left in Iran and the building of the first fire temple to house the "The Fire of Bahram" [victorious fire] that they had carried with them. The tale ends with a description of the journey of the "Fire of Bahram" from Sanjan to Navsari. [The "Fire of Bahram" was moved from Navsari to its current place in Udvada in 1742 CE. The sacred fire is now referred to as "Iranshah" in homage to the King of Iran who loyalists symbolically carried with them across the seas and whose glory continues to burn brightly to this date.]*

*The Qissa was written in Persian several centuries after the described events, and it is believed to be largely a narrative loosely based on fact rather than an accurate retelling of history. Abraham Anquetil-Duperron translated the story into French in 1771, E.B. Eastwick did the first English translation in 1844.*

F.M.D.

## ROOTS

The Parsi and Persian cuisines have many similarities, the roots being the same. They originated based on local produce. When transporting foods was unheard of each area developed its own fare from what was available locally.

In ancient Persia, animals were hunted for food, berries were used to sweeten food and nuts to thicken stews. The cold weather taught them to dry fruits for months when trees could not bear fruit. Spring brought fresh fruits and vegetables, while the fall months brought nuts that were stored away to provide nutrition and sustenance during the long winter months. It is believed that many of the old world fruits like the fig, date, pomegranate and the crocus flower producing saffron originated in ancient Persia. Parsis use the pomegranate in the offerings of fruits for jashans and other prayers. Almonds, pistachios, raisins and rosewater are used in many sweets and puddings. Persian food is incomplete without the use of a nut, dry fruit or a berry of some sort. The Parsi fondness for 'khatu mithu' (sweet and sour) possibly stems from that same root.

Most farming was done seasonally - how fresh and beautiful it must have been! Eating everything in rotation allowed our bodies to remain in balance. The phrase 'too much of a good thing' proves true in this context; excess is, and has always been, discouraged in our culture.

Niloufer Adil Mavalvala

## Gos noo Bafaat

### meat in sweet and sour coconut gravy

1 lb	boneless meat	500 g
3 tbsp	oil	45 ml
3	large onions finely sliced	3
1	small onion, chopped	1
3 tbsp	fresh grated coconut	30 g
½ tsp	turmeric	2 g
½ tsp	chilli powder	2 g
3 tbsp	paste of garlic, cumin and dried red chillies	30 g
½ cup	tomato ketchup or tomato paste or 2 large tomatoes, diced	120 ml
¼ tsp	each powder of cinnamon, cardamom and clove	1 g
6	potatoes cut in pieces (frying the potatoes is optional)	6
to taste	salt	to taste
2 tbsp	each of vinegar and sugar (depending on how sweet and sour you like it)	30 ml, 25 g

1. In a nonstick deep frying pan heat oil and fry the onions till golden brown.
2. Move the onions to a side and sauté the coconut, then add the garlic, cumin and chillies paste, turmeric, chili powder, the spices and chopped onion.
3. Sauté and add the meat pieces.
4. Nicely brown the meat and then add the tomatoes or paste or ketchup (whichever you choose to use).
5. Sauté and then add the potatoes, adding just enough water to cook over stove or pressure cooker.
6. After the meat is done add two tbsp/30 ml of vinegar and two tbsp/25 g of sugar.
7. Garnish with hard boiled eggs and a freshly chopped coriander if you wish. If you like to add the fried potatoes, you can do that too.

Serves 4

Sheroo Kanga, USA

# *Khatto Mitho Kheemo*

## sweet and sour ground meat

1 lb	lean ground beef or goat meat	500 g
1	large onion, chopped	1
1	large potato, cubed	1
1	large tomato, chopped	1
1 tbsp	garlic/ginger paste	15 g
1	green chili (adjust to taste)	1
1 tsp	cumin	5 g
½ tsp	turmeric powder	2 g
1 tsp	Kashmiri chili powder	5 g
1 tsp	dhana (coriander seeds) powder	5 g
1 tsp	cumin powder	5 g
to taste	salt	to taste
¼ cup (total)	mixture of vinegar and sugar according to taste	60 ml total
	cilantro to garnish	

1. Sauté the ground meat on medium/high heat till the fat melts; keep stirring.
2. Remove all melted fat by tilting the pot and soaking it up with a paper towel.
3. Add the chopped onion and keep stirring till the meat is brown.
4. Add garlic/ginger paste, chopped green chilies and fry.
5. Add chopped tomato and dry spices: cumin, turmeric, chili powder, dhana and cumin powder.
6. Add a little water if the meat is too dry.
7. Add cubed potatoes and cook till done.
8. After the meat is well cooked, add the mixture of vinegar/sugar.
9. Garnish with finely chopped cilantro.

Serves 4

*Armaity Mehta, Canada*

**MEMORIES**

The recipe is another take on the traditional Parsi jerdalu ma marghi. This dish was a favorite at our house and my mother learned her version from her “Khansama” (Muslim cook) when she was growing up in Central India in the 1920s and 1930s. It is chicken marinated in saffron, mild spices and yogurt or sour cream and slow cooked to get maximum flavor of all the spices.

The following recipe has evolved through the years. My mother would make it spicier as my father was fond of more chilies in his food. I make it milder, but add a dash of white wine once in a while.

A.D.

## *Jerdalu ma Marghi*

### chicken with apricots and saffron

8 pieces	chicken drumsticks and thighs	8 pieces
1 pinch	saffron	1 pinch
1 C	sour cream or unsweetened yogurt	250 ml
	juice of one lemon	
	salt & pepper	
2 tbsp	olive oil	30 ml
1	large onion chopped	1
1	large tomato chopped	1
2-3	cinnamon sticks	2-3
3-4	green cardamoms	3-4
3-4	whole peppercorns	3-4
3-4	whole cloves	3-4
2	large bay leaves	2
2 tbsp	fresh ginger-garlic paste	20 ml
1 tbsp	paprika	5 g
½ tsp	turmeric	2 g
1 tbsp	cumin and coriander powder, mixed	15 g
1 C	water	250 ml
¼ cup	cilantro, chopped	40 g
1 C	dried apricots	150 g
2 tbsp	white wine (optional)	30 ml

1. Marinate the chicken with saffron, sour cream, lemon juice, salt and pepper overnight or for at least two hours in the fridge.
2. In a heavy bottom pan or pressure cooker, heat oil and fry onions till golden brown.
3. Add chopped tomatoes and all the spices. Lower the flame and cook the mixture till you get the aroma of all the spices.
4. Add the marinated chicken and stir the mixture continuously for about five minutes making sure that the food does not stick to the bottom.
5. Add cilantro, dried apricots, water and wine.
6. Bring the mixture to a boil; simmer till the chicken is well cooked.
7. Serve with crispy, thin fries and garnish with few cilantro leaves. It can also be served with a light rice palao.

Serves 4 - 8

Aban Deboo, USA

## *Khajoor ni Ghari* dates in phyllo pastry

For the filling:

3 ½ C	chopped, pitted dates	500 g
1 tbsp	rosewater	15 ml
dash	salt	dash
3 tbsp	ghee/smen	45 ml

For the pastry:

2 C	flour	240 g
4 tbsp	semolina	40 g
1 tsp	baking powder	5 g
½ tsp	salt	2 g
2 tbsp	ghee or smen	30 ml

Extra smen and flour to make paste

Extra ghee for frying

1. In a pan, heat the smen and sauté the chopped, pitted dates on medium heat until cooked and soft. Add the rosewater and salt. Keep the filling aside.
2. In a food processor, add the flour, semolina, baking powder, salt and smen and pulse together. Add a dash of rosewater if the dough is too dry. Keep mixing until the dough is pliable in consistency.
3. Remove the dough from the machine to a flat surface and roll it out a large circle. Brush a mix of 3tsp/15 ml smen and 2 tsp/10 g flour all over the large circle.
4. Twist the circle into a long sausage and keep it in the fridge for 30 minutes to relax.
5. Cut the dough into two-inch rounds and form them into a cup, fill the date mixture into it and close the dough on top to cover.
6. Flatten slightly to make perfect discs and shallow fry in ghee till golden brown and cooked through.
7. Cook on both sides, keeping the flame on medium high.

### FILLED PASTRY

*Another ancient food which may perhaps be the oldest sweet known to mankind is baklava. There are a variety of tales surrounding this famous sweet. It is believed to have originated in Assyria and was initially made from dough and not phyllo pastry as is the norm today. The Iranians continue to make it similarly to the original method, filling the dough with dates and nuts. The closest thing that the Parsis have in their repertoire is the khajoor ni ghari and dar ni pori.*

*Another tale claims that a chef who was asked to create dishes to impress his Ottoman kings came up with baklava. When summoned to the court to explain the masterpiece, he explained with much trepidation about the '1000 leaves' he had made by hand, thinly layered and filled with the king's favorite nuts and sweetened with honey. This then spread all over the Middle East and to Greece in the West. Each culture stamped the baklava with the mark of their region using the predominant nuts grown in their local areas, such as aromatically flavored sugar syrup with lemon, rosewater or orange oil and added cardamom and saffron.*

N.A.M.

*Niloufer Adil Mavalvala, Canada*

# Dar ni Pori

## lentils in pastry

2 C	non-oily toover daal	280 g
6 tbsp	sugar	75 g
2 tbsp	chopped blanched almonds	20 g
2 tbsp	chopped blanched pistachios	20 g
2 tbsp	charoli	20 g
2 tsp	cardamom powder	30 g
1 tsp	freshly grated nutmeg	30 g
2 tbsp	rosewater	10 ml
1 tsp	vanilla essence	5ml
1 ½ tbsp	crystallized orange peel or glazed crystallized cherries	15 g
1 packet	puff pastry	1 packet
2 tbsp	ghee/smen	30 ml

Iranian rosewater tends to be the most aromatic but Lebanese rosewater is a good substitute. Do not use essence of rose as it has a bitter after taste. It may be better to substitute with vanilla extract.

1. Preheat oven to 400°F/200°C.
2. Grease and flour 8 or 9 inch/20 or 23 cm spring form pan.
3. In a large pot cook the toover daal with enough water to cover the daal, once soft, remove from fire.
4. Add sugar and ghee/smen.
5. Return to the stove and keep mixing on a low flame until everything has melted and it looks like a thick paste.
6. Remove from and when just warm add almonds, pistachios, charoli, cardamom powder, nutmeg, rosewater, vanilla essence, orange peel or cherries.
7. Once mixed, this is ready to fill the dar ni pori.
8. Roll out a sheet of readymade puff pastry in a circle about 16 inches to 18 inches/40 -46 cm (if it is already rolled out you may need to trim of the edges to round it up).
9. Place the pastry on the disc of the pan, fill up the centre with the daal mixture and close the pastry sealing it with a pinch.
10. Bake in the preheated oven for 25 to 30 minutes.
11. Alternatively, bake it on a cookie sheet or a parchment paper for easy release.

Makes 1

*Niloufer Adil Mavalvala, Canada*

# IRANI NU HOTEL

## Irani cafes

The Irani Zarathushti immigrants to India were a hard-working, industrious and self-reliant lot. They lacked the capital to establish themselves in trade, banking and industry as had the Parsis, but since they were determined to be self-reliant and productive, they established modest cafés and bakeries.

The Irani cafés or restaurants were set up for the main part by Irani Zarathushtis from the Iranian provinces of Yazd and Kerman fleeing the murderous persecution of the Islamic Qajar dynasty (1794-1925 CE) of Iran. The Iranis were aided in their flight to the west coast of India by the Parsis of Bombay. For many Irani Zarathushti refugees the Parsi housing colonies in Bombay's Fort district were their first home in India. From there, they spread out to settle in Pune and Hyderabad. Once settled, they in turn provided assistance to other Irani Zarathushtis seeking refuge in India from religious persecution in their homeland. Irani Zarathushti migration from Iran to India continued into the 1900s.

Irani cafés soon became iconic features in their localities. They became known for good, honest, reasonably priced food and beverages. Their clients were invariably individuals of modest means for whom the cafés provided a place to drop-in for an inexpensive cup of tea, wholesome snacks, or a meal – or to just congregate and socialize, for the cafés also served a social function. By welcoming everyone, the Irani cafés created a micro environment that was classless and casteless – free from societal and religious distinctions and divisions. Some café owners even posted signs such as 'everyone welcome' or 'all castes welcome'. Others displayed religious icons from different religions on their walls.

K.E.Eduljee

## CHAI KHANAS OF YESTERYEAR

*Irani cafés are more chai khanas [teashops] than cafés for the principle hot beverage they serve is tea and not coffee. Irani cafés serve another purpose as well. As an integral part of Zarathushti heritage and history, they present a facet of Zarathushti identity to others. The moment a patron walks through the door of an Irani café, they begin to experience elements of that identity and its values. It is not just the food but the egalitarian environment as well that makes for a complete experience. Most surviving Irani cafés are over 100 years old, time capsules of a bygone era: the bentwood chairs, the marble or glass topped tables, the portraits on the walls*

*Authentic Irani cafés are fast disappearing. According to a report by Naomi Lobo of the Indian Express, while there were 350 Irani cafés in the 1950s, by 2005 the number had dwindled to just 25. For the main part, the cafés are to be found in Mumbai, India.*

*The baked items served at the chai khana bring us to another associated tradition, that of an attached bakery. India's Irani bakeries are also an integral part of Irani Zarathushti heritage.*

K.E.E.



Although Irani cafes now serve Parsi staples like dhansak and curry rice, at least one Irani café has not entirely forgotten its Iranian roots – the Britannia at Ballard Pier in Mumbai's Fort district. Britannia is famed for its berry palao, an adaptation of the Iranian zereshk (barberries or *Berberis vulgaris*) polo (cooked rice). Zereshk is widely grown in Iran's Khorasan province making Iran the largest producer of zereshk in the world. Zereshk has famed health giving properties and may be a candidate for inclusion in the haoma family of health-giving and healing plant foods. The berry itself has a slightly tart flavor. If meat is left out, the zereshk polo remains a vegetarian dish.

## Zereshk Palao

### berry rice

2 lbs	chicken, skinned	900 gm
2	medium onions, chopped	2
2 C	basmati rice, soaked for two hours	260 g
1 C	zereshk (barberries), cleaned and pitted	150 g
1 ½ tsp	butter	7 g
½ tsp	saffron (powdered with a pinch of salt)	2 g
2 tsp	sugar	10 g
¼ tsp	turmeric powder	1 g
¼ tsp	ground black pepper	1 g
to taste	salt	to taste
	oil for cooking	

K.E.E.

1. Fry onions till golden. Add turmeric, ground pepper and chicken pieces and sauté together for about five minutes.
2. Add 2 cups/500 ml of water with salt to taste, bring to a boil, then cover and simmer till about ½ cup/120 ml of gravy remains. Add a pinch of saffron to the mixture and stir thoroughly.
3. In another pot, cook rice till almost done, strain and run lukewarm water over it to avoid it from overcooking (as it will need to be steamed with the chicken).
4. In a separate bowl, mix ¼ tsp/1 g of saffron and 3 tbsp/45 ml of warm water with quarter of the rice and keep aside.
5. Soak the barberries in water for about 15 minutes, strain and rinse.
6. Fry barberries with ½ tsp/2g of butter and sugar till round and plump. Add 2 pinches of saffron and keep aside.
7. In a large pot, put 1 tsp/5 g of butter and ¼ cup/60 ml of water on medium heat till the butter melts. Spread the following in layers: half the white rice; the cooked chicken pieces and some gravy; about one-third of the fried barberries; a layer of the remaining white rice; the yellow saffron rice; finally top off with the remaining barberries.
8. With a spatula, move the rice away from the sides towards the centre, making a little mound. Flatten the top slightly and add the remaining butter.
9. Wrap the lid of the pot in a towel and place it over the pot. Turn the temperature down to a low setting and allow the rice to cook for about 30 minutes. Mix through and serve on a large platter.

Serves 4

Mickie R. Katgara, Canada



# PROJECT BASKET CASE

## a search for the perfect *topli nu paneer*

This is a love story, and like many love stories it has elements of greed, passion, persistence, frustration, disappointment and joy. It's about my undying, greedy love for *topli nu paneer*, the stuff of yearning, where in my fantasies, it is morning in Bombay [Mumbai] and I'm waiting impatiently for the *paneerwala's* weekly ring. He's a gentle-mannered old Muslim man dressed in a checked *lungi* and *kurta* [loin cloth and loose muslin shirt], his beard stained with henna. He reaches into the dented aluminum vessel he carries on his head, gently pulls out a dozen or so plump, quivering *paneers* with the mark of the basket on them and places them into a waiting bowl, along with some of the whey. My mother will see that this delicious whey is quickly replaced with boiled water, but before that, I sit down to a breakfast that has no equal: an immoderate number of these exquisite poems in milk, along with a little *naram* or *gotli pao* [soft or crusty bread] and WIT's [Women's India Trust] fabulous gooseberry jam.

Till today, *topli nu paneer* has had to remain a fantasy, realized only on trips to Bombay, where my mother bought more *paneer* than she ever wanted just to keep the *paneerwala* coming back regularly. Somewhere along the line, the old man retired to his home town. For a while, until it closed forever, the irreplaceable Swabal Stores in Cusrow Baug had a delivery of *paneer* from Surat. There are now a few public-spirited Parsi women who make *topli nu paneer* to order, but they are few and far between.

About 25 years ago, hearing my wails about longing for *topli nu paneer*, my father consulted his sister, Roda, who told him that to begin with he could need special baskets made in the lane that led off Princess Street to Chandanwadi in Mumbai. (I brought four dozen baskets back with me to San Francisco). She then dictated the principles: unlike the more common *paneer* made from milk curdled with acid, *topli nu paneer* is made from milk coagulated with animal rennet, specifically dried chicken gizzard linings. The custard-like curd drips through individual baskets set on top of glasses. Each *paneer* is then inverted and plopped back into the baskets so both sides get markings. Then they are slipped out of the baskets into the collected whey, where they float.

After several unsuccessful attempts with commercially available rennet in liquid and tablet form, I have this notion that animal rennet, in the form of dried gizzard linings, might possibly account for the particular subtle tang of the original *paneer* sold by *paneerwalas* who used to go

### PRESERVING PANEER

*Topli nu paneer* [basket cheese] are small soft cheese rounds which are made in wicker baskets and bear the distinctive markings of the basket weave. *Topli* is the Gujarati word for basket, hence the name. These *paneers* are kept in earthenware pots in their whey hence they are thought to 'float', and are distinctive from the creamy 'sitting' version of the popular Parsi *paneer*. Surat is reputed to have the finest *topli nu paneer*. It is sold door-to-door.

The Bakhtiari tribesmen have a cheese, *khiki*, which is set with goats' stomach linings (Food and Agriculture Organization, 1990), and a type of *paneer* corresponding to our 'sitting' *paneer* is important in the diet of modern Iran, Muslim or Zarthushti. It doesn't seem out of the question, therefore, to speculate that our fleeing forebears may have brought the technique for both kinds of *paneer* with them to India.

We tend to see cultural preservation in larger terms, but so many every day, ephemeral expressions slip away, taken for granted until they are no longer there. *Topli nu paneer* is a rare and precious part of the worlds' repertory of cheeses and we need to encourage and document its makers and sellers. There are generations of artistry in every stage, whether it's judging the curd, or turning it out of the baskets or reaching into the vessel with knowing, gentle hands to present a perfectly made *paneer* and nothing brings that home as much as attempting to replicate the process.

I am grateful to Dhun Bana, Roshan Bavadam, Nitin Bhatt, Arnavaz Chubb, Feroze Dalal, David King, Leni Sorensen, and Amaryll Schwertner for their participation in Project Paneer, past and present.

N.I.K

door to door when I was a child. Bhicoo Maneckshaw in “Parsi Food and Customs” (1996) has a recipe for *topli nu paneer* using gizzard linings soaked in vinegar, but nothing is said about the quantity or time entailed, and whether it’s the vinegar or the gizzard itself that’s used. An internet search yielded various scientific discussions on the use of gizzards and animal stomachs as coagulants for milk. We were on the right track with vinegar, so my husband, David, suggested pulverizing the gizzards and macerating them in a jar of mild Japanese rice wine vinegar.

Meanwhile, I corresponded with a scholar in Virginia who used chicken gizzard linings to recreate a recipe from Thomas Jefferson’s cook for a sweet cream made with green tea. After many experiments, internet searches, and consultations, I did what I should have done all along: consult “Vividh Vani” (1915), a classic compendium of Parsi recipes, which had meticulously detailed instructions. My Gujarati is regrettably deficient, so I tore off to Nitin Bhatt of the New India Market [San Francisco] to get an expert’s reading of every nuance. I learned that the first choice as a coagulant are *chusda*, stomachs of young goats, and that chicken gizzards (*teti*) are the alternative, though both get macerated in vinegar.

I set four baskets to soak, prepared four squares of cheese cloth liners, and heated a cup each of raw (stemming from comments by Sorensen and Chubb) and pasteurized cow’s milk, inoculating both with 1 1/2 teaspoons of the gizzard tincture. In four hours, the milk set, the raw milk producing a denser, creamier mass. David and I lined the baskets, set them on glasses and divided the milk into them. In about two hours, we turned each *paneer*, finding that the raw milk had once more behaved better in the dripping stage, and each little proto-*paneer* was easier to invert. In another two hours, we were able to pour off the whey and slip four skinny *paneers* into it. The raw milk won on all fronts, looks, taste and texture, but even with the gizzard mixture, the taste seemed bland until I added a bit of salt to the collected whey. By 10 p.m., we shared our first *paneer*. It may not have passed the nostalgic taste of the *paneers* I had in my childhood, but the summit is within sight and within reach, and there’s a great sense of satisfaction in understanding what must be an ancient process.

*Niloufer Ichaporla King*

# COLONIAL INFLUENCE

In the seventeenth century, European trading powers - the Portuguese, the Dutch, and the British - arrived in India. In 1662, when the English took over Bombay and the East India Company became a powerful game changer in the region, Parsis moved to Bombay to participate in the economic boom. During the British rule of India (c. 1800 – 1947 CE), the Parsis by and large aligned themselves with the British. They adopted English as a primary language of communication, the British style of dress, their work ethic, their music and literature, even their cuisine. Parsis adopted 'Raj' traditions like 'high tea' as their own, as well as dishes such as porridge, Scotch eggs, and

In return for their loyalty, Britain awarded baronetcies to three Parsis, Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy, Sir Dinshaw Maneck Petit, and Sir Cowasji Jehangir, and knighthoods to many others.

The Portuguese settlers in India (1505 – 1961 CE) were also instrumental in adding to the local cuisine, the most significant addition being the vindaloo, from the Portuguese *vindalho* meaning with wine vinegar and garlic. However, because of the geographic distance between Goa, the principal seat of the Portuguese, and Mumbai, where majority of the Parsis resided, their influence was not as deeply felt on Parsi cuisine as that of the British.

The Dutch (1605–1825 CE) came to India in search of spices. Their ships anchored in Surat, Gujarat, a bustling port city in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and the Dutch factors or merchants set up a self-contained residential complex in the district of Nanpura. Five Parsi cooks who worked for the Dutch learned to bake soft bread by fermenting the dough with toddy (palm wine). This was the beginning of the legacy of the Parsi bakeries in Surat. The *nankhatai*, one of Surat's famous confections created by Parsi bakers, was inspired by the eggless Scottish shortbread favored by sailors because it kept well on long voyages. The Surti bakers realized the recipe was suitable for Gujarati vegetarians who did not eat eggs, so they adapted it to local taste by adding cardamom, cashews, almonds, and pistachios.

Farishta Murzban Dinshaw

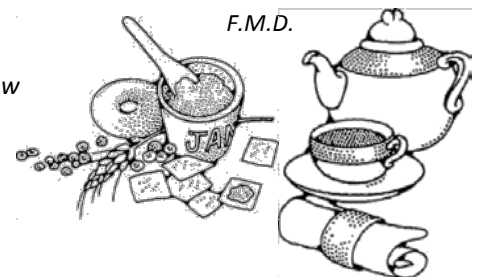
## HIGH TEA AND LOW TEA

*The British working population ate a "high tea" early evening that combined sweet foods, such as scones, cakes, buns or tea breads, with savories, such as cheese on toast, toasted crumpets, and cold meat. It was a significant meal after coming home from work. Many hotels in India and Pakistan still serve "high teas" with extensive savory and sweet dishes. Parsis often serve "high teas" at late afternoon/early evening events that are largely women-only functions such as children's birthday parties, agarnis, and sari wearing ceremonies.*

*Afternoon tea was taken between three and five o'clock. It was also called "low tea" because it was served in the sitting room or withdrawing room where low tables were placed near sofas or chairs. In some parts of England it was also known as a Cream Tea. In Cornwall, the Cream Tea served sweet white bread roll called a "Cornish split." The bread was buttered, covered in strawberry jam, and topped with clotted cream. Today splits are not so common so the traditional Devon variation is more widely known as a Cream Tea with freshly baked scones, strawberry jam and clotted cream.*

*Over the years, the "Victorian Tea" has become famous outside England. The tea is served with milk in sprigged fine bone china. The menu has three particular courses often served on three-tiered servers:*

- *Savories such as tiny cucumber and smoked salmon sandwiches*
- *Scones served with jam and Devonshire or clotted cream*
- *Cakes, cookies, shortbread and sweets*



**SWEET TOOTH**

*Caramel custard was another Raj favorite. One of the reasons caramel custard has become part of the Parsi and Indian cuisines is that the people of the subcontinent had a palate that liked sweeter treats than British cakes and pies, so this sugary dessert suited their sweet tooth. Also, traditional Indian sweets whether Mughlai sheer korma or Bengali rossogolla or Gujarati shrikand, tend to be made from milk, thus making custards more acceptable than other unfamiliar desserts.*

F.M.D

# Caramel Custard

2 ½ C	caster sugar	250 g
3	vanilla bean pods split with seeds removed (preserve the seeds)	3
70 oz	full-cream milk	2 L
12	egg yolks	12
12	eggs	12
For the caramel:		
4 ½ C	caster sugar	425 g
1 C	cold water	250 ml

1. Combine the milk and sugar in a saucepan and bring to a boil. Add the vanilla beans and seeds. Simmer for 10 minutes, stirring gently and taking care not to let the mixture burn or stick to the bottom of the pan. Remove the pan from the heat and allow it to stand at room temperature for 35 minutes.
2. For the caramel, add the caster sugar to cold water and gently simmer on medium heat stirring to dissolve the sugar. Do not stir once the liquid starts to simmer. Brush the sides of the pan with a wet bristle brush if any crystallization occurs. Simmer the sugar until it starts turning a deep caramel color.
3. Immediately remove the pan from the heat and carefully pour equal amounts of the caramel into twelve 8 oz/250 ml oven proof ramekins. Hold the moulds at the top of the rim and swirl to coat the moulds halfway up their sides with the caramel. Set aside to cool.
4. Preheat the oven to 365°F/185°C.
5. Lightly whisk the eggs and yolks in a bowl making sure not to over whip. Strain the cooled milk mixture into the egg mixture, slowly whisking until it combines all the liquid. Strain again and pour into the prepared ramekins. Lay a tea-towel on the bottom of a deep roasting tray. Place the ramekins on the tray and fill it with hot water until it reaches halfway up the sides of the ramekins.
6. Cover the tray with foil and place in the centre of the oven to cook for 30-45 minutes, or until set.
7. Allow to cool, then store in the refrigerator to chill for at least 6 hours or overnight.

Serves 12

*Sarosh Khariwala, Australia*

# Vanilla Pound Cake

## Note:

- All measurements to the weight of the eggs if one egg = 2 oz
- As illustrated by the name, the recipe is according to imperial measurements and does not translate well into metric measurements.

5	eggs (10 oz)	5
10 oz	sugar	250 g
10 oz	all purpose flour	137 g
10 oz	margarine (or butter)	300 g
1 ½ tsp	baking powder	7 g
1 tsp	vanilla essence	5 g

1. Preheat oven to 350°C /180°F.
2. Grease two loaf pans and set aside.
3. Separate egg whites from yolks and set aside.
4. Add baking powder to flour and sift. Set aside.
5. In a large bowl, cream margarine using a mixer.
6. Add sugar gradually and continue beating at high speed.
7. Decrease speed to low. Alternately fold in flour and eggs.
8. Change the beater and in a separate bowl beat the egg whites until stiff.
9. Gently fold in egg whites to the batter with a spatula or wooden spoon. Do not beat.
10. Pour mixture into the pans in a wavy motion.
11. Bake on the second shelf of the oven for 40 minutes or until the knife comes out clean.
12. Cool in the pan for 7-10 minutes; decant onto a cake rack.

Makes two loaf pans

*Jer Tata, Canada*

*From a recipe handed down from her grandmother Mehra Tata*

## POPULAR MEASURES

*The Pound Cake dates back to the early 1700s. The name Pound Cake came about because the original pound cakes contained one pound each of butter, sugar, eggs, and flour. Air whipped into the batter was the only leavening agent used.*

*The Pound cake successfully transitioned to Colonial India. At a time when illiteracy was common and recipes were not written down, using a pound as a measurement for all the ingredients was a useful memory aid. Also, a cake made of a pound each of butter, sugar, eggs, and flour could easily make enough servings for large extended families that lived together. It was a dense cake so could be eaten at breakfast in place of bread. Over the years, the recipe has changed, such as adding baking powder, to make smaller, lighter cakes, but the name survives the adjustments.*

*The Pound Cake is versatile – it can be eaten on its own accompanied with tea, or It can be sweetened with fruit or ice cream, or dusted with powdered sugar.*

*F.M.D.*

# Nankhatai

## Parsi shortbread cookie

1 C	sifted all purpose flour	110 g
½ cup	semolina	80 g
a pinch	pinch of baking powder	a pinch
a pinch	cardamom powder	a pinch
a pinch	nutmeg powder	a pinch
½ cup	unsalted butter (at room temperature)	120 g
½ cup	sugar	100 g
2 tbsp	almond slivers (optional 2 tbsp/20 g crushed almonds to add to the dough)	20 g

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F/180°C.
2. Sift together the flour, semolina, baking powder, cardamom powder and nutmeg powder. (Add optional crushed almonds to dry ingredients after sifting).
3. Blend the butter and sugar until light and fluffy.
4. Add the flour to the butter mixture a little at a time and blend thoroughly till it becomes firm dough. (If it becomes too dry or hard, moisten with a little milk).
5. Make about 20 balls from the dough.
6. Flatten the cookie slightly with the palm of your hand or back of a spoon.
7. In the middle of each cookie, make an indentation with your thumb and place almond slivers.
8. Place the cookies on the baking tray about an inch apart as they expand in the oven.
9. Bake for 15 – 20 minutes until golden brown.

Makes 18-20

*Armin McCrea-Dastur, USA*

# Lamb Trotter Cinnamon Jelly

8	lamb trotters	8
2 tbsp	brandy	30 ml
2 tbsp	fine tea leaves	30 g
2	cinnamon sticks	2
5	tbsp caster sugar	5
4	egg whites	4
4	egg shells crushed	4
8	green cardamoms pounded	8
3	limes juiced	3

Note: the cinnamon, lime juice, and cardamom can be adjusted to taste.

1. Trim and wash the lamb trotters well and cook in a heavy bottom pot with water for around 3 to 4 hours. At intervals lift the scum off the surface and keep the stock clear.
2. Strain the stock when trotters are cooked and add the egg whites and crushed egg shells.
3. Whisk and blend all ingredients into the stock, add the cardamoms, cinnamon, sugar and tea leaves. Bring to a boil.
4. Reduce the flame and let the stock reduce on low heat allowing the egg shells and the egg whites to work and clarify the stock and the tea leaves to infuse its color into the stock. Add lime juice.
5. Gently strain the stock a couple of times through a very fine muslin sieve.
6. Add brandy to taste and let it cool for 2 hours.
7. Pour into serving glasses and chill in the fridge overnight to set. The set jelly should be clear of any particles and must be translucent.
8. Serve as is or garnish the top of the jelly with a cinnamon sugar mix (2 parts icing sugar and one part cinnamon powder).

Sarosh Khariwala, Australia

## A LITTLE TIPPLE

*British cooking has featured alcohol in food for centuries. In Medieval times, mead, a honey wine, was used in cakes and was the fore runner of the quintessential English fruit cake beloved by Parsis.*

*Red or white wine is commonly used in British cooking to make sauces or 'jus', and to enhance the flavor of stews and casseroles.*

*Beer is a common ingredient used in batters including those for frying fish. The yeast in the beer aerates the batter so the coating has a light and fluffy texture after cooking.*

*In England, sherry and brandy have traditionally been used for adding an extra zing to trifles.*

*And along with adding a dram of whisky to their coffee, perfect for the cold and wet British weather, whisky is also used to flavor some classic Scottish desserts like "cranachan", made with oatmeal, whipped cream, raspberries, and honey, and "crowdie", consisting of ale, treacle, whisky and oatmeal, served at weddings with a ring mixed in it because folklore suggests that whoever gets the ring will be the next to marry.*

*Although wine was a favored drink in pre-Islamic Persia, Persian cuisine did not use it in cooked food. When the Zarathushtis settled in Gujarat, the locals were vegetarians and did not drink alcohol. The legendary "Parsi peg" is, therefore, a legacy of their interaction with the British in India as is the addition of alcohol to food, particularly sweets like rum balls, fruitcake, and trifle.*

F.M.D.

# Porc Vindalho

## pork vindaloo

2 tbsp	oil	30 ml
3	medium sized onions finely chopped	3
10-12	fresh curry leaves	10-12
10-14 tbsp	piri-piri masala	150-200 g
3-4	green chilies (long and slender)	3-4
1 lb	pork diced from belly and shoulder	500 g
as required	water or stock	as required
2-3 tbsp	tamarind pulp or paste	30-45 g
1 tsp	sugar (brown muscovite)	5 g
to taste	salt	to taste

*If you decide to use tamarind concentrate use much less than 2-3 tablespoons/30-45 g as it has a tendency to discolor the dish. It is not recommended unless there is no other option.*

1. Heat the oil in a large saucepan until it gets a haze.
2. Add the slit green chilies (do not de-seed), sauté for half a minute and add the shredded curry leaves and sauté for a few seconds only.
3. Add the onions and sauté until a deep golden brown.
4. Stir in the masala and cook until the oil separates out from it. But stir regularly to prevent it from sticking to the bottom. If this happens deglaze the pan with some water or stock.
5. Add the pork and sauté until well browned.
6. Stir in some water or stock, then add the tamarind and sugar and bring to the boil.
7. Simmer on a low flame until the pork is cooked. Remember pork tends to dry out so be careful how you cook and it's best to take it out just at the point when it is done.
8. Season with salt and serve with garlic palao or crusty bread.

Serves 4

*Sarosh Khariwala, Australia*



# GLOBAL INFLUENCE

In the eighteenth century, Parsi-Zarthushtis travelled to Britain, China, East Africa, and Sri Lanka for trade and commerce. Communities quickly sprung up around these trading posts. Britain and Hong Kong have Zarthushti communities dating back multiple generations.

In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, Zarthushtis have settled in Australia and New Zealand, Canada, United States and United Arab Emirates. Parsi-Zarthushti immigration has largely been fueled by economic reasons, while many of their Persian co-religionists left their homeland once again because of religious persecution.

As Zarthushtis settled in their new home countries, they took the evolution of Parsi cuisine in a new direction, introducing it to the Western palate and fusing it with contemporary trends. Some individuals stand out as ambassadors of Parsi cuisine – Cyrus Todiwala in the UK who runs two London restaurants, *Café Spice Namasté* and *The Parsee*, and who was awarded Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE) in 2000; Jehangir Mehta (see sidebar); Jimmy Seervai, MasterChef, Australia 2010 contestant, and owner of *Jimmy's Spice Kitchen* in Sydney; Mehernosh Pastakia, partner and general manager of *The Taj Pavilion*, located in the heart of Beijing's commercial area in the China World Trade Center.

Authors of widely appreciated cookbooks have also served to introduce Parsi and Persian Cuisine to the world – Jeroo Mehta's seminal book *101 Parsi Recipes* (Popular Prakashant Pvt. Ltd., first published in 1973) that had recipes from it featured in prestigious publications like *The Washington Post* and *The Observer*; Niloufer Ichaporia King whose recipes from her book *My Bombay Kitchen* (University of California Press, 2007) have been featured in recipe blogs across the world; Shirin Simmons, author of best selling cookbooks about Persian cuisine, including *Treasury of Persian Cuisine* (Book Guild Ltd., 2002) was the winner of the Gourmand World Cookbook Award 2002; Katy Dalal, whose two volumes *Jamva Chalaji: Parsi Delicacies For All Occasions* (Vakils, Feffer, and Simons, first Volume 1, 1999, Volume 2, 2003) has a host of little known recipes like *Bakra ni Mundi* (Goat's Head) along with the traditional favorites.

Farishta Murzban Dinshaw

## THE IRON CHEF

*Chef Jehangir Mehta, prior to becoming television's Next Iron Chef runner up in 2010, and opening his two restaurants, "Mehtaphor" and "Graffiti", in New York City, was a highly acclaimed pastry chef at some of New York City's finest restaurants. Jehangir's cultural heritage fills him with endless inspiration, including Ayurveda, and his favorite ingredients, fruits and spices.*

*Jehangir Mehta's degustation menu based on Parsi food classics would be:*

**Mincemeat crostini**  
(kheemo pav)

**Cinnamon tomato eggs on cocotte**  
(tamato-per-eeedu)

**Banana leaf cod, coriander chutney, onion fritters**  
(patra-ni-machi with onion bhajias)

**Braised lamb, shoestring potatoes**  
(sali-boti)

**Spicy tomato shrimp, turmeric lentil puree with cumin rice**  
(shrimp patio and dhun dar)

**Falooda shot**  
(falooda)

**Warm date tart, rum and raisin ice-cream** (khajoor-ni-ghari with ice-cream)

**Cookies and tea with mint, lemongrass, ginger**  
(nankhatai and phoodina ni chai)



**BURNT CREAM**

*Crème Brulee is a dessert made of a soft custard base topped with a layer of crisp caramel.*

*It is a cosmopolitan dessert, with traditional versions famous in France (from where it gets its name), Spain, as well as Britain, where it is known as Trinity Cream or Cambridge Burnt Cream, after the college where it debuted.*

*The custard base is traditionally flavored with vanilla, but is also sometimes flavored with fruits and nuts such as lemon, orange, pistachio or coconut; chocolate; liqueurs such as Amaretto or Grand Marnier; or in the case of Jimmy Seervai's recipe, spices used in Parsi and Persian cooking like saffron, nutmeg, cardamom, and cinnamon.*

*F.M.D.*

# Chai Crème Brulee

20 oz	thickened cream	600 ml
½ tsp	ground cardamom	2 g
10	saffron threads	10
¼ tsp	ground nutmeg	1 g
1	vanilla bean, split, seeds scraped	1
6	egg yolks	6
¼ cup	caster sugar	25 g
½ cup	caster sugar (for caramel)	50 g
	cinnamon powder for dusting	

1. Preheat oven to 250 °F/120°C.
2. Place the cream, saffron, cardamom, nutmeg and vanilla bean and seeds in a saucepan over medium heat and bring to scalding point, then remove from heat. Remove vanilla bean and discard.
3. Whisk together egg yolks and caster sugar in a bowl for 2-3 minutes or until pale.
4. Pour hot cream over egg yolk mixture, continuing to whisk until well combined, careful not to cook the eggs with the hot cream. I suggest adding the cream slowly. Strain mixture into a jug; and evenly divide between four 8 oz/250 ml ramekins.
5. Carefully place ramekins in a deep roasting pan lined over a folded tea towel. Pour boiling water into pan to come halfway up the sides of ramekins. The tea towel will be submerged in the water; this will prevent any splashing of the hot water once it comes up to boiling point. Cover pan loosely with foil, shiny side down.
6. Bake in the oven for 40 minutes or until the custard has just set. Remove ramekins from the water bath, and set aside to cool. The ramekins can be placed in the fridge, but not the freezer.
7. When ready to serve, take the ramekins out of the fridge and sprinkle caster sugar evenly over the surface of the baked custards. Run a kitchen blowtorch over the custards, or place under a preheated very hot grill until the sugar bubbles and caramelizes.
8. Dust a very fine layer of cinnamon powder over the top and serve. Make sure that you do this at the very end or the cinnamon will burn if you use a blow torch on it.

Serves 4

*Jimmy Seervai, Australia*

# LIVE



Life has many different occasions to celebrate including personal milestones like birthdays and graduations, and rites of passage like *navjotes* and weddings. We celebrate with special messages, flowers and gifts. We also celebrate with get-togethers with family and friends.

These celebrations would not be the same without special foods to mark the occasions. Food unites and strengthens community bonds and promotes a common identity among a group of people with shared history or geography.

This section describes some of the celebratory occasions in our lives and the accompanying foods that make them special.

*The fourth king of the prehistoric Pishdadian dynasty was called Yima Shaeta (radiant Yima, later Jamsheed). He is described as the king of the Paradise of the Golden Age of humankind. During his 300 years of prosperous rule, longevity increased, sicknesses were banished, and peace and prosperity reigned. One of the elixirs he is said to have discovered was the juice of fermented grapes. Folklore has it that the king was fond of fresh grapes and stored them in large jars in the palace cellar so he could enjoy them all year round. The grapes in one jar spoiled and were labeled as poison. A palace maid suffering from blinding migraines, decided to end her life by drinking the poison. She fell into a deep sleep and woke up clear eyed. On hearing the story, Yima realized that the "poison" was actually fermented grape juice with medicinal properties. It became known as "jaam".*

*Yima was said to have a magical seven-ringed cup filled with wine, known as the Jaam-e Jamshed, and he could observe all the seven heavens of the universe by looking into it. The popular Gujarati weekly, "Jam-e-Jamshed" published in Mumbai, India, is named after this legendary cup.*

F.M.D.

**AGARNI**

The Agarni ceremony is performed on an auspicious day in the seventh month of pregnancy in the presence of married women who have had children. The pregnant woman again receives a new set of clothes and jewelry from each set of parents and is given sweetmeats, symbolic of happiness. There are no such formal prenatal rituals in the Persian Zarathushti community, but pregnant women are encouraged to eat a diet that is correctly balanced between “sard o garm”, hot and cold. According to an ancient tradition retained by the Persian Zarathushtis, during this time the father of the child should take care not to kill an owl.

Jenny Rose

## Agarni no Lavro

### agarni favor

1 ½ C	gram flour	350 g
1 tsp	soda bicarbonate	5 g
2 C	white sugar	400 g
6 oz	water	180 ml
10	green cardamoms pounded	10
¼ cup	pistachios	30 g
¼ cup	slivered blanched almond flakes	30 g
as required	orange or yellow color	as required
as required	ghee/vegetable oil	as required

1. Make a thick batter with the gram flour. Add the coloring. Dissolve the soda bicarbonate in a teaspoon of water and add to the batter. Rest the batter for 20 minutes.
2. Prepare the syrup with sugar and water to a two string consistency (coating the back of a teaspoon).
3. Heat oil/ghee in a wide deep frying pan. Pour the contents of the premixed batter in a small pouring jug and slowly pour the batter through a round perforated frying spoon. This will let the droplets of the prepared batter into the hot oil.
4. Let them fry for a minute or two till they retain their shape and seem crisp. Remove the fried boondi [drops] and pour into the sugar syrup. Add the crushed cardamom, pistachios and almonds into the mixture and combine well so all ingredients are mixed and start to form a ball.
5. Line the conical lavra tins with grease proof paper in the shape of a cone or grease them with oil. Fill the prepared lavra tins with the warm mixture and compress with your fingers so as not to leave any air pockets. Seal the tin with a grease proof paper round to prevent the mixture from getting dry. Let the mixture set and take a conical shape.
6. Once set, demould the lavras and roll in slivered almond and barak (silver leaf).

If you do not have conical lavra tins, use conical paper party hats. They tear off easily once the ladoos are set.

Tip from Dinoo Nari Dastur

Sarosh Khariwala, Australia

## *Mava na Penda*

### sweetened milk balls

1 C	mawa	250 g
1 C	milk powder	300 g
a pinch	cardamom (elaichi) powder	a pinch
4-6	almonds and pistachios, slivered	4-6
3-4	saffron threads, soaked in 1 tbsp milk	3-4
½ cup	sugar	100 g
¼ cup	water	60 ml
	ghee/butter to grease palms	

1. Mash the mawa so it is crumbly.
2. Add milk powder, saffron and milk, and cardamom powder in a bowl. Mix well and keep aside.
3. Prepare sugar syrup or chasni by combining sugar and water and boiling till it thickens to a syrupy consistencies
4. Mix the chasni and the mawa mixture and shape it into small balls. While shaping them, grease your palms with ghee to keep them moist. Or use an ice-cream scoop to prevent hands from getting greasy.
5. Flatten the top so it looks like pendas and then decorate it with almonds and pistachios.
6. Leave it to dry until it becomes solid and store in an airtight box.

Makes about 15 - 20 depending on size

*Navaz Mistry, USA*

### **BESNA**

*The besna ceremony is performed when a child is able to sit without tipping over, usually around 7-8 months. The ceremony's name is taken from the Gujarati word "bes" meaning "to sit". The child is seated on the patla or a low stool surrounded by mava na pendas. Sometimes ladoos similar to the Agarni ka Lavra. but in the shape of balls rather than cones, are placed instead.*

Mawa is made by simmering full-fat milk in an iron karahi or wok for several hours, at 175–180°F (about 80°C) temperature. The water gradually vaporizes leaves coagulated caramelized solids in milk called mawa.

In North America, an easier way to do it is to make mawa in the microwave. In a microwave proof bowl empty a tub of ricotta cheese (250 g) and cook for 3 minutes till the water evaporates. Stir well and add 1 tbsp ghee, 3 tbsp full fat milk powder and 3 tbsp double cream and microwave the mixture again on high about 4-5 minutes. Keep checking after a minute or so to stir. You will see the moisture gradually evaporating. Knead mixture after it cools slightly. This mawa is extremely rich so for less fattening mawa just use evaporated ricotta.

**PUG LADOO**

*A laddoo (or laddu) is a ball-shaped sweet common in South Asian countries. It is popularly served at religious and celebratory occasions.*

*To mark the occasion when the child starts to take his/her first steps, Parsis celebrate the "pug laddoo" ceremony. Pug is the Gujarati word meaning "foot" and laddoos are balls made of sweetened dough. Khaman na laddoos are a specific type of laddoos with a fruit, nut and coconut filling used on this occasion. The presence of laddoos in this ceremony is significant because they are placed near the child's feet.*

For pug laddoo instead of making balls make it in shape of a foot.

## *Khaman na Ladoo*

### raisin and coconut balls

1 C	rice flour	110 g
½ cup	boiling water	125 ml
4 tbsp	butter	60 g
a handful	all purpose flour	a handful
1 C	sugar	200 g
2 C	grated coconut	120 g
4 C	milk	1 L
½ cup	chopped almonds	75 g
¼ cup	raisins	40 g

1. In a pan bring the water to a boil. Add rice flour and all purpose flour. Cook on stove stirring all the time, till soft dough is formed.
2. Add the butter and knead the dough. Set aside.
3. To make the filling mix sugar coconut and milk and cook on stove till all the milk is absorbed and the mixture is moist but dry to the touch. Add almonds and raisins and mix.
4. Make round balls from the flour mixture the size of golf balls. (If the flour mixture cracks add all purpose flour and blend it in a mixer).
5. Make a well in the centre and add the filling, then cover the top and shape into a smooth round ball.
6. When all balls are made, place a cheese cloth or mulmul cloth [muslin] in a large colander. Place the balls or laddoos in the colander and cover with foil.
7. Place the colander in a double boiler or large pan with boiling water, and cook till laddoos are soft to the touch.

Makes about 30 small laddoos

*Piloo Amroliwala, USA*

## Tafteh

hearty soup

2	eggs	2
2 tsp	turmeric	10 g
1/3 cup	rock sugar	
3 tsp	chahar tokhmeh (four seeds)	15 g
1/4 cup	vegetable oil	60 ml
1/2 cup	rice flour	80 g
2 1/2 cups	water	600 ml

*Regions in Iran have their own variation of the recipe. This recipe is from Yazd.*

1. Heat the oil in a pot.
2. Add the turmeric and stir quickly for a couple of seconds.
3. Add the rock sugar and stir a couple of seconds.
4. Add the flour and stir for a couple of seconds.  
Note: The stirring should be very quick and the heat should be set to low medium so the turmeric and flour does not burn.
5. Add water and chahar tokhmeh.
6. Let the mixture come to a boil (stir constantly to make sure the flour does not stick together). It should have the consistency of soup so if it is too thick add a bit of water and let it come to a boil again.
7. Beat the eggs in a separate bowl and then add them slowly to the boiling mixture. Keep stirring quickly so the egg does not stick together.
8. This dish is like a hearty soup. You can eat it with bread or without.

Serves 2

*Minoo Mehrayin, Canada*

## SEN-E-BOLOUGH

*The onset of puberty has always been an important occasion. The event takes place with style when the girl reaches puberty. When I was a girl of nine, my meme (mother) told me we were invited to Aunt Gohar's house to celebrate my cousin Keyan's sen-e-boloogh (coming of age). The house was packed with friends and relations and there was a loud sound of music. Keyan sat on a low chair while guests arrived showering her with presents. Tea was served with homemade cookies followed by a lunch of tafteh (sweet turmeric soup).*

*Tafteh is also given to the mother after the birth of a child and then offered to all the guests to celebrate the happy occasion.*

*Shirin Simmons*

**MEMORIES**

*On the morning of my Parsi calendar birthday, my mother would cook sev or ravo.*

*Before anyone could eat, mother would dish some of the ravo on plates, top it with fried raisins and slivered almonds, and the non-birthday child would take this to our favorite neighbors.*

*At each apartment, the neighbor would transfer the food to their plates and put a cup of sugar on the empty plate. Never send a plate back empty, grandmother taught us. This, she said, could be traced to the time our ancestral wise priests put sugar in the cup of milk sent to them by King Jadiv Rana, signifying that the new arrivals to India, would blend in peacefully with the local population.*

*Dinaz Kutar Rogers*

## *Rava*

### *semolina pudding*

4 C	milk	1 L
3 - 4 tbsp	semolina (rava)	50 g
3 tbsp	butter	45 g
2 tbsp	sugar	25 g

Garnish with following according to taste:

- rosewater or vanilla essence
- sultanas (raisins)
- slivered almonds
- extra butter

1. In a deep pan, melt the butter and add the semolina and cook until the grains are slightly swollen, but do not allow to burn.
2. Gradually add the milk and sugar and cook stirring constantly until the mixture coats the back of the wooden spoon. It will thicken further as it cools.
3. Take off heat and allow it to cool slightly before adding the rosewater or vanilla essence. Pour into a serving dish.
4. Cover the top of the rava with a layer of cling film to prevent a skin from forming as it cools. Leave to chill.
5. In a small pan, heat the extra butter and when melted sauté the slivered almonds until golden and the sultanas until plump. Remove from pan and leave to cool.
6. Garnish the ravo with a sprinkling of the almonds and sultanas.

Serves 8

*Arnavaz Chubb, Australia*



# Rava

## semolina pudding

recipe for a 1200 watt microwave

4 oz	rava	115 g
4 oz	butter	115 g
8 oz	cold milk	240 ml
32 oz	hot, whole milk	960 ml
14 oz can	condensed milk	420 ml
$\frac{2}{3}$ tsp	powdered cardamom	3 g
$\frac{2}{3}$ tsp	powdered nutmeg	3 g
$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp	salt	1 g
1 tsp	sugar	5 g
1 oz	rosewater	30 ml

1. Put butter in a microwavable dish and melt it – about 1 minute.
2. Stir the rava into the butter and microwave the mixture for 1 minute. Into this mixture, stir in the cold milk.
3. Then slowly, stir in all the hot milk, stopping frequently to stir the mixture.
4. Microwave this mixture for 1 minute at a time.
5. Stir at the end of each minute so the rava doesn't stick to the side of the bowl. Repeat until the rava comes to the boil.
6. Now, stir in the condensed milk.
7. In a separate cup, mix all the dry ingredients – cardamom, nutmeg, salt and sugar.
8. Stir 2 or 3 ounces/60-85 g of rava into this dry mixture, then add it all to the big dish.
9. Finally stir in the rosewater.

Serves 8

*Silloo Tarapore, USA*

The secret to making a good rava is to add no water at all.

For the calorie conscious, this recipe can also be made with 44 ounces/ 1 L of low fat 2% milk, skipping the condensed milk altogether. In that case, for Step 7, mix the dry ingredients – cardamom, nutmeg and salt in 4 oz/ 115 gm of sugar. Then proceed as the rest of the recipe.

Tip from Silloo Tarapore

**DECLARATION OF FAITH**

*Mithoo dahi covered with rose petals, and sev are traditionally served by Parsis on auspicious occasions like navjotes.*

*A navjote is the ritual that inducts a Zarathushti into the religion. Although there is no authoritative age at which the ceremony takes place, commonly it is held before a girl or boy reaches puberty. This is contrary to the practice in ancient Iran when the ritual was conducted when an individual reached the onset of adulthood (15 years in those times).*

*The vestments of the faith, the Sudreh (vest) and Kushti (sacred thread to wrap around the waist) are given to the child to wear from that day forward.*

*The word navjote is a compound of the Gujarati word for new (nav) and jote (reciter of prayers from the Avestan word zaotar). Iranians call the ceremony "sudreh pushi" or putting on the sudreh.*

*The navjote/sudreh pushi is a milestone in a Zarathushti's life and is an occasion for celebration.*

F.M.D.

# Mithoo Dahi

## sweet yogurt

4 C	full cream milk	1 L
2-3 tbsp	live yoghurt culture	30 – 45 g
4 tbsp or to taste	sugar	50 g or to taste

1. In a heavy based pan, bring the milk to the boil and simmer stirring constantly until it is reduced somewhat.
2. Add sugar and continue to cook until reduced by half.
3. Take off heat and cool to blood heat.
4. Brush the bowl in which the yoghurt is to be set with some of the live yoghurt culture and add the remainder into the warm but not hot milk.
5. Pour into the prepared bowl and leave covered in a warm place to set overnight.

*Tip from Dinoo Nari Dastur: It is best to use an earthenware bowl because its porous walls allow for a gradual evaporation of water that thickens the yoghurt. The dahi is left to set in a warm place because it produces the right temperature for the growth of the culture. A low heated oven may also be used if you wish the dahi to set faster.*

Makes 1 bowl

Arnavaz Chubb, Australia

## *Dhun- daar* yellow lentils with rice

½ cup	toover daar (split yellow or red lentils are North American substitutes)	100 g
½ tsp	turmeric powder	2.5 g
1 tsp	cumin seeds	5 g
2 tbsp	cooking oil	30 ml
1 clove	garlic, chopped	1
	a pat of butter	

1. Wash and soak the daar overnight if possible, otherwise soak in double the amount of water for about half an hour. Most of the water should be absorbed.
2. Cook the daar with the turmeric in a pressure cooker till soft.
3. Heat the oil in a frying pan and fry the cumin seed till they pop.
4. Add to the cooked daar and stir it well.
5. Add hot water till it is the consistency you want. Some people like thinner daar as they like to eat it like a soup.
6. Mash the daar till it is no longer grainy. You can use a handheld mixer or push it through a “mouli legume”, which is an old fashioned food mill. Growing up in Karachi, I have seen people press it through a sieve, but that is hard work and not necessary when you have kitchen appliances that can do the work faster.
7. Once again, put the daar on the stove and let it simmer for about 3-5 minutes.
8. Fry the chopped garlic till pale golden brown and add to the daar before serving. It may be garnished with fried onions and a dollop of butter.
9. This daar is served with boiled white rice to make it “dhun daar”. It can be accompanied with prawn or fish patio, and mint and coriander chutney.

Serves 4-6

*Diana Dinshaw-Parmenter, USA*

*Rice is a symbol of prosperity and plenty in most cultures. Zarathushtis shower uncooked rice on the bride and groom at various times during the wedding celebrations and also during the ceremony. Sun and water, life giving forces of nature are needed in the cultivation of rice and thus this staple food comes to represent enlightenment, abundance and productiveness.*

A.C.

*The word dhun comes from a Sanskrit word dhuna meaning wealth, riches, prosperity. It is the root of the word dhundho, meaning business. The idea of dhun as wealth is also replayed in the word for husband, dhuni, referring not only to the man in the relationship as a breadwinner, but also in relation to a husband being a woman’s true fortune.*

*In olden times, the word dhun or riches was associated with rice as the common household ate rotli, unleavened wheat bread, as rice was expensive. Rice was reserved for special occasions, both celebratory and solemn.*

*The daar in this recipe is also referred to as “mori” daar, meaning without salt. In this recipe only turmeric and cumin are used to add flavor.*

F.M.D.

# Gaam no Patio

## patio from the village

*This recipe travelled from the village of Nargol to Bombay with Dinaz's grandmother. She cooks without following specific measurements; the measurements in this recipe are estimated.*

1	large pomfret (chamno)	1
2 tsp	cumin seeds	10 g
3-4	garlic cloves	3-4
3-4	seeded green chilies	3-4
1	onion	1
1 tsp	red chilli powder	5 g
1 tsp	garlic paste	5 g
1 tsp	cumin-coriander powder (dhana jeeru)	5 g
1 tsp	Parsi style sambhar	5 g
1 ½ C	apple cider or malt vinegar	340 ml
½ cup	gaur (jaggery)	90 g
to taste	salt	to taste
as required	oil	as required

1. Clean and cut a chamno (pomfret) into four pieces.
2. Mash to a paste: jeeroo (cumin seeds), lasan (garlic cloves) and marcha (seeded green chilies).
3. Brown a chopped onion in hot oil; add a couple of teaspoons of red chili powder and the garlic paste-ball. Add a couple of teaspoons of turmeric powder, dhana-jeeroo (coriander-cumin powder mix), and Parsee-style sambhar masala. Salt to taste.
4. Add fish pieces. Pour about one and a half cups of brown vinegar (malt vinegar or apple cider), enough to cover the fish pieces.
5. Cover and simmer till fish is done.
6. Toward the end add about half a cup of gaur (jaggery, brown sugar).
7. This "gaam no patio" (patio from the village) is the perfect side dish with "dhan daar" (mori daar and chawal).

Serves 4

*Dinaz Kutar Rogers, USA*

# Mutton Curry

1 lb	mutton cut in cubes	500 g
2	small onions	2
Grind to a paste:		
	o 6 cloves garlic	
	o ¾ inch/2 cm piece of ginger	
	o 4 dry red chilies	
	o 2 tbsp/30 g coriander seeds	
	o 1 ½ tsp/ 7 g cumin seeds	
	o 1 ½ tsp/7 g poppy seeds	
	o 4 tbsp/60 g desiccated coconut	
½ tsp	turmeric powder	2 g
2 tsp	curry powder	10 g
1	large tomato chopped or ½ cup/80 ml tomato puree	1
2	potatoes cut in 4 pieces each	2
1 ¾ tsp	salt	8 g
8	curry leaves	8
4 tbsp	vegetable oil or melted ghee	60 ml

1. Heat oil or ghee and fry till light brown.
2. Add ground masala paste and cook 10 minutes adding a little water to prevent it from sticking to the bottom of the pan.
3. Add tomato and blend well.
4. Add meat and cook till water from the meat dries up.
5. Add turmeric, curry leaves, salt and blend for 2 minutes.
6. Add one cup hot water, bring to a boil. Cover and simmer for 10 minutes.
7. Add potatoes and more hot water. Cook till meat is tender.
8. Serve with white rice, kachumber (sliced onion and tomatoes in vinegar), papadum, and lemon wedges.

Serves 4

*Anahita Dinshaw, Canada*

## *Papri ma Gos*

### meat with flat beans

	oil for frying	
2	onions, chopped	2
1½ tsp	ginger paste	7 g
1½ tsp	garlic paste	7 g
1	tomato, chopped	1
1 lb	fresh papri with all ends and strings removed; cut into 1 inch pieces. (If you cannot find fresh papri, you can use frozen papri or Italian green beans.)	500 g
1 tsp	garam masala	5 g
1 tsp	salt	5 g
½ tsp	turmeric	2 g
1¼ tsp	adgmo (if you prepare papri without meat, use only 1 tsp/5 g or less)	6 g
1	small to medium sized eggplant, peeled and cubed	1
1 lb	lamb, beef or goat, cut in cubes (You can make this recipe with ground meat balls (kebab) or without meat as a vegetarian option.)	500 g
2	small potatoes, peeled, quartered lengthwise and half-boiled (optional)	2

1. In a pressure cooker, heat oil and fry onions until golden brown.
2. Add ginger and garlic pastes; fry until you smell the aroma.
3. Add tomato and papri; fry for two minutes.
4. Add garam masala, salt, turmeric, adgmo, eggplant, and meat; fry for 7-10 minutes. Add potatoes, if desired.
5. Add one-third cup/80 ml of water.
6. Cook under pressure for 20 minutes.

Serves 4

*Nancy Daruwala, USA*

# Machi na Kavab

## fish kebabs

4	Yukon Gold Potatoes	4
2	medium onions (tennis ball sized)	2
5	cloves garlic	5
1	2-inch/5 cm piece root ginger	1
1	fresh green chili	1
1 tsp	garam masala	5 g
½ tsp	turmeric	2 g
½ tsp	ground coriander seeds	2 g
½ tsp	ground cumin seeds	2 g
¼ tsp	pepper	1 g
to taste	salt (gauge saltiness of tuna)	to taste
½ - ¾ cup	cilantro	120 g – 180 g
1 tbsp	mint leaves	15 g
2 tsp	lemon juice (optional)	10 ml
dash	Tabasco Sauce (optional)	dash
24 oz	white albacore tuna	680 g
1/3 lb	grated Monterey Jack cheese	150 g
2	large fresh eggs	2
	Oil for sautéing and frying	

1. Boil/microwave and peel potatoes
2. Chop the onions into a coarse mince and sauté to soft and golden. Add finely minced garlic, ginger and chili and sauté until softened.
3. Add garam masala, turmeric, ground coriander seed, ground cumin, pepper, and salt. Once the aroma is released, about 30 seconds, remove the pan from the heat and stand aside.
4. In a large mixing bowl, coarsely mash the peeled potatoes.
5. Add the sautéed ingredients, the minced mint and cilantro into the mixing bowl. For a bit of perk, add lemon juice and a dash of Tabasco. Mix with a spoon or knead with your hands.
6. Flake the tuna (cooked, canned, rinsed, drained) and add. If you've got raw tuna, mince it to practically carpaccio (small pieces).
7. Add the eggs and cheese and mix thoroughly.
8. Use 1 oz/28 g of the mixture for each kebab. Pat them into wheels about ¾ inch/19 mm thick and about 2 ½ inch/5 cm diameter. They should not be too thin (they will be difficult to flip), or too thick (they won't cook through). Fry them for about 4 minutes over medium heat, flipping them only once at the 2 minute mark.

Makes 40 kavabs

Shenaya Tarapore, USA

## MEMORIES

*There is something very special and meaningful to me about a recipe that evolves with the input of generations of women. Only a few people I know make fish kavabs. From each of these women, I have learned one more trick. From Niloufer Vania, my friend's mom who introduced me to them, I learned to add a bit of grated cheese in addition to the eggs to help them cohere. From another friend's grandmother, Freny Katrak, I learned that they should be cooked through but not allowed to get hard – potato starch helps with this. From my mum-in-law, Perviz Motafram, I learned that a bit of lemon juice in the mixture brightens the flavor. From the meat kavab recipe of my Bapaiji, Mehra Tarapore (nee Kharegat), I took the addition of a few mint leaves to harmonize with the cilantro leaves.*

S.T.

According to my father, patting the mixture into place is essential, if you just scoop it off a spoon into the skillet, the mix isn't dense enough and will break during flipping.

Many traditional recipes instruct to dip the patty in whisked eggs and usually they suggest deep frying. I prefer to avoid deep frying and opt for a healthier alternative. I think of it as an update, rather than as unauthentic.

The kebabs can be made the day before, and reheated in an oven just before serving. Just don't let them dry out! I like to serve them warm (hot isn't essential – they're finger food after all) with ketchup spiked with a bit of Tabasco.

Tips by Shenaya Tarapore

# WEDDINGS



In the Gathas (Yasna 53.5) Zarathustra addresses the marrying brides and grooms with the words, “May you two enjoy life and may each one of you clothe the other with righteousness. Then assuredly there will be a happy life for you”.

In the Zoroastrian faith, marriage is encouraged and greatly favored by the religious texts; hence, a Zoroastrian wedding is considered to be an event which must be celebrated, not quietly, but with some éclat and must be celebrated in the presence of an Anjoman (assembly), which can bear witness to the event.

*The Marriage Ceremony of the Parsis*  
Jivanji Jamshedji Modi  
Second Edition, 1921. Bombay



## *Mava ni Boi*

### *reduced milk sweet*

1 ½ C	evaporated milk	375 ml
2 cups	powdered milk	450 g
14 oz	caster sugar (icing sugar)	300 g
1 tsp	cardamom powder	5 g
5 to 6 drops	vanilla essence	5 to 6 drops
¼ cup	crushed almonds and pistachios	40 g
	a fish-shaped mould	

1. To make mava dough, place the powdered milk in a mixing bowl and add the evaporated milk. Mix until a hard dough is formed.
2. Freeze the dough for about 30 minutes and then grate it using a coarse grater.
3. Warm 17 ½ oz/500 g of the mava and cook on low, stirring continuously, to form a very soft consistency. Remove from fire, add vanilla essence if desired.
4. Mix and cool to room temperature. Add sugar, three-fourths of the nuts and mix well.
5. Transfer to a work surface, sprinkle with some icing sugar, knead well.
6. Sprinkle icing sugar inside fish mould. Sprinkle remaining nuts in mould, distributing it equally.
7. When a soft and smooth consistency is achieved, press the dough neatly into each mould.
8. Refrigerate for two hours till well set. Pry out of mould carefully, using tip of a small knife.
9. Store in flat boxes arranged in single layer, refrigerate till required.

*Arnavaz Chubb, Australia*

### **AUSPICIOUS FISH**

*The Parsi wedding feast is not complete without fish on the menu. Fresh uncooked fish was included as part of the ses along with the other symbolic items. This has latterly been replaced with the mava ni boi, a confectionary look alike of boi which is a variety of fish caught off the coast of Gujarat that is specially enjoyed by Parsis. Fish patterned chalk (lime) designs are also regularly used as decorations on festive occasions.*

*An ancient and potent symbol of fecundity and regeneration, the fish lives in water from which supposedly all life began. In the Avesta, the fish called Kara lives in the legendary sea Vourukasha protecting the holy White Haoma tree – the tree of life and immortality. The Kara has been endowed with penetrating vision and insight. Fish is an incarnation of the Hindu deity Vishnu who was revered amongst the indigenous fisher folk of the coastal villages of Gujarat where the Parsis settled and from whom they adopted many customs that found an echo in their own traditions.*

A.C.

A quick way to make less sweet mava is add 2 lb ricotta cheese/900 g, two tsp/ 10 g ghee in a heavy bottom wide pan and stir continuously till all the moisture from cheese evaporates. Let the mixture cool once the cheese is thickened. It can be used for any recipe that calls for mava.

Tip by Arnavaz Chubb

**REMEMBRANCE DAY**

*Varadh-pattar/Varadh-vara is a special preparation made and consecrated especially at the time of Parsi weddings. It is made essentially from flour, semolina, ghee and sugar.*

*It is consecrated in a Baj with the invocation of Mino Ram Yazad a couple of days before the wedding. Mino Ram Yazad has supremacy over happiness, joy and weddings. This is in remembrance of the departed, in essence inviting loved ones who are no longer with us to the wedding.*

*Ervad Ramiyar Karanjia*

## **Varadh- vara**

### **semolina cakes**

27 oz	best quality wheat flour	750 g
13 oz	semolina (rava)	375 g
14 oz	powdered sugar	400 g
18 oz	pure ghee	500 g
1 ¼ tsp	baking powder	6 g
1 ¾ oz	charoli (also called chironji)	50 g
1 ¾ oz	almonds, boiled, skinned and chopped	50 g
1 tsp each	caraway seeds, mace powder, nutmeg and cardamom powder	5 g each
1 tbsp	vanilla essence	30 ml
5	eggs	5
	pure ghee or vanaspati for frying	

1. Place the flour, semolina, sugar, spices and melted ghee in a large shallow pan. Mix well and add the baking powder, whipped eggs and sufficient water to make smooth pliable dough. The dough should not be limp or wet and should hold its shape. Taste for sweetness at this point, adding extra sugar if necessary.
2. Lightly fry the chopped nuts, charoli and add them along with the vanilla essence and caraway seeds to the dough. Knead the dough, making a smooth ball of the dough. Cover with a damp cloth for two hours. Place in a warm corner.
3. Divide the dough into three balls. Flatten them with your palms till you get patties an inch/2.5 cm high. Do not use a rolling pin under any circumstances.
4. Heat ghee in a kadhai or wok. Slowly slide one cake in the hot oil. Keep stirring it lightly. It should not stick to the bottom of the pan. When the lower side is light brown turn it over and cook the other side in the same way, shifting it from side to side.
5. Now poke a skewer in the centre of the cake so the ghee rushes within and cooks the centre completely. Use two flat spatulas with holes to lift the cake from the ghee. Allow to drain in a large sieve. Cool and serve.

*Rita Kapadia, USA*

# LAGAN NU BHONU

## the wedding feast

The traditional Parsi wedding feast is a lavish affair comprising six – eight courses with each course including one or more choices depending on the banquet budget. Customarily, in India, it was a sit down meal with banana leaves serving as plates.

### First Course: Vegetables

*lagan nu achaar*, carrot and raisin pickle  
*rotli*, flat bread  
*laganshala*, vegetable stew

### Second Course: Chicken

*salli marghi*, chicken with potato straws  
*farcha*, deep fried chicken

### Third Course: Meat

*masala nu ros gos*, roast lamb  
*dahi nu gos*, meat with yogurt

### Fourth Course: Fish

*tareli machi*, fried fish  
*patra ni machi*, fish in banana leaves  
*khichdi saas*, fish in sauce with yellow rice

### Fifth Course: Rice

*palao with masala ni daar*, rice with spicy lentils

### Sixth Course: Sweet

*lagan nu custard*, wedding custard  
*kulfi*, frozen milk dessert

Once done, guests would fold the ends of the banana leaves, which signaled to the wait staff to clear the table.

### FEAST ON BANANA LEAVES

Banana leaves are environmentally-friendly version of paper plates used at feasts serving hundreds of people. The left-over food wrapped in the banana leaf is eaten by animals and what is left is biodegradable. Besides being environmentally friendly, the banana leaf helps retain the flavor, aroma and nutritional value of the food placed on it.

Only the leaves that are free from blemishes and tears are used. The banana leaf is washed and wiped clean before serving food on it. Traditionally, the banana leaf is placed after the guests are seated. The top part of the leaf is used for serving all the side dishes and the condiments while the lower part of the leaf is used for serving the main courses and rice.

F.M.D.



**WEDDING PICKLE**

Achaars or pickles are made from vegetables and fruits that are chopped into small pieces and preserved in edible oils like sesame or mustard oil, or brine. Different kinds of spices like asafoetida, red chili powder, turmeric, fenugreek, and plenty of salt are added as anti-microbial preservatives. Usually, sea salt is used as table salt may have anti-caking chemicals that may affect the color of the pickle and make it look muddy. In some pickles, jaggery is used to control growth of micro-organisms.

Traditionally, homemade pickles are prepared in the summer and kept in the sun during the day. They were traditionally stored in dark cool places in bannies (pronounced bun-knees), glazed porcelain jars with airtight lids. In North America, stoneware crocks may be used, but the jars must be opaque to prevent discoloration of pickles.

The carrot and raisin pickle is also known as Lagan nu Achaar or Wedding Pickle. It is so called because it is served at weddings because it has a sweeter taste than other pickles, signifying starting a relationship with a sweet mouth rather than a salty or spicy one.

F.M.D.

## *Gajar Mewa nu Achaar* carrot and raisin pickle

3 lbs	carrots	1.4 kg
3 tbsp	salt	45 g
2 oz	crushed red pepper flakes	60 g
5 C	sugar	1 kg
5 C	cups cider vinegar	1.2 L
16	cloves of garlic finely sliced	16
1	2 inch/5 cm piece of ginger finely sliced	1
12 oz	dried apricots	345 g
12 oz	dried figs cut into small pieces	345 g
6 oz	golden raisins	170 g

1. Thinly slice the carrots shoe string style. It is better to slice by hand. You can use a food processor, but that makes the carrots mushy.
2. Apply the salt on the carrots and store in a large closed container for 24 to 48 hours.
3. Mix the carrots about 3 to 4 times during this marinating period. Before cooking, drain the water that has been released, wash the carrots and dry them on paper towels.
4. In a blender grind crushed red pepper flakes with  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup/180 ml vinegar.
5. In a large pan mix sugar and 4  $\frac{1}{2}$  cups/1 liter cider vinegar. Put the pan on medium heat and let the sugar melt.
6. Add finely sliced cloves of garlic, finely sliced piece of ginger, dried apricots, dried figs, golden raisins, the drained carrots and the prepared red pepper masala.
7. Raise the heat to high and let the mixture boil vigorously. Keep mixing it often so it does not stick to the bottom of the pan.
8. When the achaar attains the right consistency, adjust salt, vinegar and red pepper to taste.

*Late Khorshed Sidhwa, Pakistan  
Contributed by her daughter-in-law, Anahita Sidhwa*

# Laganshala

## Parsi wedding stew

1	yam, cubed small	1
2	sweet potatoes (or potatoes), cubed small	2
4 oz	French beans, cut small	115 g
7 oz	green peas, shelled	200 g
2	capsicum, cut small	2
2	onions, chopped	2
4	carrots, cubed small	4
2	tomatoes, diced	2
1 tsp	cumin powder	5 g
1 tsp	coriander powder	5 g
1	½ inc/13 mm piece ginger	1
2 tsp	ginger-garlic paste	10 g
1 tbsp	vinegar	15 ml
1 tbsp	Worcestershire sauce	15 ml
handful	fresh cilantro, chopped	handful
to taste	salt	to taste
	oil for frying	

1. Separately fry all the cubed and chopped vegetables and green peas. Keep each vegetable aside separately.
2. Fry onions till they turn soft.
3. Add cumin powder, coriander powder, turmeric, ginger-garlic paste. Fry it for few minutes.
4. Add fried vegetables and tomatoes. Mix.
5. Add salt and mix well.
6. Cook till the mixture turns dry.
7. Add vinegar and Worcestershire sauce. Mix.
8. Serve hot garnished with cilantro leaves.

Serves 4

*Julie Daruvalla, UK*

## *Salli Marghi*

### chicken with potato straws

2.2 lbs	chicken, cut into medium pieces	1 kg
2 tbsp	oil	20 ml
½ tsp	cumin seed	2 g
1 tsp	curry leaves, chopped	5 g
2	large onions, chopped	2
to taste	salt	to taste

Grind to a paste:

- 3 green chilies (or to taste)
- 1 half-inch/13 mm piece ginger
- 6 cloves garlic
- ½ tsp/ 2g turmeric powder
- 1 tsp/5 g garam masala

1. Heat the oil in a pan.
2. Add in cumin seeds and curry leaves and when they begin to splutter add the onions and cook until golden brown.
3. Add the ground paste and further cook for a minute or two stirring constantly.
4. Mix in the chicken and salt and cook, stirring until dry.
5. Add three cups/700 ml water and bring to a boil.
6. Let simmer; stir occasionally until thick gravy is left.
7. Serve hot sprinkled with salli (potato straws).

Serves 4

*Mahrukh Behrana, Canada*

# Farcha

## fried chicken

10 pieces	chicken thighs and drumsticks (visible fat removed)	10 pieces
½ tbsp	chili powder	7 g
½ tbsp	spoon of cayenne powder	7 g
1 tbsp	turmeric powder	15 g
1 tbsp	garam masala powder	15 g
1 C	breadcrumbs coarse	150 g
½ tbsp	ginger-garlic paste	7 g
2 tbsp	papaya powder (if not available use semi ripe papaya and grind into paste)	30 g
a handful	regular corn flakes	a handful
6	eggs, beaten by fork not machine	6
to taste	sea salt or black salt	to taste
	oil for frying	

Corn flakes make farchas crunchy and also give the coating a semi sweet taste.

If you want to make the farchas spicy you can add ½ tsp/2 g Kashmiri chilli powder to the beaten egg.

1. Mix chicken with papaya powder or paste first and keep aside for three hours in a covered pot.
2. Add all remaining ingredients except breadcrumbs, corn flakes, eggs and oil. Set it aside for an hour.
3. Preheat oven to 375°F/190°C. Lay down the pieces in a baking dish.
4. Bake covered and cook till meat is just cooked and color of chicken changes about 30 to 35 minutes.
5. Remove from oven and keep aside to cool.
6. Crush corn flakes by hand into coarse powder, now sprinkle corn flakes on both sides of the chicken. Remember not to fully coat the chicken.
7. Roll each piece of chicken in breadcrumbs to fully coat the chicken on both sides.
8. Then dip in beaten eggs and deep fry in hot oil (oil should not be smoking) till crisp and done, roughly 4 to 5 minutes each side till golden brown.

Serves 5-6

*Fred Laher, Canada  
courtesy of Fred's Kitchen*

## *Masala nu Roast Gos*

### spicy roast lamb

2-3 tbsp	oil	20-45 ml
1	¼ inch/2 cm cinnamon stick	1
3-4	green cardamom pods	3-4
1-2	black cardamom pods	1-2
1-3	cloves	1-3
2-3	dried red chilies	2-3
3-4	medium onions chopped	3-4
2-3	medium lamb shanks (7-10 oz/200-300g each)	2-3
1 tsp	ground cumin	5 g
1 ½ tbsp	ground coriander	7 g
¾ tsp	ground turmeric	3 g
1 ½ tbsp	ginger and garlic paste (heaped spoon)	7 g
1-2	large potatoes peeled and cut into large chunks	1-2
4-5	tomatoes chopped	4-5
1 tbsp	cilantro, chopped	15 g
to taste	salt	to taste

1. Heat the oil in a hot saucepan until a haze forms on top. Add cinnamon, cardamom, cloves and red chilies.
2. As soon as the spices swell and change color, add the lamb and brown well, turning occasionally, until browned on all sides.
3. Alternatively put the shanks in a hot oven at 400°F/200°C for 20 minutes or so until browned and sealed well.
4. When the liquid in the pan has almost dried up, add the chopped onions. Sauté until soft and brown.
5. Add the ground spices and the ginger garlic paste dissolved in 1 C/240 ml of water and stir till it almost dries up and oil begins to surface again.
6. Then add some salt and enough water (or stock) to just about cover the lamb. Cover with a tight fitting lid and simmer for 15-20 minutes, stirring from time to time, making sure the sides of the pan are clean.
7. Add the potatoes and mix them in well, and add the tomatoes.
8. Cover again and simmer until the lamb and potatoes are tender and the lamb is fully cooked.
9. Check the seasoning and sprinkle with some fresh chopped cilantro. Stir some in as well, if you like, for an extra kick.

*Cyrus Todiwala, UK*



# Gos na Cutlets

## lamb cutlets

10 ½ oz	boneless mince lamb	300 g
1	medium sized onion, finely chopped	1
2 tsp	ginger garlic paste	10 g
2	green chillies, finely chopped	2
½ tsp	chilli powder (or to taste)	2 g
¼ tsp	turmeric powder	1 g
½ tsp	cumin seed powder	1 g
¼ tsp	garam masala (optional)	1 g
to taste	salt	to taste
1	medium potato, boiled and mashed	1
3 tsp	lemon juice	45 ml
2 tbsp	coriander finely chopped	30 g
2	eggs, white and yolks separated	2
	bread crumbs for rolling the cutlets	
	oil for shallow frying	

1. Wash and marinade the minced lamb and apply 2 tsp/10 ml lemon juice and salt, ginger garlic paste and keep it aside for 15 minutes.
2. In a pan take 1 tsp. oil and put in chopped onion and sauté till translucent. Add green chillies, chilli powder, turmeric powder, cumin seed powder, garam masala powder, salt to taste.
3. Add minced lamb to this mixture, stir and remove from fire.
4. To the mashed potato, add coriander and lemon juice Now mix together, minced lamb and potato mixture
5. Divide the above mixture into small balls and pat it into the desired shape of cutlets Coat with breadcrumbs.
6. Beat egg whites till stiff, add egg yolks and beat lightly.
7. Dip the cutlets in beaten egg and shallow fry in hot oil on medium flame.
8. When fried on both the sides, remove the cutlets and drain them on kitchen napkin
9. Serve with Sweet and Spicy Tomato Gravy.

Makes 6-8 cutlets

*Thrity Yazdi Tantra, India*

# *Tikhi Mithi Tamota ni Gravy*

sweet and spicy tomato gravy

3 C	water	700 ml
1	2-3 inch/5-7 cm piece of cinnamon	1
5	cloves	5
5	cardamoms	5
5	peppercorns	5
1	big beetroot (optional)	1
1	big onion peeled	1
4-6	big ripe red tomatoes cut into half	4-6
2 tbsp	oil	30 ml
1 tsp	ginger-garlic paste	5 g
1 tsp	chilli powder	5 g
½ tsp	turmeric powder	2 g
½ tsp	cumin powder	2 g
¼ tsp	garam masala powder	1 g
1 tbsp	Worcestershire sauce (optional)	15 ml
1 tbsp	vinegar (adjust to taste depending on the sourness of tomatoes)	15 ml
2 tbsp	sugar or grated jaggery	30 g
	paste of 1 tbsp/15 g corn flour mixed in 3 tbsp/45 ml cold water	
to taste	salt	to taste
one pinch	garam masala for garnish	one pinch

1. In a pan put in 3 cups/700 ml of water and add cinnamon, cloves, cardamoms and pepper. Bring water to boil.
2. Scrub beetroot well and put four cuts keeping the bottom intact.
3. Peel onion and cut it into four keeping the end intact.
4. Add tomatoes, onion and beetroot. Cover and cook till tomatoes become soft.
5. Discard beetroot and whole garam masala. Keep the water aside.
6. Remove skins from the tomatoes and puree with onion in a blender.
7. Heat 2 tbsp/ 30 ml oil in a pan. Add ginger-garlic paste and sauté.
8. Add chilli powder, turmeric powder, garam masala powder, and cumin powder sauté the masala.
9. Add tomato pulp, reserved water, Worcestershire sauce, vinegar, sugar/jaggery, salt. Stir well and bring to a nice boil.
10. Add corn flour mix and stir for 3 to 5 minutes.
11. Adjust salt/sugar/vinegar for sweet and sour taste.
12. Sprinkle little garam masala on top.

*Thrity Yazdi Tantra, India*

## *Dahi nu Gos*

### meat with yogurt

2 lb	mutton/chicken, cut in medium pieces	900 g
3-4 tbsps	ginger garlic paste	45 g-60 g
3-4	green chilies	3-4
1 tsp	turmeric powder	5 g
1 tsp	dhana-jeera (powdered coriander and cumin spice mix)	5 g
½ bunch (10-15 stalks)	cilantro, fresh/green-chopped	½ bunch (10-15 stalks)
3-4 stalks	mint, fresh-chopped	3-4 stalks
8-10	pepper corns	8-10
3 in	cinnamon stick	8 cm
6-8	cloves	6-8
4	green cardamom, peeled	4
1lb	potatoes, cut in medium pieces	500 g
4-5	medium onions	4-5
as required	oil for frying onions	as required
few threads	saffron	few threads
10-12 oz	yogurt	750 g

1. Coarsely grind peppercorns, cinnamon stick, cloves and green cardamom.
2. Marinate the meat overnight with the above crushed spices, ginger-garlic paste, green chilies, coriander, mint, turmeric and dhana-jeera powder.
3. Slice the onions and fry till brown; then allow them to cool.
4. Heat the saffron slightly and add it to the yogurt, mix well.
5. Add the marinated meat to the fried onions along with the yogurt.
6. Cook covered at low to medium heat, till the meat is done and thick gravy remains. Add water only if necessary.
7. Par boil the potatoes and lightly fry in oil or drizzle with oil and bake for 30 minutes (or till done) at 350°F/175°C.
8. Add the potatoes to the meat about 10 minutes before serving or serve separately.

Serves 6-8

*Nargesh Limbuvalla, Canada*

# Palao

## rice with meat

2 lb	meat, fish, chicken or mixed vegetables	1 kg
3 C	rice	570 g
1 C	whipped yoghurt	240 ml
3	medium tomatoes, chopped fine	3
3	medium onions, chopped fine	3
3	green chilies, chopped fine	3
1 C	cilantro, chopped	150 g
1 tbsp	garlic paste	15 g
1 tbsp	ginger paste	15 g
1 C	oil	240 ml
1 packet	any brand of packaged palao masala	1 packet
to taste	salt	to taste
1 tsp	saffron	5 g
6	hardboiled eggs, shelled	6

Instead of packaged palao masala, grind together:

- o 1 tbsp/15 g chili powder
- o 1 tbsp/15 g dhana-jeeru powder
- o 1 tbsp/15 g garam masala
- o 1 tsp/5 g turmeric powder

1. Boil rice and keep aside.
2. In a large pot, heat oil and fry onions till golden brown.
3. Add ginger garlic paste
4. Add palao masala from the packet (or the ground palao masala; see box) and cook for 5 minutes.
5. Then add yoghurt and tomatoes cook for 5 minutes.
6. Then add meat, fish, chicken or vegetables.
7. Cook on medium heat till food is cooked. It takes longer for meat and lesser time for fish, chicken or vegetables.
8. Once fully cooked remove from flame.
9. Add boiled rice to the mixture.
10. Sprinkle with saffron.
11. Lay sliced boiled eggs on the bed of rice.
12. Put in a preheated oven on 350°F/180°C for 60 minutes.
13. Eat with masala daar or raita (yogurt seasoned with chopped cilantro, cumin or other spices).

Serves 6-8

*Teenaz Mahveer Javat, Canada*

## *Saas ni Machi*

### *fish in sauce*

4 fillets	white fleshy fish such as sole or tilapia (or substitute shrimp)	4 fillets
3 tbsp	vegetable oil	45 ml
1	large onion	1
2 tbsp	finely chopped fresh cilantro	30 g
½ lb	tomatoes (or 1 cup/ 240 ml pureed tomatoes)	250 g
2-3	green chilies, slit and seeded	2-3
	paste made of ground 1 tsp/5 g cumin seeds and 6 cloves of garlic	
	paste made of 1 ½ tbsp/22 g flour and 1 cup/240 ml water	
1-2 tsp	salt	5-10 g
1 ½ tbsp	Worcestershire Sauce	35 ml
1 ½ tbsp	vinegar	35 ml
1 tbsp	sugar	15 g
3	eggs, beaten	2
1 C	water	240 ml

1. Fry onions in oil till brown and drain excess oil.
2. Add ground cumin and garlic paste and stir to blend with onions. Cook for 5 minutes.
3. Add cilantro, tomatoes and chilies and cook for 2 more minutes.
4. Add flour paste gradually, stirring constantly till the mixture is well blended.
5. Add the water and let the mixture simmer, covered, for 15-20 minutes.
6. Add the fish and the salt and simmer, covered, till fish is cooked.
7. Set aside to cool.
8. Mix the Worcestershire Sauce, vinegar, sugar and eggs and blend well.
9. Add this sweet and sour mixture to the fish. Blend carefully, tilting the pan in a circular motion to let the mixture flow evenly into the sauce. (Using a spoon to stir may break the fish fillets).
10. Serve immediately and serve with khichdi.

Serves 4

*Nergish Dinshaw, Canada*

# Khichdi

## lentil rice

1 C	rice	190 g
¼ cup	red masoor lentils	22 g
2	onions, finely chopped	2
5	cloves	5
5	peppercorns	5
1	2-inch/5 cm cinnamon stick	1
1 tsp	salt	5 g
½ tsp	turmeric powder	2 g
2 C	boiling hot water	480 ml
	oil for frying	

Khichdi is a popular dish enjoyed throughout the South Asian region. Parsis eat it with fish sauce, but other communities eat it with yogurt or with “teen yaar - papad, chokha aur achar” [three friends, crisp flatbread, potato mash, and pickles].

Some like to pour “vaghar” on the khichdi before eating it with yogurt. Vaghar is made by first frying cumin seeds in hot oil till they crackle and change color, and then frying dry red chilies and poring the spices and oil over the khichdi.

Plain khichdi of boiled rice and lentils without spices is eaten, often accompanied by yogurt, to soothe an upset tummy.

1. Soak rice and lentils together for 30-minutes.
2. In a pan, fry the sliced onions till light brown.
3. Add in all whole spices (cloves, peppercorns, cinnamon).
4. Drain the rice and lentils, and add to the mixture in the pan. Fry for a few minutes.
5. Add salt, turmeric and boiling water.
6. Cover and let it cook till the water is absorbed, and rice and lentils are fully cooked. If not, add more water and continue cooking.
7. Once the water is absorbed and rice and lentils are cooked, cover the pan and place in the oven or on a hot tawa/griddle for 30 minutes.
8. Serve with saas ni machi (fish in sauce).

Serves 4

*Nergish Dinshaw, Canada*

# *Lagan nu Custard*

## *wedding custard*

50 oz	milk	1.5 L
1	300 ml tin condensed milk	1
4 tbsp	sugar	50 g
2 tbsp	sugar to caramelize	25 g
6	eggs	6
1½ tsp	vanilla essence	7 ml
3 oz	almonds, blanched and chopped	85 g
3 oz	pistachios, blanched and chopped	85 g
1½ tsp	cardamom powder	7 g

1. Boil the milk and 4 tbsp/50 g sugar in a pan on medium about 15 minutes.
2. Now add the condensed milk.
3. In a separate pan burn 2 tbsp/30 g sugar on a slow fire to a brown color indicating it is caramelized.
4. When the sugar is brown, add in the milk and stir till dissolved.
5. Take the mixture off the stove and let it cool.
6. Now beat the eggs and add it to the milk with the vanilla essence. Make sure the mixture is cool before adding the eggs.
7. Pour in an oven-proof dish.
8. Sprinkle the almonds, pistachios and cardamom on top and bake it in a pre-heated oven at 350° F/180°C for 90 minutes to 2 hours or till the top is light brown.
9. Let cool.
10. Refrigerate before serving.

Serves 20-24

*Silloo Behrana, Canada*

**KULFI COMBINATIONS**

*I use a quick and easy base recipe to create several varieties from the base recipe using the portions of the condensed milk, evaporated milk and whipping cream mentioned in the Mango Kulfi recipe. I love to experiment and for the last 33 years I have always heard how good the various combinations taste.*

**Pista Kulfi:** Add to the base recipe ½ cup ground pistachio, 1 drop green color and 1 tsp/5 ml rose water.

**Kesar Pista Kulfi:** Add to the base recipe ½ cup ground pistachio and 1 tsp/5 g crisp ground saffron.

**Tutti Fruity Kulfi:** Add to the base recipe ½ cup fruit cake mix, 1 drop red color and 1 tsp/5 ml ice-cream essence.

*Use your creativity to try various combinations like chocolate, pineapple, falooda, etc.*

Y.M.

## Mango Kulfi

1 can, 10 oz	sweetened condensed milk	1 can, 300 ml
1 can, 12 oz	evaporated milk	1 can, 350 ml
	whipping cream	1 pt
1 can, 30 oz	mango pulp	1 can, 880 ml
½ cup	sugar (a little more or less depending on the sweetness of the mango pulp)	100 g

1. Mix all ingredients either in a blender or with hand mixer.
2. Pour the mixture in a tray or small 5 ½ oz/160 ml containers and freeze until well set. Instead of making one large tray, pour the mixture in smaller containers so that you thaw only the portion required for that event.
3. Remove from freezer when ready to serve and thaw at room temperature for a few minutes. Or put in the microwave for a few seconds to thaw. The kulfi tastes better when thawed a little instead of serving it solid.

Makes 16 servings

Yasmin Medhora, USA



# SOFREH GAVA

## the wedding table

For Zarathushtis in Iran, the marriage ceremony, which is performed by a mobed [priest], is called “Gava”. This is the ceremony where a mobed will do prayers for the couple, ask their consent, and then they will sign the documents (the gava giri or marriage contract) and become man and wife.

The “Sofreh Gava” is very simple and affordable to put together. The display represents blessings for the couple’s life together. Here is what we had in my “Sofreh Gava” when I got married in Tehran, and I have seen this in all other traditional Zarathushti weddings I have been to:

- A copy of the Avesta [book of prayers]
- *Lork* (a mixture of seven nuts and dried fruits) for abundance
- A mirror and a lit candle, symbol of light and warmth
- *Avishan* (silver thyme) for strength and courage to face future problems together
- *Noghl* (sugar coated almonds) to represent sweetness in the life of the newlyweds
- Pomegranate for fertility
- A pair of scissors to symbolize working together in tandem
- *Doolog* (a small silk handmade bag with a string around it to tighten it ) with a needle and thread in it, symbolizing co-operation between the couple and their families [The needle and thread is humorously supposed to also represent sewing up the mother-in-law’s mouth.]
- Flowers to perfume the couple’s life together
- *Shakhe Nabat* (rock sugar) for sweetness in their future
- Silver coins for wealth and prosperity
- *Sudreh* and *Kushti* [garments of Zarathushti faith] representing the couple’s commitment to their faith
- A green silk handkerchief for the groom to keep and pass to the next generation



Minoo Mehrayin  
with additional information  
from F.M.D.

## MEMORIES

*Gossip that there was a wedding to take place in the near future was always a cause of great excitement. Invitations were issued with style with cards sent to those living afar. Those who lived in the same village would be visited by two ladies one each from the groom and the bride’s family, walking gracefully through the narrow back streets of Yazd calling at individual houses to offer their rokhsat (invitation). It was a custom to seek permission for their son and daughter to be married. The ladies handed their guests a piece of fern, some oregano leaves (abhishan) and a few noghl (sugar coated almonds) from their handmade doolog (silk bag) which they carried. The ladies would be welcomed and offered black tea in estekan (glasses) with a sugar lump on the side and sweets. The names of the guests were added to the list for the happy day.*

*The wedding ceremony lasted seven days, but the most memorable and colorful day was when the groom and the bride received their presents. The house was filled with the joy and laughter of family and friends. The bride and groom sat beside each other on a low chair. The bride’s mother approached the bride and the groom and placed a small silver tray containing a type of grass called movr, symbolizing everlasting marriage, under their feet. The groom then gently removed the stocking from one of his wife’s feet and the bride reciprocated by removing one of his socks. Then their two feet were put on top of each other on the grass in the tray. The bride’s mother handed the groom a china jug containing cold milk. The groom washed his bride’s feet with the milk. The bride repeated the ritual, which symbolizes strength. The groom then offered a rosewater drink to his bride, holding it to her lips and the bride repeated this for her husband. Finally the tray was moved away and the spilt milk was poured into the nearest running stream. At this moment the priest and bridegroom recited prayers from the Avesta blessing the couple with a healthy and happy life.*

Shirin Simmons

### THE SIGNIFICANT SEVEN

In gahambar ceremonies, the seven acts of piety are added significance to the act of sharing a meal.

- Generosity of the spirit (including speaking well of others)
- Material generosity and sharing
- Honesty
- Community participation and inclusion (including supporting the gahambars)
- Selfless help towards those in need (without desire for recognition or reward)
- Piety
- Remembrance of the souls of the righteous and one's ancestors.

K.E.E.

## Lork

### fruit and nut mix

Lork is a mixture of seven nuts, dried fruits and seeds. Locale, availability, tastes (salty or sweet) and family preferences may dictate choices. Some of the popular ingredients include:

- raisins
- dried peaches
- dried figs
- dried apricots
- mulberries
- pistachios
- unsalted raw almonds
- unsalted raw hazelnuts
- walnuts
- roasted chickpeas
- roasted squash seeds
- roasted melon seeds

Seven is an auspicious number in Zarathushti culture and heritage. The seven aspects of divinity (Amesha Spentas) and the seven elements of the corporeal creation (gaiti) - fire, air, water, earth, plants, animals and human beings - are central to the jashan (thanksgiving) ceremonies. The NoRooz *Sofreh Haft Seen* spread has seven items to represent the seven elements of divinity, creation, piety, ethics, values and best practices.

*Aujil e Mushkil Gosha* is a type of lork in honor of Behram Yazad, the Victorious One who intercedes on behalf of humans to solve their problems. The *aujil* is distributed to family and friends after it is blessed. Parsis of India, in honor of Mushkil Asaan Behram Yazad, distribute a mixture of *channa* (roasted grams), *elchi* (cardamom), and *sakar* (rock sugar).

K.E.Eduljee

# FOOD FOR HEALTH

The ancient Persians looked at food from a philosophical, medicinal and cultural perspective. Good, nourishing food was essential in promoting a healthy body and healthy mind. The Gathas, which could well be considered the spiritual food of all Zarathushtis, extol the virtues of settled, agrarian community life as opposed to the transitory lifestyle of nomads.

The ancient Persian medical system was holistic and considered an integral part of daily life. It was based on the physical, psychological and spiritual characteristics of individuals. The Zarathushti way of life emphasizes the importance of cleanliness of body and mind and of the care and protection of the environment. The *Vendidad*, the Zarathushti book on the law against the demons, elucidates at length on the elaborate laws of cleanliness that are at the very foundations of the religion and are so much a part and parcel of the Zarathushti way of life. In the *Vendidad*, there exist three kinds of medicine: through the knife, *kareta*, plants, *urvara*, and the sacred word, *manthra*. Of these three, the last one is the most highly regarded. It seems logical then that in ancient Persia the roles of priest and physician became fused together and the spiritual or *menog* and physical or *getig* became part of an intrinsic whole.

The vast collection of other herbs and medicinal plants found their way into the daily diet of the Iranian people. When used in the appropriate combinations and quantities these helped to maintain bodily balance and promoted good health. Garlic, rue, borage, marjoram, fenugreek, basil, chicory and mint to name a few are all used in the traditional cuisine of Iran. We give little thought to the nutritional properties of the staples of our cuisine – the pinch of ginger and garlic that is tossed into every meal; the turmeric that is equally indispensable; the eggs and fish that are essential celebratory foods – all of the many spices and herbs with which we season our dishes help to keep our health well balanced. Unfortunately, we have forgotten these traditional healing practices and the healing and restorative powers of nature's bounty. Cardiovascular diseases and diabetes, both by and large, preventable and reversible lifestyle ailments are rampant among the Parsi/Irani communities. The Sassanian sages advocated the balanced path of moderation – “patmaan” – the golden mean. Looking after ourselves is our sacred duty and moral obligation and what better way of doing it than enjoying delicious, healthy, wholesome food.

## HOT AND COLD FOODS

*The natural balance of the body was also maintained by the judicious blend of hot and cold foods in the diet. Persian cooking was designed to be energetically balanced by combining both hot and cold ingredients. Hot and cold does not refer to the temperature of the food, but the energetic effect that food has on the body, very similar to the Chinese principles of yin and yang. For example, tea has a cold energy, so even though it may be drunk hot, it is actually a cooling beverage.*

*The Persians believed that the consumption of too many ‘cold’ foods slowed down the body’s digestive processes and caused fatigue, whereas too many ‘hot’ foods caused an acceleration of digestive processes and alertness. The coldness or hotness of foods is based on their supposed effects on the system after digestion and absorption. There is no valid reason for classifying a food as hot or cold according to the principles of modern medicine and nutrition, however, these notions are so ingrained in the culture and practice of Persian cuisine, that they are an unconscious part of the daily ritual of meal preparation.*

T.C.

*The idea of “heaty” foods influenced Parsis as well. They consider some foods to be best eaten in the winter such as kharia (trotters). Eating onions was supposed to be cooling and was recommended to prevent sunstroke. Many of the heavy “heaty” meals are, therefore, accompanied by kachumbar (chopped onions in vinegar).*

F.M.D.

Tanaaz Chubb

**GAUR AMLI KACHUMBAR**  
Sweet and Sour Onion Salad

**For the chutney**

- o 1 C/150 g deseeded tamarind
  - o 1 C/180 g jaggery (gaur) or brown sugar
  - o 1 C/150 g pitted dried dates
  - o 1 ½ C/350 ml water
  - o Salt to taste.
1. In a pot mix tamarind, jaggery (gaur) or brown sugar and dates.
  2. Add water and bring to a boil.
  3. Simmer for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally, add more water if required.
  4. Cool to room temperature and press through a medium sieve (alternately use an emersion blender).
  5. Adjust seasoning.
  6. Can be stored in refrigerator in a sealed glass jar.
  7. Let stand for 30 minutes for flavors to blend.

**For the salad**

- o 1 large red onion, sliced fine.
  - o 1 small green mango diced
  - o 1 large tomato, deseeded and diced
  - o Half English cucumber, diced
  - o ½ cup/75 g fresh cilantro, chopped.
  - o 1 fresh green or red cayenne pepper deseeded and chopped fine
1. In a bowl mix sliced onions, green mango, tomatoes, cucumber and fresh coriander.
  2. Add half cup of chutney to the salad and mix.

## *Chora ma Kharia*

### trotters in black eyed beans

¼ cup	olive or canola oil	60 ml
3	large onions diced	3
2 tbsp	garlic paste	30 g
2 tbsp	ginger paste	30 g
4 tbsp	powdered cumin and coriander (mixed)	60 g
1 tbsp	turmeric powder	15 g
1 tbsp	Parsi sambhar powder	15 g
1 tbsp	cayenne pepper (or to taste)	15 g
1 can	crushed tomatoes	1 can
2 can	tomato paste	1 can
3 tbsp	brown sugar	45 g
2 tbsp	salt (or to taste)	30 g
6	pork trotters (cut into 4 pieces each and rinsed under cold water)	6
1 ½ C	chora (black eyed beans) washed and soaked for 1 hour	210 g
1 C	fresh coriander (cilantro) chopped	150 g

1. In a large pot, heat oil.
2. Add onions and fry until light golden and soft.
3. Add ginger, garlic, cumin/coriander, turmeric and cayenne pepper and stir for a minute till fragrant.
4. Add crushed tomatoes and tomato paste, mix well.
5. Add brown sugar and salt and mix
6. Add trotters and beans (discard the water and rinse) and mix till well coated.
7. Add enough water to cover the trotter and beans and create gravy.
8. Bring to a boil and then simmer on medium low, covered for 2½ to 3 hours until cooked through and almost falling off the bone. Stir occasionally. To speed up cooking time you may use a pressure cooker.
9. Adjust seasoning (salt and sugar) to taste.
10. Garnish with fresh coriander and serve with warm crusty bread, “gaur amli kachumbar” (see sidebar) and lemon wedges.

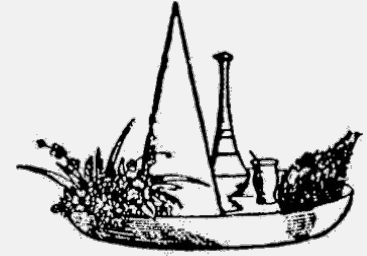
*Chisti Bulsara, Canada*

# PRAY

The food we share with friends, family and community express our appreciation for one another and remind us of what we value and have in common. We nourish our spirits and our bodies, and build a community with food, and it is woven into every aspect of life.

Food is an important aspect of the Zarathushti rituals, from rice and nuts placed in the ceremonial ses (see sidebar) to *stum*, special foods cooked as offering to the spirits of departed loved ones, to *Aujil-e-Mushkil Asaan*, a mix of fruits and nuts distributed in honor of angel Behram, to the gahambars or communal feasts which celebrate fellowship and unity, hard work, and interdependence.

This section comprises recipes that are part of rituals and holy days.



*“Ses”, pronounced sace, is the term used for a collection of ceremonial utensils and items placed on a circular metal tray with a rim. The ses is used at Parsi- Zarathushti rituals as each of the items in the ses represents a blessing.*

**A Gulabdan** is the long necked container for rosewater. Rosewater is sprinkled to signify *“May your life be fragrant.”*

**A Pigani** is the metal cup with a lid containing kumkum or vermillion powder. Rosewater is added to the powder to make a paste. The paste is lifted with a stylus or a matchstick to mark the forehead – a dot for women, and a vertical mark for a man. The blessing is *“May you shine like the sun”* for males, and *“May you shine like the moon”* for females.

**A Soparo** (or paro) is a metal cone with a base that opens so that it can be filled with saakar (rock-sugar) or flat sugar discs called patasas. The soparo most likely represents the *“Kalleh Ghand”*, a cone of rock sugar wrapped in foil that Iranian Zarathushtis use on auspicious occasions. The blessing is *“May your life be sweet”*.

*Other symbolic items placed in the tray include:*

- *A garland of flowers twisted around the soparo - joy*
- *A coconut - success in inner and outer worlds*
- *Rice grains – abundance and fertility*
- *Kharak (dried dates) - diligence*
- *Unshelled almonds - protection*
- *Silver coins – wealth*
- *Supari (betel nut) - strength*
- *Paan (betel leaves) – flexibility*

**SACRED BREAD**

The dron or daran is used in all inner rituals like Baj-dharna, Yasna and Vendidad. The word dron is derived from Avesta draonah, and is used in the sense of 'a part, a portion' offered through consecration in a ritual, to divine beings. The word dron is variously rendered into English as 'sacred bread', 'sacramental bread', 'unleavened round bread', 'consecrated bread', 'sacred cake' or 'wheat cake'.

Dron dough balls are flattened with a velan (metallic rolling pin). Sometimes a special rolling pin with metallic beads is used. The clinging sound it makes is supposed to keep away evil while preparation is in progress. The dron are preferably cooked on wooden fires, even in modern times. Traditionally, dron are exclusively prepared by male or female members of the priestly class and are generally made fresh each day and not re-used.

One dron is used in the performance of all inner rituals, except for the Baj-dharna ceremony, in which four or six are used for each performance. Four different types of dron are used in the Baj-dharna ceremony. One type has 9 marks on it, referred to as 'names'. In Gujarati they are referred to as nam padela (one that has been given a name) or nam vala (one with a name) daran. The 'names' refer to the 3 marks that are made with a rolling pin or tip of a knife while the dough is being rolled out. The marks are made in three rows, starting from down to up while thrice uttering the Avestan words, "Humata, Hukhta, Huvarshta." Frasast is the name applied to plain dron, which do not have any marks on it. However nowadays, there is no difference between dron and frasast as mostly unmarked dron are used. Chitya are the smaller dron about 3 inches in diameter, which are used for specific Baj-dharna performances. In Iran, the term luwag was used to refer to a big dron. It could be made from any flour. In India, in the Baj of Siroza somewhat larger and sweeter drons are consecrated, which may be a reflection of the Iranian practice of keeping luwag.

Ervad Ramiyar Karanjia

## *Dron*

### unleavened sacramental bread

2 C	wheat flour	200 g
as required	water	as required
½ tbsp	ghee	7 g

1. Place wheat flour in a thali (metallic plate) and add 4-6 tablespoons/60-90 ml of water and make dough.
2. Knead till the dough is quite hard.
3. Add half a tablespoon/2 g of ghee and knead into the dough.
4. Make 10-12 small equal sized pieces from the dough.
5. Take a dough ball and roll with a pittal velan (metallic rolling pin) till it is about 5 inches/10 to 12 cm in diameter. It is best to roll on a metal surface. Do not use flour while rolling, a little ghee may be used if required.
6. Repeat till all the balls are rolled into discs. The discs may be kept in another plate.
7. Heat the disks on the tawaa (hot plate) and turn them with a tawatha (flat ladle). They should have some dazya (dark spots) on them.
8. The cooked dron have to be transferred to another plate. They should be kept separately and not piled one on top of another or they may stick together.

Makes 10-12

Katy P. Karanjia, India

# *Papdi*

flat bread

1 C	white flour	110 g
2 C	wheat flour	200 g
½ cup	semolina	160 g
4 tbsp	ghee	60 g
as needed	water	as needed
to taste	salt	to taste

1. Mix flour, wheat flour, semolina, and ghee with some water.
2. Knead in a plate to make firm dough.
3. Make 18 - 20 equal sized balls from the dough.
4. Roll the balls with a rolling pin till they are about 5 inches/10 centimeters in diameter.
5. Shallow fry or deep fry the rolled disks according to taste.

Makes 18-20

*Katy P. Karanjia, India*

**JASHAN CEREMONY**

For many Parsis the confection made of grains and nuts, malido, has significance with the jashan ceremony as it is one of the offerings placed on the ritual tablecloth.

A jashan is a thanksgiving ceremony performed by two or more priests. It is one of the few liturgical ceremonies that can be performed outside the Atash Adaran or Atash Behram [place of worship].

A jashan, from the Persian word meaning festival, is held on different occasions and events throughout the year.

1. Religious jashans are performed to give thanks to Ahura Mazda on celebratory occasions such as birthdays, marriages, and house warming, or to mark solemn occasions like death anniversaries.
2. Parabh jashans are celebrated monthly in honor of Yazads [celestial beings] when the day named after them coincides with the month named after them e.g. Bahman Roj in Bahman Mah.
3. Seasonal jashans or gahambars mark occasions like harvests. There are six gahambar jashans in a year.
4. Historical jashans commemorate special occasions and events such as the discovery of fire by King Hushang on Roj Ashtad of Mah Adar, or the Sanjan jashan celebrated in India on Roj Bahman of Mah Tir to mark the arrival of Parsis in India.

F.M.D.

**Malido****a sweet confection of grains and nuts  
traditional recipe**

4 ½ C	coarse semolina or farina	1 kg
4 ½ C	whole grain wheat flour	1 kg
1 C	rolled oats	250 g
10 C	sugar	2.25 kg
1 tsp	sea salt	5 g
32 oz	water	950 ml
12	eggs	12
4 lb	ghee/butter	1.8 kg
3 lb	dry fruit combination as per your preference or as below:	1.5 kg
	o 3 C/450 g slivered almonds	
	o 1 ½ C/250 g split cashew nuts	
	o 1 C/120 g flax seeds	
	o ½ cup/80 g pumpkin seeds	
	o ½ cup/80 g sunflower seeds	
	o ½ cup/80 g pine nuts	
	o 60 g/4 tbsp shredded coconut	
	o 3 ½ oz/100 g orange cranberries	
	o 3 ½ oz/100 g pistachios	
	o 3 ½ oz/100 g walnuts	
	o 2 oz/60 g dried diced apricots	
	o 2 oz/60 g raisins	
4.2 oz	crystallized fruits	120 g
8 tbsp	honey	120 g
3 tsp	green cardamom powder	15 g
2 tsp	ginger powder	10 g
to taste	vanilla essence or rosewater	to taste

**Step 1 - Bhakras (fried)**

1. Mix the farina, whole grain wheat flour, rolled oats and sea salt in a mixing bowl and knead to smooth dough with a small amount of tepid water.
2. Roll the dough onto a smooth surface to a 1 inch/2.5 centimeter high sheet.
3. Cut with a pastry cutter mould into 2 inch/5 centimeter rounds.
4. Heat enough ghee/oil to fry the rounds till golden brown on a medium flame. Let cool to room temperature and crush the fried bhakras into crumbs with a rolling pin.

continued on the next page



**Alternative Step 1 - Bhakras (baked)**

1. Add 3 tbsp/45 g baker's yeast to the dry flour combine flour, salt, cream of whole wheat, rolled oats, 17 tablespoons/250 g ghee or butter and knead with water to make soft dough. Leave it to rest for 6 hours.
2. Roll out on a flat surface to a 1 inch/2.5 centimeters thickness and cut rounds, place them on a baking sheet and bake in the preheated oven on 350°F/120°C for about 20 minutes till cooked.
3. Let cool to room temperature and crush the baked bhakras to crumbs with a rolling pin.

In places where hapshi halwa is available, you can modify the recipe to substitute hapshi halwa. Reduce the butter/ghee to 50 oz/ 1.4 kg, reduce the sugar to 6 cups /1.75 kg and reduce dry fruits to 36 oz/1 kg and instead add 1 lb/500 g hapshi halwa to warm malido and mix well.

Tip by Rusi Sorabji

**Step 2 – Siro (sugar syrup pronounced sea-row) and malido**

1. Fry all the dry fruit and mix lightly and keep aside.
2. In a heavy bottom pan make sugar syrup with all the sugar and water till desired syrupy consistency. When warm, stir in the crumbed mixture of the bhakras mixing all the time.
3. Add honey, ginger powder, coconut, cardamom powder. Mix well by stirring continuously. Keep stirring all the time.
4. Add lightly beaten eggs one by one and cook gently on a low heat till the mixture starts to leave the sides of the pan.
5. Add three-fourths of the fried fruit mix and leave the rest to garnish when serving. Mix well.
6. Add rosewater or vanilla essence.
7. When ready to serve, garnish with the remaining dry fruit mix and serve warm on traditional papdi.

Serves 50

*Late Kumi R. Sorabji, India  
Contributed by Rusi Sorabji*

**MULTICULTURAL MALIDA**

Parsis generally see the malido as an intrinsic part of their own unique tradition. However, other South Asian communities also have confections made of grain and nuts that they call maleeda or malida, from the Persian word meaning "confection". It is a traditional dessert served in the Hyderabad region made of semolina and dried milk dough mixed with nuts and sugar. Afghans flavor it with cinnamon and serve it at weddings. The Bene Israel sect of Indian Jews serve malida made of parched rice mixed with sweetened coconut, dry fruit, like pistachios and almonds, and offered with five or seven fruits mostly on a joyous occasion like a bris (circumcision ceremony), an engagement, a house warming party or a graduation celebration. In fact, the celebratory blessing and thanksgiving ceremony, symbolically similar to the Parsi jashan, is called Malida.

F.M.D.

**Malido****a sweet confection of grains and nuts  
modified North American recipe**

½ cup	oil	120 ml
1 C	farina e.g. Cream of Wheat or semolina	160 g
½ cup	pancake mix e.g. Bisquick	55 g
1 tbsp	sugar	15 g
1 ½ C	water	360 ml
1 ½ C	sugar	300 g
1 ½ tsp	vanilla essence	7 ml
1 tsp	ground cinnamon	5 g
½ tsp	ground cardamom	2.5 g
½ tsp	ground nutmeg	2.5 g
¼ cup	slivered almonds	40 g
¼ cup	raisins	40 g

1. In a pan, heat oil over low heat.
2. Add the farina and keep stirring. Cook for about five minutes till mixture is golden brown.
3. Add the pancake mix and continue cooking for another two or three minutes stirring all the time. Remove from heat and set aside.
4. In a medium pan, brown one tablespoon/15 g sugar till it is dark brown. Quickly add water and bring to a boil.
5. Add the rest of the sugar and vanilla, cinnamon, cardamom and nutmeg. Let it boil for five minutes till the sugar is completely melted.
6. Remove from heat and add farina mixture to the sugar, stirring all the time to prevent lumps from forming.
7. Cook over low heat for about five minutes or till the sugar syrup is absorbed.
8. Remove from heat and empty into a serving dish.
9. Garnish with browned slivered almonds and raisins.

Late Naju Fali Daruvala, USA  
Contributed by her daughter Dinoo Nari Dastur

# Bhakra

## Parsi donut

5 tbsp	butter, melted and cooled	75 g
1 ½ cups	sugar	300 g
3	eggs	3
2 C	semolina (ravo)	320 g
3 C	all-purpose flour	330 g
1 C	whole wheat flour	120 g
1 tsp	vanilla essence	5 ml
1 tsp	baking powder	5 g
4	cardamoms peeled, seeds crushed	4
¼ tsp	nutmeg powder	1 g
½ cup	almonds and walnuts, crushed	60 g
2 C	plain yogurt	500 g
1 tsp	caraway seeds, crushed	5 g
	oil for frying	

1. Mix sugar and butter and beat until fluffy.
2. Add eggs and beat till smooth.
3. Add wheat flour and yogurt, one cup at a time.
4. Add all-purpose flour and yogurt, one cup at a time.
5. Add semolina and mix in well.
6. Then add vanilla essence and crushed cardamoms, caraway seeds, almonds, and walnuts.
7. Fold the batter and then add baking powder. (Do not mix with beater).
8. Sprinkle lightly with all purposes flour and then tie the bowl with a cloth and leave for about 6 hours.
9. Make small balls of dough, roll out flat (about half inch/1 cm thick) and cut out small rounds.
10. Deep fry the cut rounds till golden brown.

Makes 10 dozen

*Mehroo H. Kazak, Canada*

# Chapat

## Parsi crepe

7 tbsp	sugar	88 g
3	large eggs	3
1 ¼ C	milk	300 ml
¾ cup	all purpose flour	80 g
¼ tsp	vanilla extract	1 ml
a pinch	nutmeg	a pinch
¼ cup	oil or shortening	60 ml
1 tbsp	oil	15 ml

*Chapats are sweet pancakes that are unique to Parsi cuisine. They differ in texture and taste from crepes in France and from griddle cakes that are called pancakes in North America.*

*Chapats may be served with strawberry jam or dusted with sugar and lemon juice.*

*For variation in taste, you can add 1 tablespoon/15 g of semolina to the flour.*

*Add 2 tsp/10 g of coarsely ground almonds or charoli [also called chironji, are seeds that resemble almonds from a plant grown in India].*

1. Mix sugar and eggs together.
2. Slowly add milk and continue mixing with an eggbeater.
3. Add flour a little at a time, to the mixture to form a smooth batter.
4. Add vanilla and nutmeg and 1 tbsp/15 ml oil to the batter and mix well. Leave aside for 2 hours.
5. Heat griddle with ½ tsp/2 ml of oil.
6. Pour 2 tbsp/30 ml of batter on the griddle and spread as you would a crepe.
7. Surround pancake with another ½ tsp/2 ml of oil to facilitate turning.
8. When the center is slightly firm, pry edges and quickly turn the chapat. Allow the other side to cook. Fold in half and remove from the griddle.
9. Repeat the whole process till the batter is finished.

Makes 12

*Nergish Karanjia, USA*

# Kopra Pak

coconut sweet

¼ cup	shortening e.g. Crisco	60 g
12 oz	grated coconut	350 g
8 oz	sugar	200 g
10 oz	mavo	285 g
½ cup	milk	120 ml
¼ cup	rosewater	60 ml
a drop	red color (in 1 tsp/5 ml of water)	a drop

1. Place shortening in a non-stick pan and roast coconut for a while on little higher than medium flame.
2. Add sugar and stir until melted.
3. Add mavo and mix well. All this can be done in about 5 minutes.
4. Add rose water and color and keep stirring for 15 minutes on medium flame.
5. Remove pan from stove when mixture thickens to a soft ball. Do not dry the mix.
6. Spread mixture approximately a quarter inch/6 mm high in a slightly greased tray. Flatten to spread evenly.
7. Cool in the fridge for an hour.
8. Cut squares about one inch/2.5 cm and store.

In case you do not use mavo, use equal amount of sugar, and coconut.

You can also make the kopra paak yellow by adding half teaspoon crisp ground saffron.

Add varakh (silver paper) after you spread in the tray to give it a professional look.

Tips by Yasmin Medhora

Makes about 35 pieces

*Yasmin Medhora, USA*

## REMEMBRANCE DAYS

*Farvardigan is the Zarathushti feast in remembrance of all souls. It is based on the Farvardin Yasht, one of the oldest scriptural texts, which states that the souls of the departed come down to earth during the last ten days of the calendar. During this time, Zarathushtis invite the souls of family members who have passed away and souls of righteous people to come and bless the house with their presence. Consecrated food or "satum nu bhonu" is set out for the spirits, including favorite dishes of the departed souls. In India, this period is known as Mukhtad. In ancient Iran, there used to be a ten-day holiday to mark this festival.*

*The Farvardigan days are seen as a sacred time of remembrance, to reflect on the past and to ask for forgiveness from the living and the dead. Therefore, the last day of the year, or the day prior to NoRooz, the new year, is known as Pateti or repentance.*

F.M.D.



# STUM

## *food offerings for immortal spirits*

The *stum* is the special ritual for food offerings. This name is derived from the Avestan word *Staomi* which means 'praise'. In this ritual, cooked food, prepared by a Zarathushti who observes the strict rules of ritual purity, is offered to the souls and *fravashis* of the dear departed ones. Offering of food plays a significant role from a ritual and theological view point in Zarathushti religion. Though the souls and *fravashis* do not physically consume the food, it is believed that they enjoy and appreciate the aroma of the food and feel remembered and contented.

The *stum* ritual is generally performed three times a day, at or around the time of breakfast, lunch and dinner/supper. In the breakfast *stum*, tea or milk and certain sweetmeats connected with breakfast like *ravo* (semolina custard) are offered. In the *stum* ritual performed at the time of lunch and supper, cooked dishes such as rice, *daal* (pulses) curry, vegetables, non-vegetarian dishes (optional) and sweet dishes along with salads and *hapattis* (flat bread) are offered.

Since ancient times, Zarathushtis have offered food in rituals. Theopompus wrote in his book *History* in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE that a table of food would be set for the immortal spirits of the kings either in the outer precinct of the fire temple, a community building or the palace. This practice seems to be the *stum* ritual or something very similar. The *stum* ritual is also mentioned in the Persian *Rivayats* which were written between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. The idea of offering food stems from the desire expressed by the *fravashis* in the Farvardin Yasht (XIII.50): *Ko no stavat ko yazaite ko ufyat ko frinat ko paiti janat gaomata jasta vastravata ashanas nemangha* (Who will praise us? Who will honour us? Who will love us? Who will welcome us with offerings of clothes, food and sincere prayers?).

We are further told in paragraph 52 that being satisfied with the offerings, the *fravashis* bless the persons who remember them, in the following words: 'May there be in this house an increase of cattle and men! May there be a swift horse and a solid chariot! May the man who prays to us with offerings of food and clothing be famous and powerful.'

*Ervard Dr. Ramiyar Parvez Karanjia*

## *Sir o Sedove* garlic sauce

1 tbsp	oil	15 ml
5-6	crushed garlic cloves	5-6
	leaves of sedab, finely chopped (a strong smelling bushy plant)	
	sprigs of mint, finely chopped	
3 oz	vinegar	85 ml
2 tsp	sugar	10 g
to taste	salt and pepper	to taste
1 tsp	dried and crushed mint herbs	5 g

1. Crush garlic in hot oil, making sure it does not burn.
2. Add mint and sedab leaves and stir for one minute.
3. Dissolve the sugar in the vinegar and add.
4. Add salt and pepper to taste.
5. Simmer for another 2-3 minutes until thick.
6. Pour into a copper bowl to which mint powder is added.
7. Pour over sirog (fried bread) or komaj (cake).

*From notes by Mobed Mehraban Firouzgary, Iran*

### WELCOMING SOULS

*In the old days when community halls for public gatherings did not exist and the Zarathushti community was concentrated mainly in Yazd and Kerman, each house had its own, secluded construction for religious rites. Such a place had to be clean, well lit, close to the kitchen and secluded from frequently used rooms, especially bedrooms. Raised, open-ended platforms, the size of a room, called peskam are an architectural feature of most Zarathushti houses. The peskam would be well swept and spread with gell-e-sefid (white clay), a watery mixture of a lime like clay. The solution was sprinkled on the floor and walls of the peskam and also smeared over the entrance to the house indicating to passersby that a religious ceremony was in progress. It is also believed that the white spots help guide souls and fravashis to the location of the ceremony. A brick painted white with the gell-e-sefid is also placed next to the eatables prepared for the ceremony (myazd) which are set out on a square, white tablecloth (sofre) spread on the floor.*

*The sofré for solemn occasions does not have a mirror or rosewater like the celebratory tables, but it has other similar items: a framed picture of Zarathushtra, a prayer book, a lighted oil lamp, metal trays with lork (mixture of dried fruits). Instead of flowers, a kalacha holding myrtle (moort) branches is kept. Samples of food items prepared for the ensuing feast, including the Chome swaa (portion set aside for dogs), fruits are cut, and the sizzling, strong smelling sir o sedove is brought in during the Afringan prayers, the fragrance intended to delight Departed Souls.*

*These days the sofré is often spread on a table. The Farsi word for table is meez and meezbaan means a host – literally, one who spreads a table, indicating that a table was mainly used to serve food.*

*Mobed Mehraban Firouzgary*

**MEMORIES**

Returning to Yazd recently, brought back many wonderful childhood memories. Whilst there, I visited many places but my wish was to see Pir-e-Sabz (the green shrine) again. Pir-e-Sabz is situated on the mountain slope in the South of Iran. Only the shrine is surrounded by greenery and vegetation while all around the mountainside is rocky and bare. One can hear the water trickling from a giant rock into the pond which has been walled. It is a place of peace and tranquility.

As children, our *meme* (mother) would wake us early to start the journey to Pir-e-Sabz to avoid the heat of the midday sun. Many Zoroastrians, living in the villages scattered around Yazd prepared to travel to the holy shrine. It was time for charity and sharing food cooked in the large saucepan donated by a wealthy member of the community. *Aush-e-reshteh* or *aush-e-khirat* and *sirug* (fried naan) served with *pashmak* (candy floss), were shared by all. Along with the communal feast there would be tambourine music, dancing and singing. Each family would take boxes of sweets and nuts with them to offer to all to enjoy. When the boxes were opened they would first be offered to their sons or daughters or a member of the family who had been granted their wishes, such as having a baby or passing an exam.

Shirin Simmons

**PIR E SABZ****the green shrine**

In Zoroastrian lore, there is a towering mountain in Yazd, Iran, where Nikbanu, second daughter of Yazdegard III, the last ruler of the Sassanian Empire, was cornered by the invading Arab army in 640 CE. Frantic at the thought of being captured, Nikbanu prayed to Ahura Mazda to protect her from the invaders. According to legend, her prayers were answered – the mountain miraculously split open and she disappeared inside. A piece of her cloak remained outside when the mountain closed again. A tree growing from within the face of the mountain, said to be a remnant of Nikbanu's cane, is a reminder of the miracle and gives its name to the shrine. An ever-dripping spring located near the tree is supposed to be the tears that the mountain sheds in remembrance of Nikbanu's plight.

Each year, from June 14 – 18, thousands of Zoroastrians from Iran, India and around the world flock to Pir-e-Sabz to commemorate the miracle. At the site, believers have constructed a fire temple and several roofed pavilions to accommodate pilgrims. The only way up to the site is on foot, walking up steps carved into the mountain. All bedding, utensils and foodstuff is carried up by the pilgrims. Families stay for the five days praying, meditating, singing, and sharing the milestones they have achieved in the past year by distributing sweets.

Farishta Murzban Dinshaw





# *Aush e Reshteh*

## noodle stew

6 tbsp	cooking oil	90 ml
5	medium size onions, thinly sliced	5
5	cloves of garlic	5
1	cinnamon stick	1
1 can (15 oz)	lentils	1 can (420 g)
1 can (15 oz)	chick peas	1 can (420 g)
1 can (15 oz)	red kidney beans	1 can (420 g)
1 bunch	baby spinach, chopped	1 bunch
1 bunch	flat-leaf parsley, chopped	1 bunch
1 bunch	of leek chives, chopped	1 bunch
½ cup	cilantro, chopped	75 g
2 tbsp	fresh mint, chopped	30 g
1 ½ tsp	turmeric powder	7 g
10 oz	egg noodles or reshteh noodles	280 g
1 ½ tsp	salt	7 g
½ tsp	black pepper, freshly ground	2 g
2 tbsp	all purpose flour	30 g
1 tbsp	dried mint	15 g
½ tsp	saffron threads	2 g
1 C	sour cream or plain yogurt	240 ml

1. Fry three onions until golden in 4 tbsp/60 ml hot oil. Add garlic, cinnamon, turmeric, salt and pepper.
2. Add freshly chopped leafy greens (spinach, parsley, leek chives, mint and cilantro)
3. Mix in the beans, chick peas and lentils.
4. Add 5 cups /1.2 L of water and cook for about 15 minutes until softened. Stir occasionally.
5. Break the noodles in half and add to the liquid. Cook until softened.
6. Add 2 tbsp flour to mixture if you prefer a thicker consistency.
7. To make the topping, in 2 tbsp/30 ml oil, fry 2 onions till golden. Add remaining garlic and dried mint to hot oil till the mint darkens. In a mortar and pestle, grind the saffron threads and mix with one tbsp warm water. Drizzle the saffron liquid onto the onion mixture and mix well.
8. Ladle the aush reshteh into individual serving bowls. Add two tablespoon/30 ml of sour cream or yogurt and garnish with topping mixture.

Serves 6-8

*Eti Vajifdar, Canada*

### FOOD FOR SHARING

*The food commonly prepared and served to the congregation is aush whether it is at a seasonal gahambar or on occasions when people gather for Pir-e-Sabz or weddings.*

*Aush is said to have health giving as well as healing powers for those who are ill. Aush is made of finely chopped herbs to which are added previously soaked legumes and lentils in a whey (kashk) broth. Persian noodles (reshteh) complement the soup.*

*Every step in the preparation and serving of the aush including opening the lid of the large pot is a ritual. After prayers are said over the food, it is considered blessed, health giving and healing for those who may be ill. It is health giving and healing not just because of the ingredients, the method of preparation, and the formulation that has through the ages been put together to restore 'the hot and cold' in the body, but also because it contains the spiritual power of the healing mantra that was recited to bless the food and give it spiritual strength. Three spoons of aush are considered sufficient to aid the body heal itself and restore balance of hot and cold in the body.*

*K.E.E.*

## CELEBRATING THE SEASONS

Each year six gahambar are celebrated and represent the changing seasons reflecting the six primordial creations of Ahura Mazda:

### **Maidyozarem Gahambar**

the mid-spring feast

(sky)

April 30 to May 4

### **Maidyoshahem Gahambar**

the midsummer feast

(water)

June 29 to July 3;

### **Paitishahem Gahambar**

the harvest feast

(earth),

September 12-16;

### **Ayathrem Gahambar**

the herding feast

(flora, vegetation),

October 12-16;

### **Maidyarem Gahambar**

the mid-winter feast

(fauna, animal life)

December 31 to January 4;

### **Hamaspathmaidem Gahambar**

the feast of all souls

(humans)

March 16-20.

Each gahambar is celebrated over five days. The first four days are devoted to prayers and liturgical services, beginning with the benediction ceremony, the Afrin (Afrinagan, Afrinameh). The fifth day is for communal interaction and feasting.

A.W.



# GAHAMBAR

## congregational feasts

According to the Iranians, the word *gahambar* is derived from the Persian word signifying storage of food for the lean winter months. Another version describes the word *gahambar* as a time for gathering of food and people. Yet another version places the literal meaning as 'the proper season'. Some scholars credit the provenance to the Pahlavi word *gaasamber* - *gaas* meaning time, and *ambar* meaning getting together of people. Consensus evidently boils down to a time for gathering of food and people, in various seasons.

Fasting or deprivation has no place in Zarathushti tenets, and scholars believe that Zarathushtra laid an obligation on his followers to celebrate the high feasts. Thus, meals in every season are enjoyed in remembrance of the beneficent Creator, who has created such plenitude for the maintenance and health and happiness of every living creature, and also the Archangels. It is believed that the aroma of good food attracts spiritual beings, and that during the high feasts, or the *gahambar*s, spiritual and physical beings together partake of the victuals laid out.

The *gahambar* is also a great equalizer. Rich and poor, learned and not-so-learned, young and old, get together, pray together, sit together, eat together, laugh together and enjoy together.

Traditionally, *gahambar*s were prepared and served by volunteers. The importance of the various acts of piety, including *radih* (being charitable) and *rastih* (being truthful) is re-indoctrinated into the minds of all, and one is re-oriented with one's religious and social roots.

Armin Wandrewala

## *Ambakaliyu*

### mango chutney

1 lb	small green mangoes (do not use squishy and soft mangoes)	500 g
½ lb	jaggery (broken apart in medium size chunks)	250 g
2 tbsp	butter	30 g
2	1 inch/2.5 cm cinnamon sticks	2
4	small green cardamom	4
4	cloves	4
4 tbsp	water	60 g
½ tsp	salt	2 g

1. Peel and slice the mangos.
2. Heat the butter in a pan; add cinnamon sticks, cardamoms and cloves. Sauté till light brown.
3. Add jaggery, mangos, salt and water
4. Simmer till the mangoes have softened. Mix gently without breaking the mango slices.
5. Keep it at room temperature before serving it as a relish.

Serves 6-8

*Freny J. Deboo, USA*

#### OTHER GAHAMBARs

*Along with seasonal gahambars, there is also the khushaali no gahambar (celebratory gahambar), sometimes sponsored by one or several humdin [coreligionists] as thanksgiving event or to commemorate a special occasion, milestone, or an individual's life and work.*

*In India, the traditional gahambar menu would include ambakaliyu, a mango chutney, dhansak, a rice and lentil with meat combination; kebab, meatballs; kachumbar, onions in vinegar; and meat with potatoes. The meal would be rounded off with mango ice-cream or kulfi.*

*F.J.D.*

## *Papeta ma Gos*

### meat with potatoes

2 lb	boneless pieces of mutton	1 kg
4	marrow bones cut into 2 inch pieces	4
4 tsp	garlic	20 g
2 tsp	toasted cumin seeds	10 g
4	fresh green chilies	4
8	Kashmiri dried red chilies	8
4	pieces cinnamon bark	4
13	black peppercorns	13
8	cloves	8
8	green cardamom pods	8
3 oz	oil	80 ml
10 oz	onion, finely diced	300 g
3 ½ oz	ginger	100 g
1 lb	tomatoes finely chopped	500 g
1 lb	potatoes (peeled and diced medium)	500 g
10	green cardamom seeds, ground	10
	salt to taste	

1. Grind ginger, garlic, red and green chilies and toasted cumin seeds to a smooth paste (add lukewarm water as required for desired consistency). Leave aside to rest so it matures in taste and flavor.
2. Heat the required amount of oil in a thick bottomed sauce pan and crackle all whole spices, add and fry the diced onions till golden.
3. Add diced lamb and marrow bones and brown the meat. Add the ground ginger and garlic paste and brown further taking care not to allow the meat pieces to stick to the pan.
4. Add finely diced tomatoes to the mix and brown further. When all ingredients are combined add the required amount of water to cook till the meat is tender.
5. While the meat is cooking, blanch the potatoes in hot water till they are half done and drain off excess water. Allow to dry in a colander. Fry the potatoes till golden brown and immediately salt them.
6. When the meat is ready to be served add the fried potatoes and mix well. Sprinkle with ground green cardamom.

Serves 6-8

*Armin Wandrewala, India*

# Dhansak

## meat and vegetable stew

½ lb	lamb (or bite size chicken breast)	500g
1 C	tuver dal (split yellow daal), or red lentils or a mix of dals	250 g
½ lb	butternut squash (peeled and chopped into chunks or pineapple chunks or sweet potato	500 g
2	onions, finely chopped	2
	chopped Tomatoes	400 g
1 tsp	turmeric	5 g
to taste	salt	to taste
5 tbsp	vegetable oil	75ml
2 tsp	cumin seeds	10 g
2 tsp	coriander seeds	10 g
4	cardamom pods	4
3 cloves	of garlic, chopped finely	3 cloves
1 inch	ginger root finely chopped	2.5 cm
2	finely chopped green chilies	2
1 tsp	garam masala (mixed spices)	10 g
1 tsp	dhansak sambhar masala	10 g

1. Cook lentils, butternut squash, onions, tomatoes, turmeric and salt for 20 minutes until lentils are tender, and set aside.
2. Heat the oil in a large frying pan and roast cumin seeds, coriander and cardamom until you can smell the aroma. Grind the roasted seeds.
3. In a separate pan and add lamb pieces in small batches and fry for 5 minutes, Set aside the lamb on a plate.
4. In the same oil in which you fried the lamb add the ground seeds, ginger, garlic, and green chilies, garam masala and sambhar. Sauté for 2 minutes.
5. Combine lamb pieces, with spices, cooked lentils, squash, onions, and tomatoes. Pour a cup/250 ml of water and stir well.
6. Cover the pan and simmer for 1 hour. Uncover and cook for another 30 minutes, until the lamb is tender and daal is thick.
7. Serve hot with browned rice and gos na kevabs (meat balls).

Serves 4

Jimmy Daruvalla, UK

## MELTING POT

*In ancient Iran, gahambers were celebrated for five days. The first four days were spent in preparing for the feast. Able-bodied men, women and children worked in the fields to complete the seasonal tasks. Priests recited prayers remembering righteous ancestors, and praying for the collective good of the village and those who resided in the seven regions of the world.*

*Feasting took place on the fifth day. An old Avesta injunction, later called "Afringan e Gahambar" (or gahambar blessing), directed all participants to bring a contribution of whatever they could afford to add to the communal pot - meat, vegetables, grains. The stew made up of multiple ingredients cooked throughout the day, and was the forerunner of the Iranian dish "aush" or the Parsi staple "dhansak" served at gahambers today. It was shared at a communal feast.*

*People could also contribute firewood. For those who could not afford any contribution in kind, the Afringan suggested that they donate their time and labor.*

F.M.D.

# *Dhansak na Chawal*

## **browned rice**

2 cups	basmati rice	380 g
½ tsp	sugar	2 g
5	black peppercorns	5
4	cloves	4
1	bay leaf	1
1	1 inch/2.5 cm stick of cinnamon	1
4 ½ C	hot water	1 L
2 tbsp	vegetable cooking oil	30 ml

1. Wash and drain the rice.
2. Heat the oil in a heavy-bottomed pan and add the sugar.
3. Cook the sugar till it turns dark brown.
4. Add the whole spices and fry till they turn darker and aroma is released.
5. Add rice and mix well. Fry for two minutes, stirring to prevent sticking.
6. Mix in the hot water. Bring to a boil, then reduce to a simmer.
7. Once water dries, pick up a few grains and squeeze to see that rice is done otherwise sprinkle a little more water on it to cook.
8. Turn off the heat; cover the rice for 5 minutes or so before serving.

Serves 4

*Jimmy Daruvalla, UK*

# Dhansak

## meat and vegetable stew modified North American recipe

2 lb	beef stew meat	1 kg
1	onion chopped	1
1tsp	turmeric	5 g
1 ½ tsp	ground cumin powder	7 g
¼ tsp	garam masala	3 g
¼ tsp	sambhar powder	3 g
1 tsp	salt	5 g
¼ tsp	chilli powder	1 g
½ tsp	ginger	2 g
1tsp	minced garlic	5 g
½ can	tomato puree	½ can
1 can	split pea soup	1 can

1. Fry onion till lightly browned.
2. Add turmeric, ground cumin powder, garam masala, sambhar powder, salt, chilli powder, ginger, and minced garlic.
3. Add the tomato sauce.
4. Fry the mix of spices, tomato sauce, and onion for two minutes.
5. Add the beef stew meat. Brown, stirring often.
6. Add the water and simmer for one to two hours till meat is tender.
7. Stir in the can of split pea soup till completely mixed.
8. Serve with browned rice.

Serves 6-8

Phil Hansotia, USA

### IN MOURNING

*In Parsi tradition, after the death of a loved one, the family abstains from meat for three days, but a meal of dhansak, with meat, is eaten on the fourth day. This is the reason why dhansak is not served on celebratory occasions.*

*This tradition harks back to the time when Zarathushtis lived in an agricultural society and communal consideration fueled traditions. Mourners would come from far flung villages, and it would have bankrupted families to sacrifice their livestock to feed the mourners. Vegetables were not only more abundant, but quicker to cook and easier to digest. It was also more considerate to neighbors who sent meals to the grieving household. In some areas, it was common for mourners to bring an egg each when they came to the funeral. The eggs would be collected and scrambled to feed the congregation after the rituals.*

*This spirit of practical consideration is also the reason dhansak is served on the fourth, and last, day of mourning. Traditionally, neighbors would pool in their resources of vegetables, grains and meat to make a hearty stew that would be filling for the mourners who were making a trek back to their own villages. The addition of meat also clearly demarcated the end of the mourning period. Mourning for extended periods is not encouraged in Zarathushti doctrine.*

F.M.D.

## Gos na Kevab

### meat balls

1 lb	ground beef	400 g
1 tsp	turmeric powder	5 g
½ tsp	chilli powder	2 g
2 tsp	cumin powder	10 g
2	slices bread (without crusts, soaked with water squeezed out)	2
1	medium sized potato boiled and mashed	1
	salt to taste	
1	medium onion, finely chopped	1
1	1 inch/2.5 cm piece ginger, finely chopped	1
6	cloves garlic, finely chopped	6
2 tbsp	cilantro, chopped	30 g
2 -3	green chilies, chopped	2-3
4	eggs	4
as required	breadcrumbs	as required
	oil for frying	

1. Beat the eggs.
2. Mix together beef, turmeric, chilli and cumin powders, bread mush, mashed potato, onion, ginger, garlic, cilantro and chilies. Use some of the beaten eggs to bind.
3. Shape into round balls, dip in rest of the beaten egg, roll in the bread crumbs and fry till done. The kevabs look quite similar to large meatballs.
4. Serve with dhansak.
5. Alternatively, serve with naan, a few squeezes of lemon, some green or mango chutney and slivered onions and/or tomatoes.

Serves 6-8

*Mehernosh Bomanji, Canada*



# Vaal

## dry split beans

1 C	whole vaal soaked in water overnight	250 g
1	onion, sliced thin	1
1	tomato diced	1
1 tbsp	garlic-ginger paste	15 g
1 tbsp	cumin-garlic paste	15 g
1 tbsp	dhania-jeera powder	15 g
to taste	red chili powder	to taste
1 tbsp	Parsi garam masala	15 g
1 lump	medium jaggery	1 lump
1 tbsp	tamarind pulp	15 g
1 tsp	cinnamon powder	5 g
4	cloves	4
1 tsp	mustard seeds	5 g
2 tbsp	grated coconut, fresh or dry (optional)	30 g
as needed	oil	
to taste	salt	to taste

1. Heat a thick bottom saucepan, sauté finely sliced onions till golden brown. Add mustard seeds, and once they crackle add ginger-garlic and cumin garlic paste and sauté. Add diced tomato.
2. Add all whole spices and dry powdered spices. Add water to the mixture and add the whole *vaal*. Cover and leave to cook over a slow flame. Once the *vaal* is nearly cooked, add the grated coconut.
3. Mix the jaggery and tamarind in some water to make a fine paste and add the mixture to the nearly cooked *vaal*.
4. Simmer for a few minutes, and remove from heat. If desired, garnish with freshly chopped coriander leaves just before serving.
5. The *vaal* should be cooked dry.

### Serving suggestions

- Serve with freshly made wheat chapattis and *ambakalio* (Parsi mango preserve).
- Another ideal accompaniment to *vaal* is fist pounded onion soaked in malt vinegar or chopped green chilies soaked in malt vinegar.

Armin Wandrewala, India

### WOMEN OF COURAGE

On Roj Ashishvangh of Mah Farvardin, Parsis commemorate the valor of women during the Battle of Variav. Although not authenticated by historical evidence, the story is often retold of a Raja of Ratanpur who was enraged when the Parsis of Variav, a small village near Surat, defied his unjust demand for excessive taxes. In retaliation, the Raja sent a band of mercenaries or “gerasias” to collect the revenue. On this particular day, only women, children and the infirm were in the village as the men were away feasting on *vaal ni daar* [dry split beans] and toddy [palm wine] in a neighboring village. When the women saw the clouds of dust from hoof beats of horses racing towards the village, they realized they would have to fight off the mercenaries themselves.

Under the leadership of a woman named Navaz, the women of Variav quickly took off their saris and put on men’s clothing, covered their faces with the end of their turbans, and dashed into battle astride horses. The women fought valiantly and strategically, forcing the mercenaries to retreat over a bridge spanning the river, the end of which could be guarded till the men came home to refresh the attack. The strategy would have worked if one of the *gerasias* had not noticed earrings dangling from the ears of one of the *Variava* warriors as the wind blew her face-covering aside. Furious at having been defeated by women, the mercenaries renewed their attack with a vicious frenzy. Knowing that their defeat was in the hands of cruel mercenaries who would show them no mercy, the women jumped into the river to avoid molestation, and drowned.

When the men returned to Variav that night and heard the story of the women’s courage from those left behind, in the midst of their grief they were proud of their women. From that day onwards they decided to remember and validate the women of Variav at a communal feast in their honor every year and serve *vaal ni daar*. This feast is known as “Gahambar e Jung e Variav” [Feast of the Battle of Variav] or as “Vaal no Gahambar” [Feast of Split Beans].

F.M.D.

## SOFREH HAFT SEEN

The Iranians have four popular celebratory tables - the NoRooz Table, popularly known as the Haft Seen Table; the Marriage Table; the Sedre Pushi or Navjote Table and the Jashan and Gahambar Tables. Due to the different purposes for which the tables are laid some of the items vary but common to all is a framed picture of Zarathushtra, a prayer book, a lighted oil lamp, metal trays with lork (mixture of dried fruits) and a flower pot. On the NoRooz, Marriage and Navjote Tables is placed a mirror and rosewater sprinkler as well as a variety of sweetmeats. The flower pot is filled with flower bouquets lined with Cyprus tree branches.

The beautifully laid out Haft Seen table is one of the most significant parts of the NoRooz celebrations. This traditional table is set with seven (Farsi 'haft') items beginning with the Farsi letter 'seen'.

1. *sabzeh* - wheat, barley or lentil sprouts - symbolizing rebirth
2. *samanu* - a sweet pudding made from wheat germ- symbolizing affluence
3. *senjed* - the dried fruit of the oleaster tree - symbolizing love
4. *sir* - garlic - symbolizing medicine
5. *sib* - apples - symbolizing beauty and health
6. *somaq* - sumac berries - symbolizing (the color of) sunrise
7. *serkeh* - vinegar - symbolizing age and patience.

Mobed Mehraban Firouzgary



# NOROOZ

## spring festival

Ten thousand years ago, the Iranian king, Jamsheed Pishdadian, started the festival of NoRooz (meaning "new day" in Persian) to celebrate the coming of spring. It symbolized the triumph of good over the evil, as light literally took over the darkness of winter. The coming of spring was especially significant for the pastoral community in ancient Iran as it heralded warmer weather when farmers could begin sowing their fields and animals gave birth to their offspring.

Today, NoRooz is celebrated all around the world by people influenced by Iranian culture, notably the Zarathushtis (Zoroastrians), Shi'ite Muslims, Baha'is, and Kurds. It has the unique distinction of being the only holiday celebrated by several religious groups.

NoRooz is not a one day celebration. People prepare for it for several weeks, starting with "spring cleaning" their homes. The New Year is welcomed at the exact time when the lengths of the night and day are equal, which is at the Vernal Equinox. As the solar year is 365 days, five hours, 49 minutes and 4 seconds, NoRooz does not fall on the same day each year but moves between March 19<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> in the Gregorian calendar, although traditionally the holiday is celebrated on March 21. At the exact moment of the New Year, the oldest person in the family hugs each family member and offers them sweets and gifts of coins.

Celebrations include setting a thanksgiving table laden with Nature's bounties, such as wine, honey, fruit, flowers, pots with growing grains, sweets, painted eggs, coins, goldfish and candles, to represent prosperity, sweetness, and the beginning of new life. [See sidebar].

Festivities continue for thirteen days. The first few days are spent visiting members of the family and friends, feasting and exchanging gifts. On the last day, people have picnics in parks or on river banks to spend a day in nature. The sprouted grains are thrown into running water to carry away any bad luck that the family has seen in the past year.

Farishta Murzban Dinshaw

# Komach

## bread

4 balls	bread dough*	4 balls
2 tsp	syiah dooneh (black seeds) from Yazd	10 g
½ cup	oil	120 ml
2 tsp	turmeric	10 g

\* The tradition was to make Komach with what was left from the dough after the bread was made.

1. Take the dough and make it into small balls (small muffin size).
2. Heat the oil in a pan (low to medium heat) and add the turmeric and stir quickly on low heat.
3. Put the small balls in the oil and press a bit so it is a bit flat.
4. Add a bit of the “black seeds” on top.
5. Cover the pan and put it in the oven for 15 – 20 minutes on 350°F/180°C. Then check them and turn them over and cover and leave them for another 15 – 20 minutes.

Makes 4

*Minoo Mehrayin, Canada  
From her mother's recipe*

### SWEET BREAD

*In old days (from what I hear from my mom) when baking komach they used to put the pan in the brick oven with the lid on and then cover it with the ash and the charcoal which was left over from the fire. This way the whole pan got equal amount of medium heat from all sides and the heat left from the fire would not go to waste.*

*Initially, this was made for religious ceremonies (death anniversaries, etc.) Gradually they started adding a bit of sugar, dates, walnuts and other sweets to komach and nowadays a lot of families make it for their NoRooz table. It has evolved a lot to look like a healthy cake but with a taste of old days. I still prefer to make it the old way once in a while just to make sure we pass the “original” recipe to our next generation.*

*Minoo Mehrayin*

*On the NoRooz Table except for komaj (also komach) no other cooked food is placed. Komaj is a cake made from flour, sugar, ghee, walnuts, almonds and rosewater, and baked in copper pots. In making the komaj, all the worldly aspects of the Amesha Spentas are invoked. The butter and milk come from the animal kingdom representing Vohu Mana (Bahman). The fire used for baking represents Asha Vahishta (Ardibehesht). The metal baking pot represents Kshatra Vairya (Shahrivar). Flour and sugar are the products of the soil representing Spenta Armaity (Esfand/Aspandarmazd). Water represents Haurvatata (Khordad) and raisins, dates and nuts which are plant products represent Ameratat (Amordad).*

*Mobed Mehraban Firouzgary*

## MEMORIES

Family gatherings were important on NoRooz. Meme (mother) always wore a dress of raw silk in pale green to signify good luck and prosperity. We gathered in the lounge where a low coffee table was set with various sweets laid on large china or silver plates. The family stood near the Haft Seen table laid with a hand-embroidered white tablecloth. On it was a small dish containing white fondant, a small silver tray lined with a green silk cloth containing strands of fern, thyme, sorb and a few noghl (white fondant sweets). Meme would pour a little rosewater in our cupped hands to stroke our hair with. The perfumed water spread a special fragrance through the room. We were offered noghl (sugar coated almonds) to make a New Year wish. One of the most traditional dishes placed on the NoRooz table is kuku-ye-sabzi (savory herb cake).

S.S.

## Kuku-ye-Sabzi

### savory herb frittata

2 tbsp	butter	30 g
1 bunch	scallions, chopped	1 bunch
1 bunch	parsley, chopped	1 bunch
½ bunch	cilantro, chopped	½ bunch
½ bunch	dill, chopped	½ bunch
8	eggs	8
1 tsp	turmeric	5 g
½ tsp	salt	2 g
to taste	pepper	to taste
	roasted walnuts for garnish	

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F/180°C.
2. Sauté the scallions, parsley, cilantro and dill until the herbs are cooked, around 2 to 3 minutes. Set aside.
3. Beat the eggs, turmeric, salt and pepper.
4. Add the herbs.
5. Pour the herb and egg mixture into a baking dish and bake till eggs set, about 20-25 minutes.
6. Invert onto a serving platter and top with walnuts.
7. Alternatively, it can be eaten with yogurt.

Serves 8

*Late Katayun Felfeli, Pakistan*  
*Contributed by her daughter Mitra Irani*

# Falooda

## sweet milk drink

1 C	cold milk	240 ml
2 tbsp	rose syrup	30 ml
½ tsp	basil seeds (takmaria/tokhme sharbati)	2 g
2 tbsp	falooda (stringlike noodles made from wheat, rice or arrowroot)	30 g
1 scoop	vanilla ice cream	1 scoop
to drizzle	strawberry syrup (optional)	to drizzle

Rose syrup is the popular flavoring, but you can substitute it with saffron, which is also another traditional flavoring for falooda.

1. Soak the basil seeds for an hour, and then boil them till they are soft. Drain and set aside.
2. Mix rose syrup (or saffron) with milk in a tall glass.
3. Add basil seeds and falooda.
4. Serve with a scoop of vanilla ice-cream drizzled with strawberry syrup if you like.
5. In summers, you can just drizzle chilled falooda noodles with rose syrup and eat that as a dessert.

Serves 1

*Debbie Daruvalla-Riccio, UK*

### PEARLY DROPS

*Falooda is the favorite traditional delicacy of Iran which adorns the Haft Seen Table. While wheat starch, one of the main ingredients for Falooda can be bought readymade today, traditionally its preparation for NoRooz began at the start of winter.*

*It was prepared by soaking washed wheat in a big copper or earthen pot. This was kept in a cold place to prevent the wheat from germinating and the water regularly changed for 40 days allowing the wheat to swell and burst. The wheat was then transferred into a large stone mortar and crushed with big wooden pestles. A thick white cotton cloth was spread over the resulting wheat juice and clean, sifted wood ash was spread on the cloth. In 24 hours the moisture was absorbed and white cakes of wheat starch remained. These were cut into pieces and air dried. The wheat starch was then dissolved in water to make a thin paste. The paste was slowly added to the boiling water and stirred continuously until cooked. It was then passed through a copper sieve held over a pot of cold water into which the pearl like drops fell. The pearly falooda was stored in a cool place.*

*Mobed Mehraban Firouzgary*

# MAH BAHMAN

## month in honor of angel Bahman

In the Zarathushti calendar, the second day of each month and the eleventh month of the year is dedicated *Bahman Amashaspand*.

Bahman is the Persian form of the Pahlavi word *Wahman* and the original Avestan – *Vohu Manah*, a term which most scholars translate as the ‘Good Mind’, though there are more esoteric interpretations as well. Bahman is an *Amshaspand* or *Amesha Spenta* (variously translated as Bountiful Immortal or Archangel).

Bahman is the guardian of Ahura Mazda’s Good Creation of Animals – particularly *Goshpands* like cow, goat, sheep. It is for this reason that devout Parsis abstain from eating meat throughout the entire month of Bahman. Even those who do not observe fasting from meat for the whole month try to avoid eating meat on Bahman Roj of Bahman Mah and the days dedicated to Bahman’s *Hamkara* (co-workers) – Mohor, Gosh and Ram.

Strictly speaking, throughout the month of Bahman, a Zarathushti is expected to live on a simple diet of *ann*, *fal* and *shak* or grain, fruit and vegetable. But Parsis being Parsis cannot live on what they call *ghaas phoos* (grass and hay) and, therefore, most consider eating eggs as quite acceptable and some go even further to believe that eating fish or even fowl would be perfectly legitimate. “Aquatic creatures with fins and two legged fowls are not Goshpand,” it is argued! To each their own!

I have memories of observing Bahman Mah as a child and one of the most vivid is eating just plain *khichdi*, rice cooked with *daal* and turmeric, with spicy-tangy *baffenu*, a ripe mango pickle, or *doru*, a tangy-runny concoction made with tamarind.

Noshir H. Dadrawala



# Baffena

## mango pickle

25	semi-ripe whole mangoes (wash and dry well)	25
1 ½ bottles	vinegar	1 ½ bottles
3 bottles	til oil (sesame oil) [See box]	3 bottles
24 oz	mustard powder	675 g
2 tbsp	haldi powder (turmeric)	30 g
8 ½ tbsp	salt	125 g
3 lb	gaur (jaggery)	1 ½ kg
4 oz	garlic	125 g
1 tbsp	cinnamon (grind coarsely)	30 g
1 tbsp	cardamoms (grind coarsely)	30 g
1 ½ tsp	cloves	7 g

1. In a large deep pan, bring the prepared sesame oil to the boil.
2. Put in the mangoes and simmer till tender. Remove from fire and drain off oil.
3. Mix the rest of the ingredients with the vinegar. Add one or two tablespoons of oil to the mixture.
4. Coat each mango with this paste and place in wide-mouthed jars.
5. Pour remaining masala mixture on top.
6. Cover jars tightly and keep for ten days to ripen before using.

*Freny J. Deboo, USA*

## MEMORIES

*This Buffena recipe is from a very old collection of family books and hand written Gujarati cook books on authentic Parsi cooking. The story of Buffena dates back to mamajee (grandmother) and great-aunts' time when the best meals were made and served to family out of plain "Khichdi" (yellow rice) and Buffena on a rainy day! From the health and nutritional point of view, ingredients in Buffena such as mustard powder help prevent colds and runny noses in the cold season.*

*F.J.D*

### Oil for Pickles

Nowadays, certain local Indian grocery stores carry oil/masala for preserving pickles, but if you want to make it yourself try the following recipe.

- 3 bottles til (sesame) oil
  - 2 rice or wheat chapattis, fresh or stale
1. Put oil in a large pan and bring to the boil.
  2. Put in one chapatti and cook till one side of chapatti is coal black.
  3. Carefully turn it over and cook the other side the same way.
  4. Remove chapatti from oil and discard.
  5. Repeat this process with second chapatti.
  6. Remove all oil from the fire.
  7. Strain oil through a muslin cloth.
  8. Use this oil for all pickles. This keeps the pickle from going bad.

# *Papeta ne Sekhta ni Seengh*

## potato and drumsticks

6	large tomatoes	6
3 tbsp	oil	45 ml
1	large onion, finely chopped	1
1 ½ tbsp	ginger-garlic paste	22 g
1 tbsp	cumin, red chilies, and vinegar paste	15 g
1 tsp	curry powder	5 g
1 tsp	dhana-jeera masala	5 g
1 tsp	sambhar masala	5 g
1 tsp	chili powder	5 g
½ tsp	turmeric powder	2 g
1 can	coconut milk	1 can
3	medium size potatoes (par boiled)	3
6 oz	frozen drumsticks (sekhta-ni-seengh)	170 g
to taste	salt and lemon juice	to taste
	a small bunch of fresh cilantro, washed, stemmed and chopped	

1. Boil tomatoes in hot water for about 10-15 minutes. Remove skin and blend in a blender. Set aside.
2. In a 5-quart saucepan, fry onions till light brown. Add ginger-garlic and cumin-vinegar paste, curry powder, dhana-jeera, chili powder, turmeric and sambhar masala. Cook over low heat till aroma rises.
3. Add coconut milk, blended tomatoes and salt. Cook for about 10 minutes. Add a little water if needed.
4. Add potatoes and drumsticks and cook on medium heat till done.
5. Add salt, lemon juice and chopped coriander just before removing from stove.
6. Serve with white rice.

Serves 6-8

*Nergish Karanjia, USA*



# Channa ni Daar

## chickpeas

1 C	channa daar (washed and soaked in water for 1 hour or approx.)	150 g
4 tbsp	oil	60 ml
2	large sliced onions	2
1 tbsp	chopped cilantro leaves	15 g
to taste	salt	to taste

Grind to a paste:

4	red chilies	4
1 tsp	cumin seeds	5 g
1tsp	coriander seeds	5 g
½ tsp	turmeric powder	2 g
1	one inch/2.5 cm piece ginger	1
8	cloves garlic	8
1	half-inch/13 mm piece cinnamon	1
6	peppercorns	6

1. Heat oil and fry the onions until golden brown. Remove quarter of the fried onion from the oil and keep aside.
2. Now add the ground masala and fry with the remaining onions.
3. Keep frying the masala for about 10 minutes or so.
4. Add the washed channa daar and salt and mix with masala for another 5 – 8 minutes.
5. Add water and then cook it in the oven or on a stove top on medium heat until the daar is cooked through and very little gravy is left.
6. Once done garnish with fresh cilantro leaves and the remaining fried onions.
7. Serve hot with naan or chapatis.

Serves 2-4

Tanaz Divecha, Canada

## THERAPEUTIC HERBS

*I like to equate the composite Gujarati word, "kathor" to 'therapeutic herbs'. It encompasses a wide variety of seeds of leguminous plants of the family of pulses, which include peas, beans and lentils. The term 'pulse' is now used exclusively for dry seeds, thus excluding green peas and a variety of green beans, which are considered green vegetables.*

*Pulses are vital because of their high protein content (around 25% protein, which is twice the amount in wheat and triple that of rice) but the essential amino acid constituents are marginally less. Pulses are gluten-free and have a high content of 'resistant starch', which is not absorbed in the gut, thus reducing total calorie intake. Their combination of insoluble fiber and soluble fiber gives a mild laxative effect ensuring intestinal health. A protective fatty acid also keeps colon cells healthy because of its anti-inflammatory and anti-cancer properties.*

*The cholesterol lowering effects of pulses are related to these factors: soluble fibre, vegetable protein, chemicals of the gut organism (E. coli) and fatty acids. They thus reduce risk of heart disease by lowering blood pressure. They restrict serum glucose levels from rising too rapidly, thus reducing the risk of diabetes and obesity. They increase absorption of non-heme iron (iron of vegetables).*

*Pulses must be soaked overnight to eliminate most or all of the phytic acid content, which interferes with digestion, delays absorption and causes abdominal fullness/bloating.*

*Pulses in our traditional Zarathushti diet comprise chora (black-eyed beans), channa daal (two varieties of chickpeas), Masoor (whole red lentils), split red lentils, red kidney beans, broad beans (Fava beans), toovar (toor daal), mag (mung beans), vaal beans and urad daal.*

Sam Kerr

# Kuku Cauliflower

## cauliflower frittata

1 tsp	oil	5 ml
1	large onion, thinly sliced	1
1 tsp	cumin powder	5 g
½ tsp	garlic paste	2 g
a pinch	turmeric	a pinch
a pinch	saffron	a pinch
1	finely chopped green chili	1
	small pinch of paprika or red chili powder	
1 lb	chopped cauliflower (medium to small pieces)	500 g
6	eggs at room temperature	6
to taste	salt	to taste
handful	finely chopped fresh herbs - coriander, parsley or basil	handful
4 oz	grated cheese	115 g
4 oz	milk	120 ml
a pinch	baking powder	a pinch

1. In a 10 inch/25 cm skillet heat oil and sauté the onion.
2. Add cumin powder, garlic paste, turmeric, saffron, chopped green chili paprika or red chili powder stir lightly.
3. Add chopped cauliflower. Sprinkle with salt to taste and cover until cooked. Add a touch of water if too dry.
4. While this is cooking prepare the egg mixture with eggs, herbs, cheese, milk, salt, and baking powder.
5. Once the cauliflower is cooked to desired tenderness pour over the egg mixture.
6. Cover and cook on low heat until it is cooked (about 5 minutes).
7. Alternatively, bake in a hot oven at 375° F/190° C. Do not cover if baking. It will take 12 minutes to bake to golden brown.

Serves 6-8

*Niloufer Adil Mavalvala, Canada*

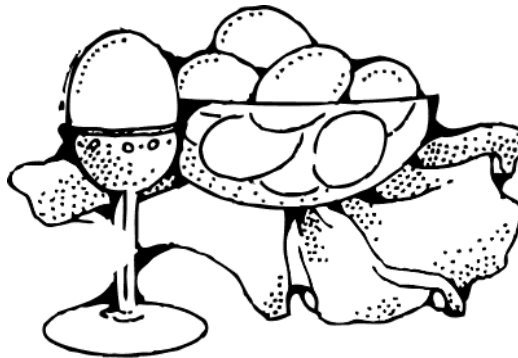
# EGGS

Eggs are an intrinsic part of Zarathushti tradition and cuisine. An egg is a traditional symbol of rebirth. In days gone by the egg, due to its shape, was a symbol of the earth.

For Zarathushtis, the egg is associated with Jamshedi NoRooz which is traditionally celebrated on 21 March, the day of the vernal equinox. At the vernal equinox, day and night are of equal length. After the equinox, days become longer. This is a return of life after the “dead of winter” and the official beginning of spring. Many animals, especially birds, begin their courtship and mating rituals during spring. Thanks to its obvious association with the beginning of life, on NoRooz Zarathushtis continue to decorate eggs as a symbol of spring and renewal.

Zarathushtis are enthusiastic about eggs in their cuisine. The *kuku*, a take on the omelet similar to the frittata, is a staple in Persian cuisine. *Per eedu*, or eggs on top of a vegetable, is a popular fall back in Parsi homes. The vegetable base may be tomatoes, spinach, okra, potatoes and onions, crisp potato chips (wafers), even heavy cream. One reason for this preference may be that initial settlers in Gujarat were mainly poor farmers, and eggs are a source of animal protein that does not require one to sacrifice the animal.

*Farishta Murzban Dinshaw*



## ACHOO MICHOO

*The egg is also used in the “achoo michoo” ritual to ward off envy and the “evil eye”. The achoo michoo ritual is done on celebratory occasions like navjotes, weddings, when families first step into their new homes, when someone graduates or wins an award.*

*A senior member of the family, traditionally a woman, circles a raw egg around the individual’s head seven times to ward off evil as it was believed that concentric circles form a shield against evil energies. The egg is then smashed on the ground beside the individual’s left foot. In North America, the egg is generally placed in a plastic bag or smashed on a tray to avoid a messy clean up.*

*In elaborate rituals, the process may be repeated with a bowl of water, rice grains, betel-nuts and dates, and finally a coconut. Although adopted from their Hindu neighbors, this is now a part of Parsi cultural practice.*

*F.M.D.*

# Kera Per Eedu

## eggs on bananas

2	medium onions (sweet variety preferred)	2
4 tbsp	canola cooking oil	60 ml
1 tsp (flat)	turmeric powder	5 g
½ tsp	salt or to taste	2 g
¾ tsp	garlic powder or fresh garlic paste	3 g
4	small green chilies finely chopped	4
4 tbsp	finely chopped fresh cilantro	60 g
4	ripe bananas (regular yellow variety)	4
4	large eggs	4

1. Heat the canola cooking oil in a non-stick saucepan over medium heat to boil.
2. Add thinly chopped onions to the hot oil and stir till they are medium pink.
3. Add garlic, turmeric, green chilies and coriander to the sautéed onions and stir some more.
4. Cut bananas into quarter inch/6 mm thick slices.
5. Lightly sprinkle salt over the banana slices and spread evenly.
6. Add banana slices to the saucepan stirring occasionally to prevent sticking to the saucepan.
7. If the banana slices break and become mushy, it's OK.
8. Add extra salt if needed.
9. When the bananas and onions are caramelized and brown in color, make four holes and break eggs into the holes. Sprinkle a tablespoon/15 ml of water around the edges, cover the saucepan and reduce the heat to low setting.
10. When the eggs are fully set to your liking, garnish the dish with finely chopped fresh coriander leaves and the dish is ready to serve.
11. Eat with hard crusted French bread or wheat rotlis.

Serves 4

*Rustom Engineer, USA*

## *Tamota Papeta Per Eedu*

eggs on tomatoes and potatoes

3	large potatoes, peeled, halved and sliced	3
2	medium onions, sliced	2
2	medium tomatoes, sliced	2
½ tsp	ginger-garlic paste	2 g
½ tsp	chilli powder	2 g
¼ tsp	turmeric powder	1 g
¼ tsp	jeera (cumin)	1 g
2	green chilies chopped	2
1 tbsp	cilantro, chopped	15 g
3	eggs	3
¼ tsp	salt and dash of pepper	1 g
	oil for cooking	

1. Fry onions in a large frying pan till golden brown.
2. Add ½ tsp/2 g ginger garlic paste and fry for a minute.
3. Then add chilli powder, turmeric powder, jeera and green chilies, and fry some more.
4. Spread mixture evenly in pan, and put in potato slices and mix lightly, till potatoes are coated with spices.
5. Put a layer of sliced tomatoes on top, add salt and pepper.
6. Cover the pan, put some water on the lid, and let cook on a slow fire for about 25 – 30 minutes.
7. Take the pan off fire and gently stir the mixture through.
8. Spread the potatoes evenly in the pan, and break the eggs on top. Cover again and put back on fire till eggs are cooked. (Alternatively, beat the eggs till stiff, spread onto hot mixture, cover and cook till done).

Serves 3

*Mikie R. Katgara, Canada*

## *Tamota Per Eedu*

### eggs on tomatoes

1tbsp	oil	15 ml
½ tsp	cumin seeds	2 g
4 cloves	garlic, chopped or grind	4 cloves
1	¼ inch 6 mm ginger, chopped or ground	1
1	green chili, finely cut	1
1	large onion, finely cut	1
4	large tomatoes, diced	4
½ tsp	salt, or according to taste	2 g
¼ bunch	coriander, finely cut	¼ bunch
3	eggs, beaten	3

1. In a fry pan heat the oil
2. Add cumin seeds chopped garlic, ginger and green chilies - sauté for a few minutes then add chopped onions and sauté it until golden brown.
3. Add the diced tomatoes and cook for a few minutes until soft.
4. Add salt and finely cut coriander.
5. Add the beaten eggs and spread it all over the tomato mixture. Cook on a low burner for 5 minutes until the eggs are set.

Serves 4-6

*B. Bhasin, Canada*

# Akoori

## Parsi scrambled eggs

4	eggs	4
2	finely chopped onions	2
4 tbsp	butter	60 g
2	finely chopped green chilies	2
2 tbsp	finely chopped cilantro	30 g
1	finely chopped tomato	1
½ tsp	minced ginger	2 g
¼ tsp	turmeric powder	1 g
to taste	salt	to taste

To make a sweeter variation of the akoori known as Bharuchi Akoori, substitute nuts and raisins for the spices. In the butter, lightly sauté 2 tsp/10 g each slivered almonds, chopped charoli, cashews and pistachios for 2-3 minutes. Remove and keep aside. In the same butter, stir in beaten eggs and when nearly scrambled add the raisins and fried nuts.

1. Fry chopped onions till they turn soft.
2. Add chopped chilies, cilantro, tomato, ginger paste and turmeric to the onions.
3. Cook the mixture for about 3 minutes then set aside.
4. Stir in beaten eggs in the above mixture.
5. Add salt and keep stirring all the time until it becomes the consistency you prefer.
6. Serve immediately.

Serves 2

*Zavare Tengra, Canada*

# Parsi Pora

## Parsi omelet

### EGGLESS PORA

You can use chickpea or garbanzo bean flour as a substitute for eggs to make an eggless pora.

Make a batter with the flour similar to a pancake batter. Onions and tomatoes may give out water once you add that to the mixture so do not make it too runny. You can always add more water later if you want a thinner consistency.

Tip from Diana Dinshaw-Parmenter

4	eggs	4
1	medium onion, finely chopped	1
2	small green chilies, seeded and chopped or substitute chopped sweet red or green pepper for less spicy pora	2
2 tbsp	cilantro	30 g
to taste	salt and black pepper	to taste
	oil for frying	

Optional ingredients for different variations:

- medium tomato, finely chopped
- ½ teaspoon/ 2g ginger garlic paste  
(or 1 minced garlic clove/¼ inch  
grated ginger)
- a pinch of turmeric

1. Whisk two whole eggs at a time to make individual poras. (Do not separate the white and yolk and whisk them separately or it will make fluffier omelets like North American omelets).
2. Add in the onion, chilies, cilantro, tomatoes and turmeric until well combined. Add salt and pepper to taste.
3. Heat some oil in a large frying pan. The pan should be shallow with sloping sides to make it easy to slide the omelet onto the plate.
4. Spoon the egg batter (½ cup/125 ml egg mixture for each 2-egg omelet) into the pan.
5. Use a spatula to spread the vegetables so it doesn't become lumpy in the centre.
6. Cook each side of the omelet for 3-4 minutes till nicely browned.
7. Repeat till all the batter is used up
8. You can serve it with warm crusty bread, cheese and jam for breakfast or roll it in a rotli to take on a picnic.

Serves 2

*Nari Dastur, USA*