

# HELLO!

MIDDLE EAST

'The day  
our dreams  
came true'

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EXCLUSIVE

## MARK AND MICHELLE'S MAGICAL WEDDING

THE BRITISH TV STARS  
WHO MET AND FELL  
IN LOVE IN DUBAI  
• SPEECHES, DANCING  
AND SURPRISES

ANGELINA AT 40



HOW SHE BECAME  
ONE OF THE WORLD'S  
MOST INFLUENTIAL  
WOMEN





ENTERTAINING

# Pride of Persia

*Dubai-based chef Ariana Bundy, author of Pomegranates and Roses, shares the recipes of her childhood so everyone can taste the best of Iran*

## BELDERCHINEH TOO POR (QUAIL STUFFED WITH ROSE PETALS)

Iranians love stuffed food. From meats to fish, fruits to vegetables, the art of stuffing has been around for thousands of years. They use rice (never bread), along with fruits, nuts and vegetables

Serves 10

### INGREDIENTS

- 10 quails or poussins

#### For the stuffing:

- 1 large onion, grated
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp butter
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- ¼ tsp turmeric
- 1½ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp white pepper
- 200g rice
- Zest and juice of ½ lemon
- 500ml unsalted chicken stock or water

- 3 tbsp dried rose petals
- 15g dried barberries, washed (or cranberries)
- 25g dried pitted cherries
- 2 tbsp sugar
- 25g raw pistachios, ground or in slivers

#### For the basting sauce:

- 125ml orange juice
- 1 tbsp pomegranate molasses
- 3 tbsp lemon or lime juice
- Pinch of saffron threads, pounded then dissolved in 2 tbsp hot water
- 2 tbsp butter or oil

#### To roast:

- Salt and pepper
  - Melted butter or olive oil
1. Preheat the oven to 200°C (or 180°C if using poussins).
  2. To make the stuffing, fry the onion in the oil and butter; add the garlic right before the

onion turns translucent. Add the turmeric, salt and pepper, stir for a minute then add the rice. Stir this mixture for another minute or two. Add the lemon zest and juice and chicken stock or water; cover, cook the mixture on a high heat for a minute or two then lower the heat and let it simmer for about 15 minutes. Add the rose petals and take the mixture off the heat and let it cool.

3. To prepare the basting sauce mix together the orange juice, pomegranate molasses, lemon or lime juice, saffron liquid and butter or oil in a small pan. Warm up until just heated through.

4. Prepare the birds by washing and patting them dry. Then rub or brush the outside of the bird with some of the basting sauce.

5. Add the dried fruits, sugar and pistachios to the cooled rice.

6. Take a roasting pan and place a rack over it. Stuff the birds and either sew the ends closed or use half of an already squeezed lemon or lime, or an orange wedge, the skin side out, and gently press it into place. Rub a little salt and pepper and olive oil or melted butter on the skin of the birds, put them on the rack and roast them in the oven.

7. Pour the basting sauce over the birds after they've been in the oven for 10 minutes. Baste a little occasionally until the birds are beautiful and golden – 30–35 minutes for quail, 50–55 minutes for poussin.

7. Take out of the oven and allow them to rest for about 10 minutes. Place them in a pretty serving dish and scatter with fresh and dried rose petals and a few slivers of pistachios.

## SHIRIN POLO

This is the mother of all Iranian rice dishes, created around the 16th century under the reign of Shah Abbas. A similar dish – jewelled rice – was served on special occasions in ancient times, when real gems such as rubies and emeralds would be used to decorate it

Serves 6

### INGREDIENTS

- 800g rice
- Peel of 2 large oranges or 150g ready prepared peel
- 10 medium-sized carrots, cut into julienne strips
- 50g butter
- 250g sugar
- 50ml rose water
- 1½ tbsp cinnamon

### For the taadig:

- 50–75g melted butter, ghee or safflower oil, plus 1 tbsp extra for topping
- 1½ tbsp natural yoghurt
- ¼ tsp saffron threads, pounded

### To serve:

- 1 tbsp almonds
- 1 tbsp pistachios

1. Cook the rice so it's al dente, strain and set aside.
2. Place the fresh or ready-prepared orange peel in a pan and cover with water. Bring to the boil and boil for about 2–3 minutes, then discard the water. Do this three times to remove the bitterness.
3. Put 500ml water in a pan and add the orange peel, carrots, butter and sugar. Bring to the boil and boil for 15 minutes. Remove from the heat and add the rose water, then set aside.
4. Add the melted butter, ghee or oil to a heavy non-stick pan and heat briskly with 75ml water, the yoghurt, saffron and 2–3 ladles of rice. Stir well and spread the mixture over the base of the pan and start layering the rice and carrot mixture on top. Start with a layer of rice. Then add a layer of the carrot and orange peel mixture, and sprinkle with 1 tsp cinnamon. Repeat the layers, making the rice into a pyramid shape.
5. Cook the rice uninterrupted for about 45–50 minutes until fluffy.
6. Now, in order for the almonds 'not to be too tough on the teeth' as the Iranians say, you can steam them on top of the rice. Add them about 5–7 minutes before you're about to take the rice off the heat. If you prefer, put them in a little china ramekin and place it directly on the mound of rice. Pistachios don't need this treatment as they have a more delicate texture and are best when they are a little crunchy. Serve the rice on a platter and scatter with the almonds and pistachios. ▶



## TAACHIN (YOGHURT AND GARLIC MARINATED CHICKEN IN A SAFFRON RICE CAKE)

Taachin means 'to arrange everything at the bottom'. This is a savoury cake that's perfect for parties for its stunning visual effect. Rice is layered with chicken marinated with yoghurt and garlic and lots of saffron.

Serves 6

### INGREDIENTS

- 800g basmati rice, soaked in water for at least 5 hours
- 500–600g skinless, boneless, chicken breasts, cut into 8cm cubes
- 2 tbsp unsalted butter
- 1 tsp olive oil
- 1 medium white onion, chopped
- ½–1 tsp salt, few twists of pepper
- ½ tsp turmeric
- 6–7 small garlic cloves, peeled and diced
- 1kg Greek yoghurt
- ½ tsp saffron threads, pounded then dissolved in 2–3 tbsp hot water
- 4 egg yolks
- 75g dried barberries (optional)

1. Cook the rice till al dente, then drain and cool.
2. Place the chicken, butter, oil, onion, some salt and pepper, turmeric and half of the garlic in a large frying pan. Cover and cook for about 30 minutes on a low heat. Tip the mixture into a bowl and cool for 10–15 minutes.

Add the yoghurt, the rest of the garlic and saffron liquid: mix well. Marinate in the fridge for at least two hours, or overnight.

3. Preheat the oven to 190°C/375°F/Gas Mark 5. Take the chicken out of the marinade and set aside. Add the egg yolks to the marinade mixture with some extra salt and stir well.

4. Then take the cooked rice and set aside 175g for later. Ladle the remainder of the rice into the yoghurt and egg mixture. Fold it in, but be gentle so that the rice grains don't get crushed, otherwise you'll be left with a mushy cake. Stop as soon as the whole thing is amalgamated.

5. Take a non-stick baking dish and spread the reserved cup of plain rice over the bottom. Then add a third of the rice and egg mixture. Layering the dish in this way stops the rice and egg mixture coming into direct contact with the pan and burning.

6. Add a layer of chicken pieces (and barberries if using) then a layer of rice again. Repeat until the dish is filled. Cover with a lid if it has one or wrap with foil. Place in the oven and cook for 1½ hours until the bottom is golden brown. When the dish is cooked, invert it over a plate immediately, so that the crunchy taadig (crust) at the base doesn't go soggy.



## FALOUDEH (RICE NOODLE GRANITA WITH LIME AND ROSE WATER)

Faloudeh is the world's oldest ice cream: a mix of shaved ice, rice noodles, sugar and rose water. The recipe has hardly changed since it was created at court 3,000 years ago and, in Yazd, street vendors still sell it straight from giant white-copper pots. Their version is less icy and is served with a wedge of lime to squeeze on top. This simple recipe is quick to make and is amazing after a heavy meal; the sharp lime cleanses the palate yet there's enough sweetness to satisfy your need for a dessert. Some people add a dollop of Morabayeh Albaloo and chopped pistachios. I've broken with tradition and added some fresh lime juice to the mixture.

Serves 6

### INGREDIENTS

- 100g very thin rice noodles
- 850g sugar
- 125ml lime juice

- 2 tbsp Persian rose water lime or lemon wedges, to serve

1. Boil the rice noodles for a minute in a large pan of hot water. Drain and pour ice-cold water over them.
2. Boil the sugar, 500ml water and the lime juice, until the sugar dissolves, about a minute or so. Let the liquid cool. Add the noodles and the rose water to the cooled syrup, and churn in an ice-cream maker. Serve straight away or freeze for later.
3. If you haven't got an ice-cream maker, pour the mixture into a tray, freeze for 30 minutes, and fluff the ice with a fork.
4. Repeat twice more and then let the mixture freeze for a few hours or overnight. This method will break up the rice noodles considerably, but it's not really that important. Pile the ice cream high in elegant glasses and serve with lime or lemon wedges.



## **KASHGEH BADEMJOON (GRILLED AUBERGINE SPREAD)**

Kashk gives this rich aubergine dish its special edge. It is dried buttermilk – a by-product of cheese-making that is either compressed into round balls or powdered. Before adding to dishes it must be mixed with water to create a paste or liquid whey. Kashk has depth of flavour – think liquid feta but much stronger in taste and with the consistency of tahini. Ready-mixed kashk is conveniently sold in jars in Persian food shops. Kashgeh Bademjooon is generally served at parties as an appetiser with lots of thin lavash bread for dipping.

Serves 6

### **INGREDIENTS**

#### **For the aubergine spread:**

- 6–7 medium aubergines
- 60ml cup olive oil, extra virgin or regular olive oil
- 1 large onion, thinly sliced
- 4 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 75g kashk
- ½ tsp salt
- pepper, to taste

#### **For the topping:**

- 2 sprigs of fresh mint, finely chopped or 1 tsp dried mint
- 2 tbsp olive oil, plus extra to drizzle
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 3 tbsp kashk
- 1/3 tsp saffron threads, pounded then dissolved in 2 tbsp hot water
- 1 tbsp ground walnuts

1. Bake the whole aubergines at 200°C for 45–60 minutes until charred. Remove the skin, chop the flesh and place in a non-stick frying pan with the olive oil and onion, and fry until golden. Add the chopped garlic at the very end and allow it to brown. Then add just enough water to cover the mixture and let it simmer for about 20–30 minutes so that it becomes soft enough to purée.

2. Purée the cooked aubergine and onion mixture in a food processor, with a hand-held mixer, pestle and mortar or even a potato masher, along with the kashk, plus salt and pepper to taste.

3. To make the topping, fry the mint in 1 tbsp oil, and set aside. Fry the garlic in the remaining oil until golden, then set aside.

4. Spread the aubergine purée on a large shallow plate. Garnish with the fried mint and garlic, the kashk and a drizzle of olive oil and saffron liquid. Sprinkle with walnuts and serve with lavash bread or any other thin bread, a crusty baguette will also do nicely.

5. For a quick version, instead of baking whole aubergines, cut them into 8cm cubes. Place in a colander, run a little water over and then salt them to sweat away the bitterness. After 20–30 minutes, wipe the pieces with paper towels, then follow the method above.



## **MAST O KHIAR**

This yoghurt and cucumber soup is an example of a perfectly balanced 'hot' and 'cold' dish; 'cold' yoghurt is mixed with 'hot' walnuts and raisins, with fresh herbs for easy digestion.

Serves 4

### **INGREDIENTS**

- 1 large cucumber, semi-peeled, seeded and diced or 6 small cucumbers, diced
- 400g low-fat Greek yoghurt or crème fraîche
- 200g full-fat natural yoghurt
- 200g soured cream
- 50g raisins
- 4 tbsp roasted walnuts, chopped
- 1 tbsp chopped fresh mint
- ½ tsp dried mint
- 3 tarragon sprigs, finely chopped
- 2 spring onions, finely chopped

- 1 tsp sea salt
- Fresh pepper, to taste
- 1 tsp dried rose petals, to decorate

1. Mix all the ingredients except the rose petals together in a large bowl. But if preparing in advance, add the cucumbers at the last minute so that they stay crunchy and don't give out too much juice. You can also slice the cucumber first, sprinkle with salt, leave for an hour in a colander, run under the tap to remove the excess salt, dry the slices and then dice them. They'll be extra crunchy and will not go limp the next day in case you have any soup left over.

2. Sprinkle the soup with rose petals and serve in individual bowls. On a hot day, add a few ice cubes.

