

Baronial Anniversary AS LII Recipes

Redacted by Signora Onorata Elisabetta Foscari

First Course

Bādhinjān bi-Laban (Eggplant and Yoghurt Dip)

Take medium eggplant, cut off its leaves and half its stems, and half boil it in water and salt. Then take it out, dry it well and throw it in yoghurt and garlic. Refine fresh sesame oil with a bit of cumin and coriander and throw it on. Sprinkle bit of mixed spices and nigella on it, and use it. (p88, A Baghdad Cookery Book, trans. Charles Perry)

Ingredients (to serve 12)

1 eggplant
¾ cup plain yoghurt
1 or 2 cloves of garlic (depending on personal taste)
1 T sesame oil
1 t ground coriander
1 t ground cumin
A pinch of nigella seeds, coriander and cumin

To make

1. Boil your eggplant in salted water until soft. Cut it in half first for a quicker cook time
2. Put eggplant in food processor with yoghurt and garlic. Blend to a paste.
3. Add in sesame oil and first mix of cumin and coriander. Blend again until fully mixed
4. Serve with pinch of nigella seeds, coriander and cumin sprinkled on top accompanied by warm Lebanese bread

Another bārīda of fava beans by Ibn Abī Nūh al-Kātib

Snip off both ends of fresh fava beans and boil them. Next, discard the jackets and skin the beans. Pound them in a mortar and pestle along with boiled chard leaves, shelled pistachio, walnuts, and almonds.

Take the mixture out of the mortar and fry in a pan with olive oil, sesame oil, and the chopped white part of a fresh onion. While still in the frying pan, add to the mixture black pepper, cloves, spikenard, cassia, coriander seeds, cumin seeds and murri.

Spread the mixture on a platter and arrange skinned almonds on the surface so they look like scattered stars. Colour some almonds yellow with saffron and garnish the dish with them.

(pp. 229-30 Annals of the Caliph's Kitchen, Nawal Nasrallah)

This recipe I adapted heavily to make it more manageable when cooking for 50 in the Rimu Park kitchen and to allow people with allergies to eat it.

Ingredients (to serve 8)

250gm bag of frozen broad beans

½ cup of silver beet leaves

¼ cup each of ground pistachios, walnuts and almonds (I put these in the food processor to grind and measured after grinding)

1 T olive oil

½ T sesame oil

1 t pepper

½ t cloves, cinnamon, coriander, cumin¹

1 T soy sauce²

1 T blanched almonds

Pinch of saffron

To make

1. Boil beans and silver beet in separate pots until cooked
2. Put the almonds and saffron in a cup of water and leave to soak
3. Remove the grey skin from the beans (We decided not to do this for the feast due to timing and it didn't make much difference)
4. Blend beans into a paste in a food processor
5. Add silver beet and mix in
6. Mix in ground nuts
7. Add in spices
8. You can here fry the mixture in a pan with the oils, white parts of spring onions and soy sauce (I chose not to do this for the feast due to space and allergy issues. It didn't seem to make it any less delicious)
9. If you choose not to fry up the mixture add the oils and soy sauce to the mixture in the food processor and blend again
10. Put the mixture in a bowl and top with the saffron soaked almonds

¹ I did not include spikenard and substituted cassia for cinnamon due to availability.

² I chose to use soy sauce as a substitute for murri based on Charles Perry's research in to this condiment. <http://articles.latimes.com/1998/apr/01/food/fo-34730> is an article where he made murri from scratch to find it tasted like cheap soy sauce!

Maqlūbat al-Shiwā (Spiced beef patties)

The way to make it is to take cold roast meat and pound it finely with the cleaver. Put the known spices and walnut meats on it, and follow the procedure mentioned for the making the maqlūba, also with eggs. If you want it made sour, sprinkle a little lemon juice on it.

(p79, A Baghdad Cookery Book, trans. Charles Perry)

Maqlūba

Take lean meat and cut it into strips, then pound it with the cleaver, then transfer it to the mortar and pound it as fine as possible. Take fresh sumac (berries), boil them in water, then strain after macerating it well. Put in the pounded meat and boil it until it is done and has absorbed all the sumac water, the water covering it twice (ie by twice its depth). Then take it up from the pot, sprinkle lemon juice on it and spread it out to dry. Then sprinkle it with some of the finely pounded spices – dry coriander, cumin, pepper and cinnamon – and [crumble into it] bunches of dry mint. Take walnuts, pound them coarsely and add to it. Take eggs, break them, throw them on it and mix them well with it. Then fry it as cakes with fresh sesame oil in a thin iron or copper pan. (When (one) surface of them is done, then turn over the other surface. Then it is done; take it up)

My recipe is somewhere between these two in terms of complexity. I used some of the ingredients mentioned in the second as the ‘known spices’ mentioned in the first. I omitted some of the techniques and the sumac from the first due to make it less complex.

Ingredients (to serve 6)

300gm beef

1 t coriander, cumin, pepper, cinnamon

1 T dried mint

½ cup of roughly ground walnuts

2 eggs (must have 2 eggs, only 1 leads to a lack of structural integrity)

1 lemon

To make

1. Roast the beef until well done
2. Cool and then grind up finely in the food processor
3. Add in spices and Mint then mix again
4. Add in walnuts and mix
5. Take out of food processor and put in a bowl.
6. Add the eggs and mix together by hand until sticky

7. Form the mixture in to palm sized balls and flatten in to patties
8. Fry the patties until brown in a frying pan
9. Before serving squeeze half a lemon over the patties

These are lovely in pita bread with some of the eggplant dip from above

Recipes from the Second Course of the Baronial Anniversary Feast A.S. LII

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All recipes are from Annals of the Caliph's Kitchen: Ibn Sayyār al-Warrāq
Tenth Century Baghdadi Cookbook (Leiden: Brill Books, 2010)

Another sibāgh by Ibn al-Mahdi (page 186)

Choose an excellent quality chicken, scale it, and wash it.

Now take 10 pomegranates, half sweet and half sour. Extract their juice and put it in a container. Stir in 1 ūqiyya aged murri.

Give the chicken a rub with olive oil then with pleasant-tasting salt and thyme.

Grill on a rotating spit over coals. Add to the pomegranate juice and murri mix whatever dissolves of the chicken fat and continue doing this until the chicken is fully grilled.

Shell and pound 20 walnuts, stir them into the pomegranate mix, and eat the sauce [with the chicken]. It is delicious, scrumptious, wonderful, and quite popular.

My redaction to serve 6 hungry people

Ingredients

- 1kg of chicken legs
- Roughly ground salt
- A good handful of thyme (for half of the sprigs separate the leaves from stem)
- Either 1 pomegranate or 1 packet of pomegranate seeds
- Optional: 1 T lemon juice
- 1 T soy sauce

- 1 cup of ground walnuts
- Olive oil

Process

1. Heat the oven to 220°C (you may want to reduce this later when they are cooking but the higher heat will give it that slight charred taste that approximates the spit roasting of the original. Or cook on a charcoal bbq)
2. Rub the chicken legs with olive oil, salt and the thyme leaves (I used chicken legs as it was easier and cheaper to cook for a large number. You could cook a whole chicken and serve the sauce on the side)
3. Spread the rest of the sprigs of thyme over the chicken. Cook chicken until you are sure it is done.
4. To make the sauce I blended up the pomegranate seeds and added the soy sauce.¹
5. Chop or grind up the walnuts into a grit and add to the pomegranate mix.
6. I spread this mix over the chicken 15 mins before it finished cooking as it gave the walnuts a lovely roasty taste.

A note on pomegranates: In period you could both sweet and sour pomegranates. The pomegranates you buy today are the sweet ones. If you are finding your pomegranates a bit sweet or you are using the boxed juice you could add 1T of lemon juice to provide tartness

Another eggplant recipe similar to Bādhinjān Būrān (pages 227-228)

Take small eggplants and cut them lengthways into halves. Let them soak in salted water. Take a small pot and heat in it a mix of sweet olive oil and sesame oil. Fry the eggplant until done. Sprinkle the eggplant with murri and add to the pot cassia and galingale a piece each. Add as well sprigs of rue. Spread the eggplant on a platter, grind 10 shelled walnuts, and spread them over the eggplant while it is still hot. Cover the plate with a piece of cloth to let the walnuts release their oil. Spread on the dish a small amount of fresh leek which has been fried in olive oil with cilantro and rue. Serve the dish, god willing [!!]

My redaction to serve 4

Ingredients

- 1 eggplant
- Olive oil
- Sesame Oil

- Soy sauce
- 1 bunch of parsley
- 1 t of ginger and cinnamon
- ½ cup of ground walnuts
- 1 leek
- 1 T butter

Process

1. Cut the eggplant into strips lengthways
2. Fry in a splash each of olive oil and sesame oil until the eggplant is soft
3. Sprinkle over soy sauce
4. Add in 1 T of roughly chopped parsley with 1 t cinnamon and ginger (as more accessible than cassia and galingale – you could also use a lump of root ginger)
5. Put the eggplant mix on a plate. Spread over ½ cup ground walnuts
6. Cover the eggplant with a clean cloth and leave to sit while you prepare the leeks
7. Fry up leek with herbs (I used more parsley and a bit of mint but you could use coriander depending on your diners). While butter is not appropriate for this time it does give the leeks a lovely flavour. If you are aiming for authenticity use olive oil.
8. Spread leek and herbs on eggplant and serve.

A bārīda (cold dish) of dressed carrots (Page 228)

Boil the carrots, cut them in to rings like dirhams, and set them aside.

Chop onions, fresh herbs, and rue. Fry them very well in olive oil and pour on them murri and vinegar. Add as well cassia, black pepper, galangal, coriander seeds, ginger, spikenard, and cloves all ground. Bring the pot to a good boil, and pour the vinegar mixture all over the carrots, which have been put on a platter. Chop rue on it and serve it, God willing.

My redaction to serve 8

Ingredients

- 8 carrots
- 3 spring onions
- ¾ cup of chopped green herbs. I used mostly parsley with some mint
- ½ cup soy sauce
- ½ cup white balsamic vinegar

- 1 t each ground ginger, cinnamon, pepper, cloves,
- 1 t each ground coriander and caraway seeds

Process

1. Cut carrots in rounds and boil
2. Chop onions and green herbs. I chose to use green onions as I thought the taste would complement the carrots better than the more intense brown onions.
3. Fry onions and herbs until soft. Pour over soy sauce and white balsamic vinegar (the white balsamic is sweeter to counterbalance the salty soy sauce)
4. Add all the spices and bring the mixture to the boil.
5. Pour the mix over the carrots. Sprinkle over the rest of the fresh herbs