



LWF Jerusalem Program

Recipes to Celebrate Life





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Each recipe is taken from
one of the LWF Jerusalem
Annual Reports

2013

Hindbeh bil-Zeit (Sautéed Dandelion Leaves)

2012

Lentil Soup and Garden Salad

2011

Sautéed Okra with Fresh Tomatoes

2010

Lubia bil-Zeit (French Green Beans and Tomato Salad)

2009

Munazaleh (Baked Eggplant with Tomatoes)

2007

Mujadara (Rice and Lentil) and Farmer's Fresh Salad

The Palestinian Diet & Life

By Dr. Tawfiq Nasser

The Palestinian diet reflects to a large degree the history of the area and struggle over land. During every foreign occupation of Palestine, and definitely from the Turkish rule onward, each foreign invader left a substantial mark on the diet of the local population. The Turks essentially introduced their kitchen as the predominant cuisine in Palestine and during the hundreds of years of Turkish occupation most of what was cooked as local cuisine was nothing more than exact or modified recipes from the Turkish kitchen. The good news is that Turkish food is part of the healthy Mediterranean diet.

The British followed in the Turks' wake and were largely responsible for introducing some processed and canned foods. These foods were distributed to the population following the two World Wars, and became part of the diet in mainly urban centers of Palestine while the rural population continued to eat the traditional diet dependent on the land and domestic husbandry.

Diet changed again with the Israeli occupation, and that change was significant on the urban as well as rural populations. The dependence of the Palestinian economy on Israel and the heavy subsidies Israel received, and still receives from large economies like the USA, enabled Israel to establish and market its large dairy, processed food, and other products at very affordable prices to the Palestinians. In addition, many Palestinians found employment in Israel and were directly exposed to many different foods coming to the new Israeli State from all over the world.

Thus, and quickly, the diet patterns of the Palestinians shifted from a natural diet of pulses, vegetables, fruits, and occasional dairy and meat, to one that is heavily based on processed dairy products, processed meats, sugars and fat.

Compounding the diet problem was the loss of physical activity associated with maintaining the large lands and agricultural areas that were taken away from Palestinian rural life since 1948. Men and women were active daily in cultivating land, but after the newest occupation they ended-up without land, without agriculture and looking for work in the service and construction industries.

The change in diet and loss of physical activity were two main factors in the rapid increase in diseases of the industrialized nations, namely diabetes, hyper-lipids, hypertension, obesity, and, some speculate, cancers associated with high intakes of fat and processed foods.

The beauty of the Palestinian traditional diet is that it is a portrait that comes right out of the picturesque daily rural life. The men and women with kids waking up early in the morning, walking a few kilometers after dawn prayer, packing a few vegetables, boiled eggs, wheat bread, and some fruits as their one meal for a whole day of work in their land.

Upon returning, having picked some fresh tomatoes and fresh onions, the women go in the dark cool storage room to get some of the typical basic pulses: rice, lentils, and some yogurt freshly made from their goats' milk.

LWF Jerusalem 2013 Annual Report

Hindbeh bil-Zeit (Sautéed Dandelion Leaves)

INGREDIENTS

- 2 bunches dandelion leaves (or endives)
- 2 large onions
- 1 cup olive oil (from the finest LWF Mount of Olives oil) • 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
- Juice of large lemon
- Salt and pepper

Chop the dandelion bunches (if desired, dandelion leaves can be replaced by green endives). Clean well by soaking in water and a pinch of salt. Wash and drain well by gently pressing out excess water through the colander. Add dandelion leaves to a pot and cover with water. Bring to a boil and simmer for 10 minutes. Drain well.

Slice two large onions. In a skillet, sauté all but a handful of the onions in olive oil until light brown. Set these aside and add uncooked onions to remaining oil. Sauté until golden. Add garlic and let cook for one minute before adding dandelion leaves, salt and pepper. Mix well and sauté about 10 minutes. Add lemon juice. Let cool to room temperature. Add one tablespoon of olive oil.

Transfer the cooked dandelion onto a serving plate and top with the browned onions. Serve with pita bread.



LWF Jerusalem 2012 Annual Report

Lentil Soup with Garden Salad

“Sahtain” is the Arabic equivalent of “Bon Appetit” and is derived from “Siha” meaning health.

“Sahtain” means two health(s) and is intended to emphasize the sincerity of the person wishing you double the good health. Enjoy this soup and salad combo! Sahtain!

Soup Ingredients

- 1 cup lentils (red lentils work best, although brown are also fine)
- 1/4 cup rice
- 6 cups water
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp cumin
- 1/8 tsp black pepper
- 1 large diced onion
- 1/4 cup olive oil (from the finest LWF Mount of Olives oil)
- 1/2 cup chopped parsley
- 1/2 cup toasted cubes of pita bread sprinkled with olive oil

Soup Preparation

Boil the lentils and the rice in water and bring to a simmer for at least one hour and a half. Make sure the lentils are soft.

Blend the lentils and the rice with the remaining water and if the mixture is too thick, add another half cup of water.

Place the mixture on very low heat and add salt and all the spices.

Sauté the finely diced onion with the olive oil until onion is translucent and soft. Add it to the lentils and cook all on very low heat for 10 minutes.

Pour in a soup bowl and garnish with parsley and pita cubes.

Serve the soup with a typical Palestinian garden salad:

Salad Ingredients

- 4 cucumbers
- 4 tomatoes
- 1 romaine lettuce
- 1/2 cup fresh mint
- 4 spring onions
- 4 small radishes
- 2 tsp salt
- 2 cloves finely minced garlic
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 1/4 cup lemon juice
- 1 Tbsp vinegar

Salad Preparation

Chop all vegetables in small cubes and add minced garlic, olive oil, lemon, salt, and vinegar mix and serve with the soup.



* These two recipes are made to serve | 4 | persons.



LWF Jerusalem 2011 Annual Report

Sautéed Okra with Fresh Tomatoes

Okra is a staple food of Palestine. It is readily available at fresh vegetable markets when it is in season (early summer). Villagers used to string okra and sun-dry it during summer to preserve it for winter use.

Okra is cooked in two ways, either as a warm stew with lamb meat served over rice, or sautéed to be served as a cold salad and eaten with Taboon bread (wheat bread baked in an earth oven) or pita bread.

The dish is believed to have originated in the mountains of Lebanon and traveled across Greater Syria, including the Palestinian territories.

Ingredients

- 2 pounds of small or medium okra (large okra can be cut cross-wise into one or two pieces)
- 1/2 pound of diced fresh tomatoes
- 1 large red onion diced
- 1 tablespoon of tomato paste
- 3 cloves of garlic (crushed)
- 2 table spoons of chopped cilantro
- 1/4 cup LWF olive oil from the Mount of Olives 4 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1 table spoon salt
- 1/2 cup water

Preparation

Heat 2 tablespoons of olive oil and sauté the okra until soft with brown edges about 10 – 15 minutes. Set aside to drain. Heat the remaining olive oil, sauté the onions, garlic, cilantro, and keep tossing in the pan for 4 – 5 minutes until onions are glassy and soft. Add okra and mix.

Dissolve tomato paste in water and add to pan with all other ingredients. Add also fresh diced tomato. Mix well and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 30 minutes, stirring regularly. Turn heat off and cool. Add lemon juice, mix well, and serve with bread.

Serves 4 people

LWF Jerusalem 2010 Annual Report

Lubia bil-Zeit (French Green Beans and Tomato Salad)

A tradition in rural Palestine's cuisine is to prepare cooked vegetables and then let them cool to serve as a cold salad. The choice of vegetable was always seasonal and came from what was locally grown. One of the most popular vegetables is the green bean (known as fasulia) and its derivative, the French green bean (known as lubia).

These vegetables were also used to prepare stews with meat, but that depended on the economic abilities of rural families and the affordability of lamb meat. In general, meat was much less consumed than it is now.

The featured dish is referred to as lubia bil-zeit (string beans in oil). The use of "bil-zeit" or "in oil" usually indicated that the dish is vegetarian and has no meat or animal fats. Thus, much of this food is exactly what the medical literature is recommending now after many years of research in dietetics and nutrition.

Ingredients

- 2 pounds French green beans
- 4 medium ripe tomatoes
- 2 medium yellow onions, halved and thinly sliced
- 3 tbsp. LWF Olive Oil from the Mount of Olives
- 3 cloves garlic, sliced
- 4 green onions, finely chopped
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- Pita bread, warmed in oven



Preparation

Remove the ends of each string bean and cut in half. Rinse well and soak in cold water. In a large pot, heat water to a full boil. Drop tomatoes in boiling water until they start to peel, then quickly remove and soak in cold water. Peel tomatoes and chop into large pieces.

Add olive oil to a hot deep frying pan or wok; pre-heat for 30 seconds (do not overheat olive oil, as the taste will change). Add sliced onions and garlic; sauté briefly, then add green beans. Sauté together until both onions and beans are soft.

Add tomatoes, salt and pepper and stir over high heat for 5 minutes. Reduce heat and let the whole mixture simmer for 20 minutes.

Remove from heat and let stand until cooled to room temperature. Sprinkle with green onions and serve with pita bread. This dish can be eaten as a cold salad/dip with pita bread, or it can be served hot next to lamb chops or any type of steak or a premium cut of beef.

Munazaleh (Baked Eggplant with Tomatoes)

This is a flavorful vegetarian dish typical of Palestinian rural cuisine. Eaten warm or cold with pita bread, it is a seasonal dish that uses summer vegetables and local olive oil.

Ingredients

- 3 medium-sized eggplants
- 3 onions
- 3 tomatoes
- 2 green bell peppers
- 1 hot banana pepper (optional)
- 6 whole cloves of garlic, peeled
- 1/2 cup tomato paste
- 1 cup water
- 1/2 cup olive oil (best with LWF's olive oil from the Mount of Olives)
- Salt

Preparation

Preheat oven to 375°F/190°C. Peel eggplant and slice horizontally into 1/2-inch, wheel-shaped slices. Sprinkle both sides of slices with salt and rub in; let sit for 30 minutes on a paper towel, flipping occasionally. In the meantime, slice onions and fresh tomatoes into 1/4-inch horizontal slices and slice bell peppers and (optional) hot banana pepper vertically.

Heat a skillet and add the olive oil. Fry eggplant slices until brown, adding more olive oil to skillet as necessary. Lay the browned eggplant slices evenly at the bottom a 12-inch baking pan. Spread the sliced tomatoes, peppers, ban and onions on top of the eggplant. Add the whole cloves of garlic around the edges of the pan.

Mix the tomato paste and water and add salt to taste (about 1/2 teaspoon). Pour the tomato mixture over the vegetables. Cover the pan with aluminum foil and bake 1 hour, until all the vegetables are tender.

Remove from oven and let stand till cooled to room temperature. Serve with toasted pita bread.



LWF Jerusalem 2007 Annual Report

Mujadara (Rice and Lentils) and Farmer's Fresh Salad

Here is a typical recipe that may have been cooked that day. It is light, full of fiber, balanced, and typifies the famous Mediterranean diet.

Mujadara (Rice and Lentils)

Ingredients

- One cup lentils
- 1/2 cup rice
- 3 cups water
- 1/2 teaspoon cumin (ground)
- teaspoon salt
- 5 medium onions
- 1/2 cup olive oil (best with LWF olive oil from the Mount of Olives)
- 1 cup plain yogurt
- 1 cup fresh Farmer's Fresh Tomato Salad (see right)

Soak lentils in water for 10 minutes. Drain and add 3 cups of boiling water then cook on low heat for half an hour. Add cumin, salt and rice to the lentils and stir well, cook for half an hour until both rice and lentils are cooked and soft.

Cut onions in half and slice longitudinally into thin slices. Heat LWF olive oil in a pan and fry onions until fully browned around the edges. Strain from the oil, and add half into the rice and lentil mix. Empty the rice and lentils in a bowl and top with the remaining onions.



Farmer's Fresh Tomato Salad

Ingredients

- 9 medium tomatoes (ripe)
- One medium onion
- One tablespoon fresh mint
- 1/2 cup of olive oil
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

Dice the tomatoes and onions in small equal sizes (as small as possible), chop the mint and add to the tomatoes and onions. Add salt and LWF olive oil. Mix well and let sit until rice and lentils are done.

To serve, place one cup of the Mujadara on a large dinner plate, add next to it the Farmer's Tomato Salad and a half cup of plain yogurt.