

[DAW AAUW International Gourmet](#)

[SYRIAN Cuisine](#) May 30, Saturday, Krane home, 6:30 p.m.

Menu: Appetizer: Lamb pies, first course: salad, main course: kafta, cabbage rolls, chicken-**Fari Falaki**, dessert: baklava

Appetizer: Lamb pies



# Sfeeha

## For the topping

350g lamb mince

2 teaspoons each ground cinnamon and ground allspice (i add a touch more all spice)

3 tablespoons pine nuts, lightly toasted

2 handful chopped fresh parsley

2-3 teaspoons pomegranate syrup

1-2 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1 medium onion, grated

2 tomatoes, very finely chopped

2 tablespoons tahini

2 tablespoons lemon juice.

## For the dough

1 teaspoon dried yeast



1 teaspoon dried yeast  
 450g strong bread flour  
 1 1/2 teaspoon fine salt  
 125 ml olive oil  
 175 ml room temperature, natural yoghurt  
 125 ml warm water

Put all the mince ingredients into a bowl and mix well until almost a paste. Or you can mix it on a low speed on your stand mixer. Cover and leave in the fridge until you need it.

To make the dough, put in the flour, salt, yeast, make a well and add the oil and yoghurt and mix on a stand mixer. Add the water a little at a time, as you may need less or more depending on how much the flour absorbs. You are after a soft dough, but not very sticky. Continue kneading for five minutes, until the dough is elastic and smooth.

Leave to rise in the mixer bowl, with oiled clingfilm over the top, in a warm, draught free place, until it has doubled in size, around two hours. Then punch down, knead gently to a ball and leave to rise again for another 20-30 minutes.

Preheat your oven to 230 deg C.

Now for assembling; pinch of large walnut sized balls of the dough, flatten and roll a little on a lightly floured surface. This doesn't have to be perfect and don't roll thinly. Dollop on about 2-3 tablespoons of the mince mix and spread right to the outer edges of the flat, round dough as these shrink a lot on cooking.

Put the sfeeha on a baking tray and place into your oven, for 15-20 minutes, or until the lamb is cooked through. The dough should still be quite pale, with no more than a hint of gold. A green salad like fatoush would go extremely well with the sfeeha.

## Salad: Fattoush salad

Syrians often use chopped leaves in salads, rather than leaving them whole or roughly broken. Substitute feta or an aged goat's cheese if you don't have any shanklish — a strongly flavoured, crumbly Lebanese cheese available from most Middle Eastern grocers.

### PREPARATION: 10MIN

### Ingredients

- **1 pita** - crisped in oven
- **1** baby cos (romaine) lettuce, roughly chopped
- **1 cup** mint leaves, roughly chopped
- **1 cup** flat-leaf parsley leaves, roughly chopped
- **1** small red onion, finely diced
- **1** English cucumber cubed
- **3** ripe vine-ripened tomatoes, cut into large dice
- **3** radishes, cut into wedges
- **1** garlic clove, crushed with ½ tsp salt
- **2 tbsp** lemon juice
- **2 tbsp** extra virgin olive oil
- **2 tbsp** shanklish (or feta)
- **salt**
- **pepper**

### Instructions

Crisp the pita in the oven. Cool and then tear into small bite sized pieces. Toss the pita and the salad ingredients together in a large mixing bowl except for the lettuce. Pour on the lemon juice and extra virgin olive oil and toss together well. The pita needs to soak to get the flavors. After it has soaked a while add the lettuce and toss. Then add the cheese crumbleing it roughly and scatter over the top.

## Main Course: Kafta (Beef Kebabs)



## INGREDIENTS

- 8 oz. ground beef chuck
- 2 tbsp. finely chopped parsley
- 2 tbsp. finely chopped sun-dried tomatoes
- 2 tbsp. Aleppo pepper
- ¼ tsp. ground allspice
- ¾ tsp. dried mint
- ½ tsp. ground cumin
- ½ tsp. ground coriander

¼ tsp. ground cinnamon  
½ medium yellow onion, grated, drained in a strainer  
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

## INSTRUCTIONS

Build a hot charcoal fire in a grill. In a large bowl, stir together beef, parsley, tomatoes, pepper, allspice, mint, cumin, coriander, cinnamon, onions, salt, and pepper. Form 1 tbsp. beef mixture each around the end of 22 skewers; grill, turning, until lightly charred, about 4 minutes. Serve with a half pita so they kafta can be pushed off the skewer.



## Main Course: Malfouf, or Cabbage Rolls

1 large cabbage or two small cabbages

### Filling

1 cup rice, soaked overnight, rinsed, and drained  
½ lb ground meat, grassfed beef or lamb preferred  
2 tsp ground allspice  
1 ½ tsp sea salt  
½ tsp freshly ground pepper

3 tbsp cup olive oil

15 or so cloves of garlic, crushed

Seasoned stock or water, enough to cover the cabbage

1/2 cup tomato puree (optional)

A couple of lemons

Prepare the leaves:

The goal here is to remove all of your cabbage leaves, and to cook them until they are tender, flexible and become translucent. The outer leaves of cabbages are darker colored leaves, and they are tough and require longer cook times, while the inner cabbage leaves are paler and more tender.

1. Remove outer leaves of your cabbage. Bring a very large pot of water up to a boil, and carefully submerge your cabbage. Once the outer leaves soften enough, remove them with a pair of kitchen shears or a sharp knife. Set aside. Return your cabbage to the boiling water, and repeat process until your cabbage leaves are all removed.
2. Cut out the central rib out of each leaf. Then cut each cabbage leaf into sections. If the leaf is large, cut it into 3-4 sections. If the leaf is small, cut it in half. Save any cabbage remnants to sauté for a tasty side dish for another night of the week.

NOTE: If your cabbage leaves are loosely furled and fairly tender (you will know this because your cabbage will be very pale in color, almost white), then you may be able to skip the next step. Your goal is for the leaves to be translucent and tender enough to roll, but not cooked so much that they fall apart.

3. Sort your leaves by color - make a stack of dark, medium and pale leaves. Bring your water back to a boil and boil each stack until leaves are starting to turn translucent and are tender enough to roll. Dark leaves may take 10 minutes to boil, and the palest leaves may only take 1-2 minutes. Remove leaves with tongs.

Stuff and cook the rolls:

1. In a bowl, mix together the ingredients for your stuffing.
2. At a table, set out a large cutting board or platter for rolling, your stack of cabbage leaves, your bowl of stuffing, and a large pot, greased with a little olive oil on the bottom. Start with your darkest leaves, as they will be on the bottom of your pot and will cook the most thoroughly. Place about one tablespoon (less for smaller rolls) of filling onto a cabbage leaf, and mold it into a long, cigarette shape. Roll your cabbage leaves tightly, and place onto the bottom of your pan. Continue rolling, packing in your cabbage rolls onto the bottom of your pot as tightly as possible. When you have completed one layer, scatter in cloves of garlic. Then continue to build layers of cabbage rolls, scattering in garlic as you go.
3. Pour some well seasoned broth (lamb or beef would be delicious, but any broth will do, mixed with tomato puree, (if using) over the cabbage, filling just to the top layer of cabbage rolls. Place a plate on top of your cabbage rolls, then cover with a lid.
4. Bring to a boil and then simmer on very low heat for about an hour, until cabbage leaves are tender and cooked. If the top layer of rolls isn't fully submerged, add a little water or consider flipping them one at a time so that they cook thoroughly.

Serve with generous squeezes of lemon juice, spoon the garlicky broth over top, and serve with a bowl of plain, whole yogurt and a little Arabic bread.

*Sah-tain!*

Tip: Instead of steaming the leaves, try putting the head of cabbage in the freezer for 24 hours, then let it thaw. That softens the leaves for good rolling, and no need to sweat over a hot pot to do it.

Serve with a thick, plain yogurt!

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**Main Course: CHICKEN WITH CHICKPEAS, ALMONDS & PRUNES**



**Ingredients**

- 4 part boned chicken
- 75 g blanched almonds
- 1 can chickpeas, drained
- 50 – 70 g butter
- 1 tsp saffron threads
- 2 onions, very thinly sliced
- 900 ml chicken stock
- 1 small cinnamon stick
- 4 tbsp fresh Italian (flat leaf) parsley, chopped plus extra for garnishing
- Lemon juice to taste
- Prunes – a handful (optional)
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

## Method

- Put the almonds in a saucepan of water & simmer for about 2 hours until they are fairly soft, then drain them and set them aside.
  - Drain the chickpeas, and set these aside.
  - Put the chicken portions in a saucepan with the butter, half of the saffron, salt and black pepper to taste (use the pepper generously here) and the prunes if you are using them.
  - Heat gently until the butter has melted and then add the onions, the stock and bring to the boil before adding the chickpeas and the cinnamon stick; cover and cook over gentle heat for an hour.
  - Remove from the heat and, using a slotted spoon, transfer the chicken to a dish to keep warm.
  - Bring the sauce to a boil and simmer until it has reduced by about  $\frac{3}{4}$  and then add the almonds, the parsley and the rest of the saffron & cook for about 3 minutes; sharpen the sauce with a little lemon juice and stir well before pouring over the chicken & garnishing with extra parsley.
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## Dessert: Syrian Baklava

Can purchase at Sunnyvale Market, Pleasant Hill

Preparation Time: 40 min

Cooking Time: 40 min

Number of servings: 40



A sweet treat consisting of many thin layers of phyllo dough that are filled with ground walnuts and soaked in sugar syrup. Guaranteed pleasure!



## COOKING METHOD

1. To prepare the sugar syrup: put the sugar and water in a small saucepan and place over medium heat. Stir until the sugar dissolves. Leave to boil then add the lemon juice and keep on medium heat for 10 min until the syrup thickens. Add the orange blossom water and rose water. Remove from heat and transfer to a large bowl.
2. For the baklawa, butter a baking pan that has the same size as the phyllo sheets. Spread 12 sheets one at a time, generously buttering each sheet layer.
3. Spread the walnuts (or pistastashios) evenly on the 12th sheet and top the walnut with 12 other sheets; always brushing the layers with butter.
4. Cut the dough in the shape of diamonds. Make sure to cut all the way through the layers.
5. Bake in a preheated oven at 350 degrees F for around 30 min or until the top becomes golden and the dough is puffed up.
6. Remove from the oven and pour the sugar syrup over it and leave it to completely absorb the syrup.
7. Serve one piece or more if desired.