

JEWISH FLAVOR: MEDITERRANEAN COMFORT FOOD

**with Vered Guttman
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RICE PAPER FETA BUREKAS

Recipe by Vered Guttman

Yields 18 burekas

Ingredients:

- ½ lb cream cheese at room temperature
- ½ lb feta at room temperature
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- 2 green onions, chopped (optional)
- Olive oil (about ¼ cup)
- 18 rice papers, 9" round (22 cm)
- 1 egg yolk
- 3 tablespoons sesame seeds
- 3 tablespoons nigella seeds or black sesame seeds



Directions:

1. Oven to 425 degrees. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper. Set aside.
2. In a medium bowl, mix cream cheese, feta, egg and green onion. Set aside.
3. Fill a large bowl that can fit the rice paper with water. Drizzle a little oil, the size of the rice paper, on the working surface.
4. Soak rice paper, one at a time, in water for 20-30 seconds, until pliable. Shake water off and place on drizzled oil on the working surface. Put a spoonful of the Cheese Filling along the lower third of the rice paper. Fold the bottom edge away from you to just cover the filling; then fold the 2 sides in to the center. Roll the burekas away from you a couple of times to make a square package, ending with the seam side down. Place on the baking sheet. Repeat with the rest of the rice papers.
5. Use a fork to gently poke holes at the top of each burekas. This will prevent it from exploding or leaking the filling in the oven. Put egg yolk in a small bowl, add 2 tablespoons of water and 1 tablespoon of oil and mix. Use pastry brush to brush burekas with egg, then sprinkle with sesame and nigella seeds.
6. Bake for 20 minutes until burekas are light golden color. Let cool on a rack for 5-10 minutes and serve.

For more recipes follow Vered on Instagram [@veredguttman](https://www.instagram.com/veredguttman) or visit veredguttman.com.

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IRAQI-KURDISH KIBBEH (BEED STUFFED DUMPLINGS)

Recipe by Vered Guttman

Serves 6, Yields about 18 kibbeh

Ingredients:

For the soup

3-4 medium sized beets, greens included if possible
5-8 leaves Swiss chard (if beet greens are not available)
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 yellow onion, chopped
2 tablespoon tomato paste
4-5 garlic cloves, sliced
8 cups chicken stock or vegan chicken-flavored stock
 $\frac{1}{3}$ cup lemon juice
1 tablespoon dried mint
1 tablespoon sugar
2 teaspoons salt
Olive oil to drizzle

For the kibbeh shell:

1½ cups fine (regular) bulgar
1½ cups water
1½ teaspoons kosher salt
1½ cups farina

For the filling:

$\frac{3}{4}$ lb. beef chuck
1 teaspoon kosher salt
Black pepper
1 tablespoon olive oil
6 large garlic cloves, skin on
 $\frac{1}{2}$ bunch cilantro, chopped
1 teaspoon dried mint
Pinch nutmeg

For a vegan filling (optional):

$\frac{3}{4}$ lb. meatless ground beef
 $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon salt
Black pepper
1 minced garlic clove
 $\frac{1}{2}$ bunch cilantro, chopped
1 teaspoon dried mint
Pinch nutmeg



Directions:

1. Start with the filling. Salt and pepper beef chuck on both sides. Put a small saucepan on medium-high heat, add oil, and sear chuck on both sides for about 6 minutes. Add water just to cover, then add garlic cloves around the chuck. Bring to boil, then reduce heat to low, cover pot and cook for 2 ½ hours, or until beef is very tender and falling apart. You can do that a day ahead.
2. Pull the beef chuck apart or use a knife to chop it. Put in a medium bowl, squeeze cooked garlic cloves out of their skin and add to beef, together with cilantro, Minch and nutmeg. Mix and adjust salt to taste. Set aside.
3. For the vegan filling, simply mix all the ingredients in a medium bowl. Set aside.
4. Put bulgar in a fine sieve and wash with water for 60 seconds. Put in a bowl of a stand mixer or a large bowl, add 1½ cups water and salt, mix, cover bowl with towel and set aside for 15 minutes for the bulgar to absorb the water.
5. After 15 minutes, add farina. Mix in a stand mixer fitted with the dough hook for 5 minutes, scrapping the sides of the bowl as needed, to create a soft dough. If it seems too dry, add a little water, if it's too watery, add a little more farina. Cover bowl with towel and set aside.
6. Start making the soup. Separate green parts of beet leaves of Swiss chard from their stalks. Finely slice stalk, set aside. Slice green parts and keep them separately. Peel and half beets, then slice into thin slices.
7. In a large, preferably wide pot, heat olive oil over medium heat. Add onion, leave stalks and sauté for 5 minutes. Add sliced beets, tomato paste and garlic and cook for another 3 minutes, stirring occasionally.
8. Add greens to pot together with stock, lemon juice, mint, sugar, salt. Bring to boil, then lower heat, cover pot and continue to cook as you make the kibbeh.
9. Spray a baking sheet with oil. Fill a small bowl with water and put it next to the dough mixture and the filling.
10. Wet your hands and spoon a 1.5" ball of dough into your palm. Flatten the dough in your hand, then put a spoonful of the filling inside. Using your other hand, pinch the dough around the filling to completely cover it, roll the covered meatball in your hands to make sure it's round and not ripped (you can close any hole in the dough by adding a little more dough from the bowl). Then flatten the ball into a disk and put on the greased baking sheet. Repeat with four more kibbeh.
11. Taste soup and adjust salt and lemon juice. Increase heat to medium and gently add 5 kibbeh into the soup, make sure they do not touch each other. Keep soup on low simmer as you prepare the rest of the kibbeh, 5 at a time, and adding to the soup.
12. When all kibbeh are in the soup, cover pot and lower the heat and cook on low simmer for 40 minutes, shaking pot occasionally, to prevent from kibbeh to get stuck to one another.
13. Serve in large bowls with a drizzle of olive oil.

CELERY ROOT AND SWISS CHARD PASHTIDA (KUGEL)

Recipe by Vered Guttman

In Israel we would've called it Pashtida. Spoon bread sounds as good.



Serves 8

Ingredients:

- 3 celery roots, peeled
- 3 gold potatoes, peeled
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 yellow onion, diced
- 1 large bunch Swiss chard, green parts only, chopped
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cups heavy cream
- 2 large eggs
- 2 egg yolks
- 4 tablespoons flour
- $2\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons salt
- Pinch nutmeg
- 1 cup grated Gruyère or parmesan cheese

Directions:

1. Oven to 350 degrees. Brush a 8" by 10" casserole dish with olive oil.
2. Cut celery root and potatoes to 2 inch cubes. Put in a sauce pan, cover with boiling water and bring to boil over high heat. Cover, lower heat and cook for 15-20 minutes, until tender. Drain, transfer to a large bowl and mash with a fork to a chunky mix. Set aside.
3. Put olive oil and butter in a large skillet over medium-high heat, add onion and sauté for 5 minutes. Add Swiss chard, sauté for another 2 minutes until wilted and remove from heat. Transfer into the bowl with celery root.
4. In a small bowl mix cream, eggs, yolks, flour, salt, nutmeg and half of the Gruyère. Add to celery root mixture and mix gently. Pour into prepared casserole dish. Sprinkle with the rest of the cheese and bake for 50-60 minutes, until settles in the center. Remove from oven, and let rest on a cooling rack for 15 minutes before serving.

OLIVE OIL, ORANGE AND POLENTA CAKE WITH LABNEH CREAM

Recipe by Vered Guttman

This olive oil based cake is very moist and full of flavors, but make sure to use a mild olive oil.

The cake is better served a day after it's baked.

Yields 10" rounds cake

Ingredients:

- 4 large eggs at room temperature
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 orange
- 1 cup mild olive oil
- 1 teaspoon almond extract
- 1.5 cups polenta
- 7 oz. ground almonds
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon ground cardamom (optional)

For the labneh cream:

- 1 cup heavy cream, cold
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. labneh

Directions:

1. Oven to 325 degrees. Grease a 10" springform pan with a cooking spray.
2. Whisk eggs and sugar in a stand mixer for 10 minutes, until they tripled in volume and become pale yellow.
3. In the meantime wash the skin of the orange, cut the orange into eighths (skin included, do not peel the orange) and rid of any seeds. Put orange in a food processor and mix for a chunky consistency. Put in a bowl and add the olive oil and almond extract.
4. In a second bowl mix polenta, ground almonds, baking powder and ground cardamom.
5. Lower the speed of the mixer and alternate adding the dry ingredients and the orange-olive oil mixture into the eggs, finishing with the dry ingredients.
6. Pour the batter into the greased pan and bake for 45 minutes, until golden brown on top and sides and still moist in the center. Cool on a cooling rack. Cover lightly with aluminum foil and serve the day after.
7. Before serving, make the labneh cream. Put cold heavy cream in a bowl of a stand mixer fitted with whisk and whisk on medium-high speed. Add sugar as you start and whisk and continue until cream has doubled its volume, but still very soft. Stop the mixer and add labneh, then continue to whisk just until cream is stable. Remove from mixer.
8. Serve the cake with a nice dollop of the cream on the side.



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