

Nosheen's Kousa Mahshi

SERVES
4 PEOPLE



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200g MEDIUM-GRAIN RICE
6 SMALL COURGETTES
6 SMALL TOMATOES
150g OF FINELY CHOPPED GREEN ONION
20g OF FINELY CHOPPED FRESH PARSLEY
225g MINCED BEEF
½ TEASPOON ALLSPICE
SALT & FRESHLY GROUND BLACK PEPPER
2 LEMONS, CUT INTO ROUNDS
240ml LEMON JUICE
3 CLOVES MINCED GARLIC
3 TEASPOONS DRIED MINT

Preparation Time:
40 minutes
Total Time: 1.5 hours
Serves: 4

1. Soak rice in a bowl for approximately 30 minutes, then rinse and drain until water runs clear
2. Cut off tops of tomatoes and top ends of courgettes. Use a spoon to empty tomato contents into a bowl to dice for later, and a corer to core inside of the courgette. Be careful not to puncture sides or bottom. For added detail, use a vegetable peeler to remove thin vertical lines of skin of the courgettes.
3. In a bowl, gently knead together drained rice, ground meat, green onion, diced tomato, parsley and allspice, plus generous amounts of salt and pepper.
4. Fill each tomato and courgette about three-quarters full with the meat-rice mixture, leaving enough room for the rice to expand as it cooks.
5. To cook, select a deep pot in which the tomatoes and courgettes can fit tightly in an upright position. Line bottom of pot with lemon slices.
6. Arrange tomatoes and courgette in the pot, upright with the opening on top. Add enough water to cover them, adding also the salt, lemon juice, garlic and mint to the water. Cover pot, bring to a boil over medium heat, then reduce heat to low and let simmer for 30 minutes.
7. Simmer until rice is fully cooked and courgette is tender. Carefully transfer to a serving platter.

“My mother would cook the traditional way. That means she used a lot less ingredients than we do today, but she still managed to have more flavour. She taught me how to make Kuttelk, and Maqluba and Kousa Mahshi. All the things I now love. Sometimes she would only show me once and I would have to try on my own the next time. I still can never make it quite like hers, but I keep trying. Your mother's cooking is always the best!”



Nosheen grew up with a strong connection to Syrian food and is no stranger to rich flavours. Her father, a beekeeper and honey merchant by trade, instilled in her a love of simple, natural flavours early in her life. Memories of sneaking bites of honeycomb with her brother while it dried in the sun colour her early memories of food as being both something that brought her family together, as well as a means for making a living. When Nosheen became a beekeeper herself, receiving a beehive from her father as a wedding gift, she took not only a love of honey with her when she moved to Damascus, but also her mother's cooking lessons. On slow Saturday mornings, now living as a refugee in Domiz camp, far away from the beehives she once tended, she feeds her own children breakfasts of tea with honey, sun-dried aubergines and flatbreads dipped in fresh olive oil and sprinkled with Za'atar – a spice mix scented with thyme, sesame and sumac. It is a fragrant reminder of home, and the strong roots she comes from.



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