



Flavours

UNITED STATES

(Thanksgiving edition)

author: Sarvar Akobirova

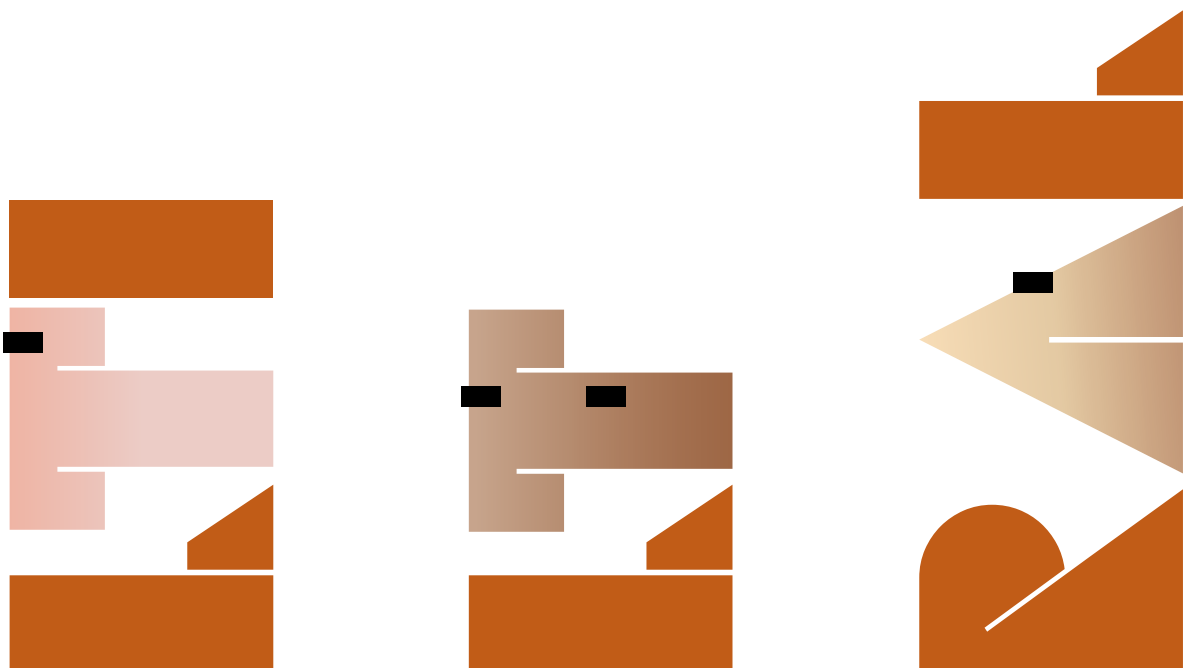
about me

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 a 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

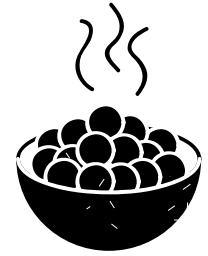
accommodates the second largest Polish population in the U.S. Since I have been living in Poland, I had the opportunity to introduce Polish people to American and Tajik cuisines, and in return, I was introduced to the Polish cuisine and Polish traditions. Poland's own multicultural historical past -- which can still be observed on the streets of Kazimierz in Krakow, 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 which 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

The American cuisine varies from region to region, and has influences from diverse set of cultures due to its immigrant history. Thanksgiving is one of the widely celebrated national holidays that is centered on family and unity. Despite the positive feelings and images that are associated with Thanksgiving and that Americans are taught from an early age -- for Native Americans, this day is marked as a day of mourning. Non-indigenous Americans are taught what happened in Plymouth in 1621 was a friendly and celebratory exchange between the Pilgrims and the Wampanoags. Unfortunately, many teaching materials give an inaccurate portrayal of the first Thanksgiving that centers on the perspective of the Pilgrims, and overlooks the tragic destiny that came upon the Native Americans after the exchange. Within 20 years, European disease and treachery had decimated the Wampanoags -- some estimate that diseases accounted for a death toll reaching 90 percent in some Native American communities. Today, some Native Americans may choose to boycott the holiday, while some continue to celebrate but also commemorate and recognize the tragic events behind it. Therefore, while this holiday brings joy and warmth to most Americans, we must also recognize the dark history of our nation's foundation that had a huge toll on our fellow indigenous Americans.



STOVETOP MAC'N CHEESE



 30 min

Mac n' cheese is an all-time favorite classic American dish. It can be consumed all year round -- no matter the time of the year. It is especially commonly found on Thanksgiving tables in the Southern states. The ingredients and preparation are relatively easy and quick to make, therefore making it a convenient dish that even busy folks cannot make an excuse to not prepare.

**Recipe taken from Dinner at the Zoo*

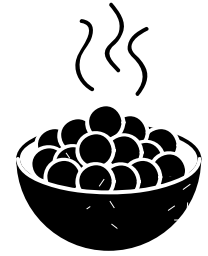
ingredients

- 1 pound of elbow macaroni
- 4 cups of cheddar cheese (shredded)
- 1 cup of mozzarella cheese (shredded)
- 3 and 1/2 cup of whole milk
- 2 Tbsp. of unsalted butter
- 2 Tbsp. of flour
- 3/4 Tbsp. of salt
- 2 cups of water
- 1/2 tsp. of smoked paprika powder
- 1/4 tsp. of black pepper
- 1/4 tsp. of garlic powder
- 1/4 tsp. of onion powder
- 1 Tbsp. of parsley (chopped)

directions

1. Melt the butter in a large pot over medium heat. Add the flour, then whisk until combined, about 30 seconds.
2. Pour in the water and whisk until smooth and just thickened.
3. Add the milk and whisk until combined.
4. Stir in the macaroni, salt, garlic powder, onion powder, smoked paprika and pepper, then bring the mixture to a simmer.
5. Cook for 8-10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until pasta is done.
6. Turn the heat to low, then stir in the cheeses. Keep stirring until the sauce is smooth. Sprinkle with parsley and serve.

MASHED SWEET POTATO



 30 min

Mashed sweet potatoes is another all time-favorite dish that is relatively easy to make. It can be sweet or savory, and is a great accompaniment to your Turkey or Tofurkey (for vegetarians). This particular recipe aims for a savoury taste.

**Recipe take from COOKIE + Kate*

ingredients


- 7 medium sweet potatoes
- 3 Tbsp. of unsalted butter (cubed)
- 1/4 cup of sour cream
- 1/3 cup of green onion (finely sliced)
- 1 medium garlic clove (minced)
- pinch of ground black pepper
- 1 tsp. of olive oil extra virgin
- 1/3 cup of parsley
- 2 tsp of salt

directions

1. Place the cubed sweet potatoes in a large saucepan or Dutch oven and add enough water to cover by about 1". Add 1 teaspoon of the salt and bring the mixture to a simmer over medium-high heat. Reduce the heat and simmer, uncovered, until the potatoes are tender (in other words, it's easy to slide a fork in and out), about 9 to 12 minutes.
2. Drain well, then return the potatoes to the pot. Mash the sweet potatoes to your desired consistency.
3. Promptly add almost all of the green onion and parsley, reserving a small amount of each for garnish. Add the garlic, and stir to combine. Then stir in most of the sour cream (reserve roughly 1 tablespoon for garnish), all of the butter, and the remaining 1 teaspoon salt. Season to taste with additional salt (I usually add another 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon) and freshly ground black pepper.
4. Transfer the mashed potatoes to a serving bowl and swirl the reserved sour cream onto the top with a spoon. Sprinkle with the reserved green onion and parsley, drizzle the top lightly with olive oil, and finish with a sprinkle of pepper.
5. Serve promptly. Leftovers will keep well, covered and refrigerated, for 3 to 4 days.

PECAN PIE



 1 day

Pecan pie is the perfect sweet pie that can be enjoyed after you and your family have devoured the Turkey, Mac N' Cheese, mashed potatoes. Therefore, avoid overeating and make sure to leave room for this delicious treat!

**Recipe was taken from Bon Appetite*

ingredients

crust

- 1 Tbsp. of sugar
- 1 and 1/2 tsp. of salt
- 2 cups of all-purpose flour
- 5 Tbsp. of unsalted butter (chilled, cut into pieces)
- 3 Tbsp. of vegetable shortening
- 1 Tbsp. of apple cider

filling

- 2 cups of pecan halves
- 6 Tbsp. of unsalted butter (melted, slightly cooled)
- 4 large eggs
- 1 and 1/2 Tbsp. of salt
- 2/3 cup of light brown sugar
- 1 cup of light corn syrup
- 1 Tbsp. of vanilla extract
- 1 Tbsp. of dark molasses

directions

Crust:

1. Pulse sugar, salt, and 2 cups flour in a food processor until combined. Add butter and lard and pulse until mixture resembles coarse meal with a few pieces of butter and lard visible, about fifteen 1-second pulses. With motor running, drizzle in vinegar and 5 and 1/2 Tbsp. ice water and pulse until dough is still crumbly but just holds together when squeezed (add 1 tsp. water at a time if necessary, but be careful not to overwork dough).
2. Turn out dough onto a work surface. Knead 1-2 times, pressing just to incorporate any shaggy pieces. Flatten into a 6"-wide disk. Wrap with plastic wrap and chill at least 1 hour.
3. Preheat oven to 425°. Roll out dough on a lightly floured work surface to a 14" round. Transfer to a 9" pie dish. Pick up edges and allow dough to slump down into dish, letting excess dough hang over dish. Trim, leaving about a 1" overhang. Fold overhang under; pinch and crimp. Chill 30 minutes.
4. Line dough with parchment paper or foil, leaving some overhang. Fill with pie weights or dried beans. Bake until crust is dry around the edges and just beginning to lightly brown, 25-35 minutes. Carefully remove parchment and weights and reduce oven temperature to 350°. Bake until crust is set and beginning to brown in the center, 10-15 minutes. Transfer to a wire rack and let cool.
5. Do Ahead: Dough can be made 3 days ahead; keep chilled, or freeze up to 2 months. Crust can be baked 1 day ahead; tightly wrap and store at room temperature.

PECAN PIE (cont.)

Filling and Assembly:

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Toast pecans on a rimmed baking sheet until browned and fragrant, 8–10 minutes. Let cool.
2. Reduce oven temperature to 325°. Whisk eggs, corn syrup, brown sugar, molasses, vanilla, and salt in a large bowl until smooth. Slowly whisk in melted butter until combined. Fold in pecans and pour into cooled crust.
3. Bake pie until edges are set and slightly puffed but center is recessed and wobbles like Jell-O, 55–70 minutes (it will continue to set after baking). Transfer to a wire rack and let cool at least 3 hours before slicing. Serve with ice cream.
4. Do Ahead: Pie can be baked 1 day ahead; tightly wrap and chill. Serve warm or at room temperature.



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!

In our cycle called „Multicultural Flavours” we will be publishing a free ebook featuring a different cuisine every month. If you like our work, we will be grateful if you would support us by a voluntary donation:

Bank account number: PL 65 1 160 2202 0000 0000 4950 853 1

(Bank Millennium S.A.).

SWIFT/ BIC: BIGBPLPW

It is enough if you donate 5, 10 or 50 EUR – every donation means a lot to us! Thanks to collected funds we will be able to continue our mission of helping refugees. Thanks for all your support!

www.pomocprawna.org

www.facebook.com/pomocprawna.org

twitter.com/CPPHN

www.youtube.com/user/CentrumPomocyPrawnej

