



SHAVUOT RECIPES FOR OR HADASH

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BALA DI KESHI (FRIED CHEESE BALLS)-ARUBA & CURAÇAO

These crisp-on-the-outside, melting-on-the-inside, deep-fried cheese balls are popular in both Aruba and Curaçao, where they are a specialty of its 300-year-old Jewish community. Use a less-aged cheese if you prefer a milder flavor, or combine two or three types, such as Monterey Jack, aged Cheddar, and Mexican *queso blanco*. Traditionally, they are rolled in fine, dry breadcrumbs before frying, but coating them in Japanese panko breadcrumbs gives them a crisper coating and helps seal in the cheese. Adapted from **Aruba Tastes & Tales** by Aliza Green

Makes about 5 dozen

6 large egg whites, at room temperature

Pinch of salt

1 pound shredded aged Gouda cheese

2 cups Japanese panko breadcrumbs

1 quart sunflower, grapeseed, or peanut oil, for frying

Flour for dusting

Using the whisk attachment for an electric mixer, whip the egg whites until fluffy, then add the salt and continue beating until the whites are firm, but not dry and still glossy. Fold in the cheese one third at a time so as not to deflate the egg whites. Form the mixture into about 5 dozen small balls, each about 1-inch in diameter. Keep your hands well-floured while you're forming the balls. Arrange the balls on a baking sheet lined with wax paper, and refrigerate at least 30 minutes, or up to 2 days.

When ready to cook, heat the oil in a wok or a heavy pot until it's shimmering, registers 365°F on a frying thermometer, and the air above the pot feels hot when you hold your hand about 3 inches above the oil. Roll the balls in the panko, shaking off any excess. Fry the balls 2 to 3 minutes, or until they are golden brown and float in the oil. Drain and serve piping hot.

MOROCCAN CARROT CONFIT

Here carrots are made into confit, or preserve, by slow-cooking in cumin-scented orange juice, concentrating their flavor and infusing them with the typical flavors of Moroccan cooking. The carrot confit may be kept refrigerated for at least 1 week and reheated gently. As in much of the Mediterranean and at the Sephardic table, cooked vegetables are usually served at room temperature to enhance delicate flavors that are lost when eaten very hot or very cold. Adapted from **Starting with Ingredients** by Aliza Green

Serves 6 to 8

3 pounds carrots, peeled and cut into 3-inch lengths (split in half, if large)

½ cup extra-virgin olive oil

Juice of 3 oranges (about 1½ cups)

Zest of 1 orange

1 tablespoon chopped garlic

1 tablespoon ground cumin

1 tablespoon ground coriander seed

1 to 2 teaspoons fine sea salt

½ to 1 teaspoon hot red pepper flakes

½ cup chopped cilantro (or parsley, or a combination)

Preheat the oven to 275°F. Combine carrots, olive oil, orange juice and zest, garlic, cumin, coriander salt, and pepper. Place in a large casserole and cover tightly. Bring to a boil, then place in the oven and bake 1 1/2 hours.

Uncover and bake 30 minutes longer or until the liquid evaporates and the carrots are very soft. Shake occasionally but don't stir as this will break up the carrots. Cool to room temperature and stir in chopped cilantro just before serving.

RODANCHAS DE BERENGENA FROM SALONIKA

These fat, crunchy rolls are filled with a savory mixture of roasted eggplant, leeks (prassa in Ladino), walnuts, and grated cheese. Cut the rolls into smaller lengths and serve as an appetizer. In the Sephardic version of this savory pastry, a specialty of the Jewish community of Salonika, the rolls are curved and formed into a spiral (or rodanacha) before baking. A sweet one is made from pumpkin puree, walnuts, sugar and cinnamon. Adapted from **Starting with Ingredients: Baking** by Aliza Green.

Serves 8 to 10

3 pounds (2 large) eggplant, cut into 1-inch cubes

Fine sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 pound leeks, white and pale green inner portion thinly sliced

1½ cups extra-virgin olive oil, for frying and brushing pastry

½pound (2 cups) grated Graviera or sharp Cheddar cheese

½ pound (2 cups) crumbled feta or ¼ pound grated kefalotyri or pecorino Romano cheese

6 ounces (1¼ cups) chopped walnuts

2 teaspoons ground cumin

1 pound phyllo dough, defrosted if frozen, or 1 pound Turkish yufka dough

Sprinkle the eggplant cubes lightly with salt and pepper and drain in a colander for at least 1 hour.

In a medium skillet over medium heat, fry the leeks in 2 tablespoons of the olive oil until they are soft, about 5 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 400°F. Rinse the eggplant under cold running water, drain and pat dry with paper towels. Spread the eggplant out on a baking pan lined with parchment paper or a silicone mat. Roast for 30 minutes, stirring once, or until the eggplant is soft and brown on the edges. Cool to room temperature.

Chop the eggplant and combine it with the leeks, both cheeses, the walnuts, cumin, and pepper to taste.

Set the oven to 375°F. Fold a sheet of phyllo dough in half the short way and brush with olive oil. Spread about ¼ cup of the eggplant mixture across the

dough to make an even form, no more than 1 inch in diameter and leaving a 1-inch border all around. Fold over the edges of the dough, then roll up tightly to form into a log. Place the log, seam side down, on a baking pan lined with parchment paper or a silicone mat. Continue with the remaining filling and dough until the filling has been used up.

Gently push the ends of the logs toward the center to form a wrinkled surface on the rolls, which will make them crispier. Using a French baker's lame, a single-edged razor, or a box cutter, lightly score the rolls into six portions each to make them easier to cut into portions. Bake about 1 hour, or until golden brown. Remove from the oven and allow the rolls to cool somewhat before cutting into portions and serving.

VENETIAN SALMONE IN SAOR (SWEET & SOUR SALMON)

Sephardi Jews brought sweet and sour stockfish (air-dried cod) with raisins and pine nuts to Venice, which evolved into sarde in saor, In Chioggia, on the mainland south of Venice, suca in saor, sweet-and-sour pumpkin with raisins and pine nuts clearly has Jewish origins.

Serves 8 as an appetizer

2½ pounds wild salmon fillet, cut crosswise into ½-inch thick slices

½ cup potato starch or cornstarch (for dusting)

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

½ cup extra-virgin olive oil, divided

1 red onion, thinly sliced

¼ cup cider vinegar

2 tablespoons raw sugar

¼ cup Zante currants, soaked in warm water to cover until soft, about 15 minutes

2 teaspoons finely chopped rosemary

½ cup pine nuts, lightly toasted in a 275°F oven for 10 minutes

2 tablespoons chopped Italian parsley

Sprinkle salmon on both sides with salt and pepper. Heat 2 tablespoons olive oil in a large heavy skillet. Meanwhile, dust the salmon slices on both sides with the starch, shaking off the excess. Add the salmon slices to the pan without crowding, and working in batches if necessary. Cook over medium heat 2 to 3 minutes or until lightly browned at the edges.

Using a spatula, carefully flip the salmon over and cook 1 minutes or until firm. Remove salmon from the pan and arrange on a serving platter.

Add the remaining olive oil and Add the onions to the pan and sauté until crisp-tender. Add the drained currants, vinegar, sugar, salt and pepper, and rosemary to the pan. Bring the mixture to the boil. Cook 2 to 3 minutes, or until the liquid is syrupy. At the last minute, add the pine nuts, tossing to combine. Pour the mixture evenly over the fish and sprinkle with the parsley.

Serve immediately, or cover and refrigerate up to 2 days, allowing the fish to come to room temperature before serving.

SWEET NOODLE AND CHEESE KUGEL WITH GOLDEN RAISINS

This lusciously tender Ashkenazi-Jewish-style noodle pudding is tangy and rich with small-curd cottage cheese and sour cream, and fragrant with cinnamon, vanilla, and lemon zest. Plump golden raisins give each mouthful a burst of fruity-sweet flavor. Is it a dessert or a main dish? That's up to you. Sweet as it is, this kugel is often served for a main dish, especially on Shavuot, during which dairy dishes are traditionally served. It also makes a wonderful make-ahead brunch dish. Adapted from **Starting with Ingredients** by Aliza Green

Serves 8

1 pound egg noodles	1/2 pound small-curd cottage cheese
3 eggs	1/2 cup sour cream
1/4 cup granulated sugar	1 cup golden raisins
2 teaspoons vanilla extract	1/2 cup Japanese panko or homemade-style breadcrumbs
Grated zest of 1 lemon	1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
4 tablespoons + 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted and divided	

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Bring a large pot of salted water to the boil. Add the egg noodles and cook until firm. Drain and reserve.

Meanwhile, lightly beat together the eggs, sugar, vanilla, lemon zest, and 4 tablespoons of butter. Combine with the cottage cheese and sour cream. Stir in the noodles and the raisins.

Butter a 6- to 8-cup baking dish and fill with the noodle mixture. Combine the breadcrumbs, the remaining 2 tablespoons of butter, and the cinnamon and sprinkle over top of kugel. Bake for 40 minutes, or until the kugel is set and the topping is golden brown. Remove from the oven, cool slightly, cut into serving portions, and serve.

LOR CHEESE AND SESAME COOKIES FROM IZMIR, TURKEY

I learned to make these deliciously delicate sesame-crusting cookies from my Turkish friend and her mother. We all sat around forming the soft dough into balls, then coating them in white sesame seeds before baking them. Turkish *lor* is a tangy fresh white cheese curd related to Italian ricotta, French fromage blanc, Indian paneer, and Russian style farmers cheese, which I'm using here. Adapted from **Starting with Ingredients: Baking** by Aliza Green)

Yield: 36 cookies

½ pound (2 cups minus 2 tablespoons) unbleached all-purpose flour

2 ounces (¾ cup) potato starch

1 teaspoon baking powder

1 teaspoon fine sea salt

¼ pound (1 stick) unsalted butter, softened

1½ cups sugar

1 large egg

10 ounces crumbled farmers cheese

Grated zest of 1 lemon (1 tablespoon)

1 teaspoon each almond and vanilla extract

1 cup white sesame seeds

½ cup blanched almonds

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line two (18 x 13-inch) half sheet pans (or other large baking pans) with parchment paper or silicone baking mats.

Whisk together the dry ingredients: flour, potato starch, baking powder, and salt.

In the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, cream the butter and sugar until light and fluffy, 5 to 6 minutes. Beat in the egg, ricotta, lemon zest, almond and vanilla. Add the flour mix and beat until just combined, making a soft dough. Roll the dough into 36 small balls, about the size of a walnut.

Place the sesame seeds in a bowl. Roll the balls into the seeds to coat completely. (The sesame seeds form a crust, holding the soft dough in place when baking.) Arrange the cookie balls equidistant in rows of 3 and 4 on the baking pans. Flatten each cookie lightly with the palm of your hand. Firmly press an almond into the center of each cookie.

Bake for 25 minutes, or until golden brown on the outside, but still soft in the middle. Cool on a wire rack to room temperature before serving. Store in a cookie tin or other similar container for up to 4 days.

SOUR CREAM RAISIN BARS

Bar cookies are about the easiest way to satisfy a sweet tooth for a crowd. Soaking the raisins in bourbon first is a small extra step that elevates these bars to a higher level of sophistication. Brandy or gold rum make good substitutes, but there is no doubt that the American-made bourbon complements the raisins perfectly. Adapted from **Starting with Ingredients: Baking** by Aliza Green.

Makes 36 bars

3/4 pound golden raisins	1/2 pound (2 sticks) unsalted butter, softened
1/2 cup bourbon	2 egg yolks
1/2 pound rolled oats	2 cups sour cream (1 pound)
1/2 pound (2 cups) all-purpose flour	1/2 cup granulated sugar
1 teaspoon baking soda	2 tablespoons cornstarch
1 teaspoon salt, divided	2 teaspoons vanilla extract
1 cup dark brown sugar, packed	

Soak the raisins in the bourbon until plump and most of the liquid has been absorbed, at least 30 minutes. Preheat the oven to 350°F.

Whisk together the oats, flour, baking soda, ½ teaspoon salt, and brown sugar. Beat in the butter, continuing to beat until the mixture forms a rough ball. Press half the mixture into the bottom of a (9 x 13-inch) rectangular baking pan lined with parchment paper. Bake for 15 minutes, or until lightly colored, then remove from oven and cool.

Meanwhile, whisk together the egg yolks, sour cream, granulated sugar, cornstarch, and remaining ½-teaspoon salt in a medium, nonreactive saucepan. Heat over moderate heat while constantly whisking until the mixture thickens and begins to bubble, about 5 minutes. Remove from the heat and stir in the raisins with any soaking liquid, and the vanilla.

Pour the filling onto the partially-baked crust. Top with the remaining crumb mixture, crumbling it over top. Bake for 30 minutes longer, or until the top begins to brown. Cool and then refrigerate until cold before cutting into 36 bars. Bring to room temperature before serving.

CHEESECAKE WITH STRAWBERRY COMPOTE & BISCOTTI CRUST

Serves 16

Biscotti Crumb Crust

6 ounces crushed biscotti cookies,
preferably almond (substitute vanilla
or nut cookies)

6 ounces almonds

6 tablespoons dark brown sugar,
packed

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

6 tablespoons unsalted butter,
melted and cooled

Prepare a 10-inch spring form pan by wrapping the outside in foil. Preheat the oven to 350°F.

Place the biscotti, almonds, brown sugar, and cinnamon in a food processor. Process together until fine crumbs are formed, then pour in the butter and process for 1 more minute or until combined but not pasty. Press the crumb mixture into the bottom of the prepared pan and chill for 30 minutes. Bake 15 minutes, or until lightly browned. Cool and reserve.

Filling

1½ pounds cream cheese, at room
temperature

½ cup Greek yogurt

¾ cup granulated sugar

3 large eggs

2 large egg yolks

Scrapings of 1 vanilla bean, or 2
teaspoons vanilla extract

2 tablespoons cornstarch

Lower the oven temperature to 300°F. Beat the cream cheese until smooth, scraping down the sides of the bowl once or twice with a rubber spatula. Add the yogurt and beat again until smooth. Add the sugar, eggs, yolks, vanilla bean scrapings and cornstarch to the bowl and beat until smooth.

Spoon filling into baked crumb crust. Place in a larger baking pan and transfer to the oven. Pour enough hot water to come 1 inch up the sides of the pan. Bake 1 hour or until barely set. Check carefully near the end of the baking time to be sure the filling doesn't over bake and begin to over-rise and crack.

Remove cheesecake from the oven and cool to room temperature (or refrigerate overnight). Meanwhile, prepare the topping.

Topping

1 cup Greek yogurt

¼ cup sugar

Preheat oven to 400°. Whisk together yogurt and sugar. Spread onto cheesecake. Bake 5 to 7 minutes or until topping has set. Remove from oven and cool completely before cutting into 16 to 20 serving portions, using a knife dipped in hot water and wiped dry in between each cut.

Strawberry Compote

1 quart fresh strawberries, preferably local

½ cup sugar

Wash, drain, and then trim the strawberries. Slice, quarter, or crush with a heavy whisk or potato masher. Combine with sugar. Spoon the strawberries over each portion of cheesecake just before serving.