



Flavours

# KAZAKHSTAN

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## *about me*

I was born and raised in Almaty – the biggest city in Kazakhstan. I was raised in a relatively middle-class family, that went through a journey from shattering poverty to calming stability just like any other household in the 1990s. My parent made huge efforts to invest into my education and I was lucky enough to get an access to all opportunities from early childhood. As a part of a traditional Kazakh family, I was exposed to the importance of family feasts from early age, as they were meant to unite relatives from all the corners of the country. Kazakhstan is a multinational country with different cultures and cuisines, I enjoyed discovering – and still do – national cuisines of various ethnicities: Russian, Uyghur, Korean, etc. Along with other factors, my love for food discoveries shaped me as a person and helped me to go through a crisis of self-identification. So now I can proudly call myself a Kazakhstani rather than a Kazakh. As being raised in a multicultural society, it is truly hard to say that you belong to one ethnicity, whereas you represent a beautiful mix of dozens of them.

## *intro*

Kazakhstan is located in the heart of Eurasian continent and thanks to nomadic lifestyle of people inhabiting the region, the local cuisine was mostly comprised of meats, flour, and dairy products. It shares many similarities with Uzbek, Kyrgyz, and Tatar cuisines – our neighbors in the region. Historically, Kazakhstan was standing on the Silk road and region was introduced to culinary traditions from East and West. Several centuries later, in the result of notorious mass deportations of ethnic minorities from all around of Soviet Union, Kazakhstan became a new home for dozens of ethnicities starting from Poles to Koreans. This tragic event turned Kazakhstan into an 'immigrant country' and despite sad past, we are now proud of our multicultural heritage. The modern culinary traditions are rarely limited to only Kazakh dishes. Typical 'dastarkhan' (meal setting) includes Kazakh Besbarmak (meat dish), Korean banchan (set of vegetable side dishes), Russian Herring under a Fur coat or Olivier salads and Tatar Chak-chak for a dessert.

However, today I will use my chance to introduce you to 3 dishes that comprise a basis of traditional Kazakh cuisine and will get you one step closer to the nomads of Central Asia.

# BESBARMAK

(as I do it at home)



 3-4 h

## ingredients

*As it was told already, Kazakh cuisine is mostly comprised of meat. Besbarmak is apotheosis of Kazakh cuisine, a must-eat dish if you are in Kazakhstan. Different variations of this dish exist in all countries of Central Asia and even in Kazakhstan.*

*It is important to note that a basis of this dish is a horse meat. But lack of availability or ethical reasons should not stop you from cooking it. You can replace horse meat with beef or experiment and use any meat of your choice and even try out the vegetarian version. Just remember that Besbarmak is a family dish and should be comforting for you and your loved ones.*

### boullion

- 1.5kg of horse meat (or any meat of your choice)
- salt / pepper to taste

### sause

- 1-2 onions
- salt / pepper to taste
- 500ml of meet bulion

### pasta

- 600g of plain flower
- 2 cups of water
- 2 eggs
- salt to taste

### side

- 0,5kg of potatoes
- 500ml of meet bulion

## directions

1. Start with washing meat thoroughly under cold tap water and put it into deep pot and cover with water. When water boils, remove all foam, turn down the heat to the minimum and leave for 3 hours. If you're cooking beef or lamb, then cooking time should be reduced.

After 3 hours, take out the meat and let it cool down a little bit. After this you can cut it into bite size pieces and set aside for final assembly.

2. While meat is cooking, let's prepare some pasta. In a large bowl mix flour with salt and create a little well. Drop in 2 eggs and start adding water whisking all with a fork. When the mixture will turn into soft clumps, set fork aside and kneed the dough with hands. Work it for 5-10 minutes. The final product should be slightly firm and smooth.

Let the dough rest for half an hour and then kneed once again. Cut in into 2 equal part and form balls of them.

Roll each ball into thin (almost translucent) sheet of pasta. If you have pasta machine, then roll it on the thinnest setting. Cut the sheep into rectangular pieces of 15x15 cm and set aside. You can leave them on tablecloth put over your bed to dry out a bit.

# BESBARMAK (cont.)

If you're not in the mood of making pasta, you can buy it in stores. In Kazakhstan, ready to cook pasta is sold in all stores and is called Zhaima. In Europe, you can replace it with lasagna sheets, however, try to choose the thinnest sheets possible.

3. And the sauce! Sauce is called Tuzdyq. Tuzdyq is a flavourful and thick gravy made of onions and meat bouillon. Start with peeling and slicing onions. Put the onions into saucepan and add generous amount of salt and black pepper. Tuzdyq is meant to be salty, because the word Tuz is translated as Salt from Kazakh.

Cover onion and spices mix with bouillon from cooked meat. Make sure to skim for the fattiest layer of broth! So, try to scoop the bouillon from the top layers where all fat is concentrated.

Put the saucepan on the medium heat and leave under the lid for 30-40 mins.

4. Peel potatoes and cut them into big pieces. Usually I cut potato in 4 parts. Put potatoes into a pot and cover with bouillon from cooked meat. Set it to boil, turn down the heat and cook for 15-20 minutes until ready.
5. When your dish is 80% ready and your guests have already arrived, you can start assembling the dish. First cook the pasta.

Boil the meat bouillon and drop pasta sheet one by one into boiling water. Don't forget to mix constantly because sheets tend to stick to each other! In 3-5 minutes pasta should be ready. Scoop it carefully, drain excess broth and place onto the big plate.

Mix cooked pasta with half of the Tuzdyq. Mix thoroughly, make sure fat covers evenly all pasta sheets, so they will not stick.

Put cut meat on top on the pasta, in the center of the dish.

And put potatoes around meat, forming a circle.

Cover the meat and potatoes with other half of Tuzdyq and the dish is ready.

Bon Appetit!

# BAURSAK



 2 h

*Boursak is a traditional puffed bread. It varies in sizes and shapes but the recipe is pretty similar in all regions of Kazakhstan. Boursak is served along with other dishes and despite the striking resemblance with donut, it is not a dessert dish.*

## ingredients

- 700g of plain flour
- 1 pack of instant yeast
- 1 cup of milk
- 1 cup of water
- 2 Tbsp + 700ml of vegetable oil
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. sugar

## directions

1. Mix water and milk and microwave it until lukewarm. Mix warm liquids in a large bowl together with yeast and sugar and set aside for 15 minutes.
2. In another bowl, mix flour, salt, vegetable oil and yeast liquid. Knead the dough. Cover the bowl with clean towel and leave to rest for 30 mins.
3. Knead the dough once again and leave for another 30 minutes.
4. After 30 minutes, roll the dough, 1.5 cm thick and cut into any shapes you prefer. Make sure not to cut to small or too large, ideally these should be pieces 8x8cm size.
5. Now cover boursak with towel and leave to rest for 20 minutes.
6. Meanwhile, preheat 700 ml of oil in the deep pot. You can drop a small piece of dough into the oil and if it floats and starts bubbling immediately, then oils has reached correct temperature.
7. Fry boursak in batches of 7-10 pieces depending on their size. 1 minute per side. Once dough turned gold color, they are ready to serve.
8. Carefully take them onto paper towel to remove excess oil.
9. Boursak is ready to be served and eaten!

# MANTY



 2 h

*Manty is a traditional dish of Central Asian nations. It is a finely chopped pieces of meat and vegetables wrapped into thin sheet of dough and them steamed. The closest relative to our Manty more or less known to a Westerner is Chinese Bao buns with soup filling.*

## ingredients

### dough

- 0.5kg of plain flour
- 1 egg
- salt to taste
- 1 cupr of water

### filling

- 1 kg of beef fillet
- 500g of onion
- 200g of pumpkin
- salt and pepper to taste

## directions

1. First start with making a dough. Mix all ingredients in a large bowl helping yourself with a fork. When dough will look clumpy, work it with hands for 10-15 minutes. Once dough is smooth, leave it covered for 20 minutes.
2. While dough is resting, prepare the filling. Chop meat, onion and pumpkin into small pieces. You may replace fillet with ground beef but make sure to add 2-3 tbsp of water because ground beef lack of juice that makes manty so delicious.  
Mix the filling together and season it to your taste. If you feel that filling is a bit dry, add some water.
3. Take your dough and roll until very thin – almost translucent – and cut into 12x12 rectangles.
4. Take 2 tbsp of filling and put in the center of your sheet. Take all corners of the sheet and stick them together, forming an envelope like shape. Then take 2 corners of this envelope and stick them together. Make the same from the other side. In the end, you will have “number 8” on the top of your manty.
5. Put your ready manty into the steamer and cook for about 40 mins on medium high heat.
6. Once they are ready, serve them on a large dish and garnish with herbs of your choice.



## *about us*

For 18 years we have been working towards protection of human rights and providing free legal assistance to foreigners, refugees and stateless persons. Through this recipe ebook we would like to share with you our intercultural experience that comes from our daily work with persons coming from all over the world. We believe that learning about the customs and the cuisine of different cultures is a great way of building a more open society!

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