



Flavours

TAJIKISTAN

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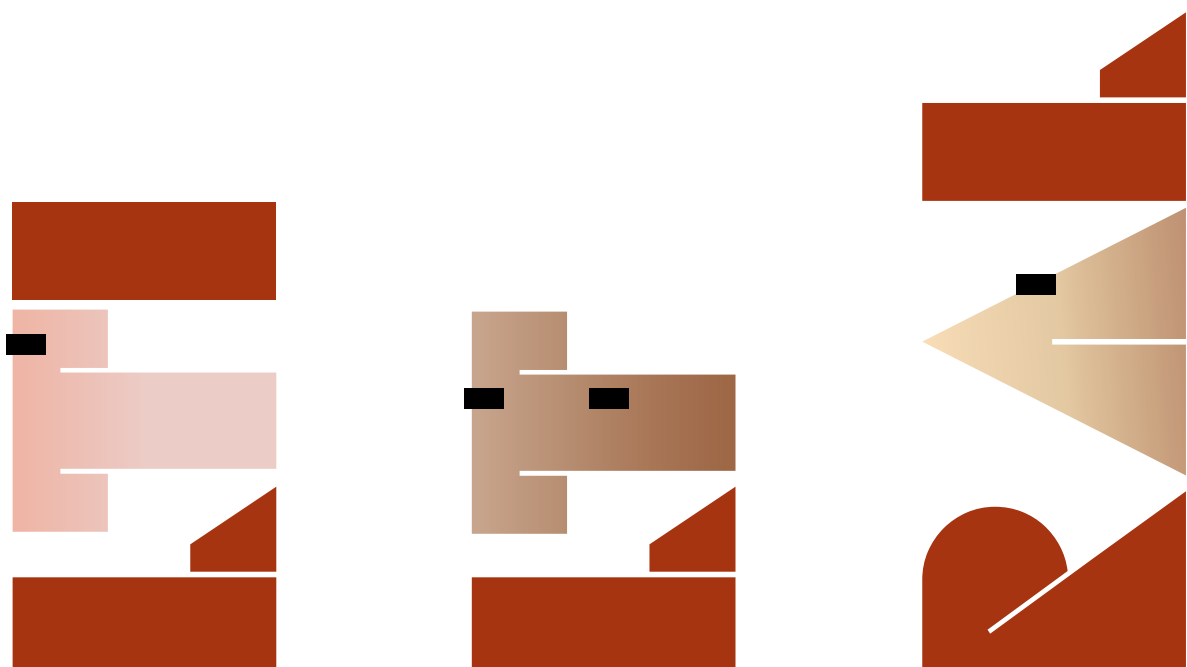
about me

I am a first generation Tajik-American originally from Brooklyn, New York. Despite living kilometers away from my ancestral home, my parents made sure that I grew up with strong consciousness of my cultural identity and history. I grew up in a trilingual household where my parents would switch between Tajiki-Persian and Russian, while I would resort to English whenever I would struggle to express myself in the other two languages. Growing up and living in Brooklyn, I was exposed to a variety of cultures and people -- from Mexico and El Salvador to Egypt and Palestine to Nigeria and Morocco and Poland to Slovakia. A 30 minute train ride in Brooklyn will allow you to travel across the globe; a 30 minute train ride will transport you from my home, Brighton Beach -- where sweet Russian babushki are selling piroshki and chebureki on street corners -- to Bay Ridge, where the smell of freshly baked manakeesh and maqloubeh engulf the busy streets. However, like all children living in the diaspora, I have experienced that feeling of in-betweenness and unbelonging - I was neither Tajik enough, nor American enough (however some may define what constitutes these socially constructed identities). Outside of home, I never spoke Tajiki nor had any Tajik friends or acquaintances, therefore, that part of my identity remained marginalized for a long time. I was always met with glances of confusion whenever I would reveal my ethnic background to other Americans -- "is that in the Middle East?" they would suspiciously ask. Despite all of this, meeting and befriending other diaspora kids with hyphenated identities and with similar experiences led me to deconstruct the false idea of ethnic authenticity. As Palestinian-American author, Edward Said, has eloquently elaborated: "No one today is purely one thing. Labels like Indian, or woman, or Muslim, or American are not more than starting-points, which if followed into actual experience for only a moment are quickly left behind." This also led me to seek out ways to reconnect with my ancestral culture kilometers away, whether through reading about Tajik and Persian history, reading Tajik literature and improving my Tajik and my Persian, and of course, through cooking. I also began to familiarize myself with the history of my native New York by visiting the Little Syria that used to be a bustling neighborhood on Battery Park and accomodated a small Syrian minority from the late 1800s to 1924, as well as the history of Greenpoint, a neighborhood in Brooklyn which accommodates the second largest Polish population in the U.S. Since I have been

living in Poland, I had the opportunity to introduce Polish people to American and Tajik cuisines, and in return, I was introduced to the Polish cuisine and Polish traditions. Poland's own multicultural historical past which can still be observed on the streets of Kazimierz in Krakow and in north-eastern Poland where Lipka Tatar mosques continue to serve the small Polish-Muslim minority to this day, and the current inflow of Chechen, Tajik and Ukrainian migrants further emphasizes the multicultural character of the country, is what attracted me to the country and allowed me to relate to it on a personal level.

intro

Tajik cuisine shares many similarities with Afghan, Iranian and Uzbek cuisines and many of its ingredients can be found across West, South, and East Asia due to its geographical proximity and historical interactions with these regions. For instance, Gushi Fil is consumed all across the Persian-speaking world -- from Afghanistan to Iran during Eid and Nowruz (Persian New Year) festivities. Shir choy is consumed in Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Kashmir. Tajik cuisine is generally not vegetarian-friendly, as meaty dishes such as kabob, sambusa, oshi palov and mantu are widely consumed. The national dish of Tajikistan, however, is an exception to the rule.



QURUTOP



Qurutob (from Tajiki-Persian: Qurut-dried sour yoghurt balls and Ob-Water) is the national dish of Tajikistan. It is traditionally a vegetarian dish from Southern regions of Tajikistan, although some may add lamb to it. Tajikistan is also a mountainous country -- about 80% of the country is covered by mountains, therefore winters are tough with temperatures below zero and with very little to no food was available. This dish, which requires very basic ingredients such as flour, milk and vegetables, helped people to survive the harsh conditions in the mountainous regions. It spread to the capital, Dushanbe, and became a staple dish during and after the Civil War because of the food shortage -- especially shortage of meat, as well as for the unsafe conditions that restricted people from travelling far distances. It is large and is meant to be eaten with a group of people, therefore making it a dish that unites people.

ingredients

- 300g of greek yogurt
- 4 medium tomatoes
- 4 medium cucumbers
- 3 medium onions
- 2 bunches cilantro
- 2 bunches dill
- 2 bunches spring onion
- 2 pieces chilli pepper
- 50g of vegetable oil

fatir bread

- 600g of flour
- 1 tsp of salt
- 250ml of water
- 250g of butter
- 1 tbsp of oil

directions

Qurotop:

1. Heat the Greek yogurt and water in a saucepan over medium heat. Add salt.
2. Stir regularly for 30 minutes. The result should yield about 2/3 of the initial weight of yogurt.
3. Cut the tomatoes, cucumbers and onions into cubes. Chop the dill, spring onion and cilantro. Set aside.
4. Sauté onion in a skillet in hot oil until translucent, about 8 minutes.
5. Meanwhile, place small pieces of fatir bread in a large bowl.
6. Top with yogurt.
7. Pour the onion with the hot oil.
8. Top with spring onions, tomatoes, cucumbers, dill and cilantro.
9. Decorate with chilli peppers.

Serve immediately.

● QURUTOP (cd.)

Chleb fatir:

1. Add salt and water to the flour and mold into dough. Let the dough rest for 30 minutes, covered.
2. After 30 minutes has passed, we can begin thinly rolling the dough. Cut the rolled dough into three pieces.
3. Smother a layer of dough with melted butter. Repeat with each layer. Combine the three layers together.
4. Roll the dough into an envelope.
5. Smother this side with melted butter as well and squash into a roulette.
6. Leave the dough for 10 minutes, covered.
7. After 10 minutes, begin to shape the dough into a flat bread form with the help of a rolling pin.
8. With the help of a fork, create small holes in the dough. Smother the dough with oil afterwards.
9. Place the dough in a 200 degree oven for 25 minutes or until well-baked (has a golden appearance).

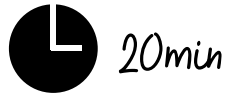
Take it out of the oven and let it cool.

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SHIR CHOY AND KULCHA



20min

Shir choy (from Persian: "shir" - "milk", choi - "tea") is consumed all over Tajikistan, but it is an essential part of the Pamiri cuisine. It is a very simple, yet calorific, dish that is consumed during breakfast. Every Pamiri consumes shir choy for breakfast, regardless of what part of the world they live in.

ingredients

shir choy

- 1 1/2 cup of water
- 200ml of milk
- 2 tbsp of black tea
- 50g of walnuts
- 1/2 tbsp of salt
- butter by taste

kulcha bread

- 2 1/2 cups of flour
- 1 tbsp of dry yeast, activated
- 1 tbsp of salt
- 3 tbsp of melter butter
- 150ml of milk
- 1/4 cup of warm water

directions

Shir choy:

1. In a small pot, bring to boil 1 1/2 cups of water.
2. Add black tea, salt and walnuts.
3. Cover and let boil for 5 minutes.
4. Add milk, bring to boil and remove from heat.

Serve with butter and kulcha bread.

Kulcha:

1. Put 2 1/2 cups of flour in a mixing bowl, add active dry yeast and salt and mix them all together.
2. In separate measuring cup, mix together warm milk and melted butter.
3. Add to dry ingredients, then add warm water.
4. Mix together and knead well.
5. Form into a ball, cover with a towel and let it rest in a warm place for 2 1/2 hours.
6. Once the dough doubles in size, make a round flat bread and pierce the top with the fork.
7. Place on a baking sheet, brush with water and bake in a 375 F (190C) oven for 15-20 minutes until golden brown.

*Recipe taken from Gulshermo YouTube channel

GUSHI FIL



Gushi Fil (from Persian: Gush-ears and Fil-elephant - meaning ear of an elephant) is a traditional Tajik, Afghan and Iranian sweet that is shaped into elephant ears and made from fried dough covered with pistachio pieces. It is usually prepared during Eid festivities, as well as during Nowruz (Persian New Year).

ingredients

dough

- 4 cups of flour
- 5 medium eggs
- 1 cup of warm milk
- 1/2 cup of vegetable oil
- 1 tsp of baking powder
- pinch of salt

syrup

- 3 cups of sugar
- 3 cups of hot water
- 1 lemon juice
- saffron (opcjonal)
- pistachios (for decoration at the end)

directions

1. Crack the eggs in a big bowl. Add baking powder, pinch of salt and vegetable oil.
2. Add flour and mix.
3. Mix all together.
4. At the end add warm milk, Combine all ingredients well.
5. Cover the bowl and Leave the dough to rest for 30 minutes. Meanwhile, prepare the syrup. In a pan with hot water, add sugar and dissolve it. Squeeze the lemon juice. Boil the syrup on medium to high heat for 10 minutes.
6. After 30 minutes, make 4 dough balls.
7. Sprinkle some flour on the surface board. Make thin and flat one of the dough. Using a large cutter and cut them in a circle shape. Pinch half the circle as you see in the photo. Heat the oil in a pan. Fry in hot oil for 2-3 minutes. Put them in the syrup for 1-2 minutes and topped with chopped pistachios.
8. Pinch half the circle as you see in the photo.
9. Fry in hot oil for 2-3 minutes.
10. Put them in the syrup for 1-2 minutes and top with chopped pistachios.



about us

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