

Aziza's Delicacies

Bedouin food is very healthy because it is made from only natural ingredients and has lots of vegetables, beans and rice in it.

Aziza is a fantastic cook, and cooks in a kitchen that looks like a restaurant kitchen. She has two big gas burners, a sink, and a refrigerator that runs on electricity. It is not a big space but the utensils and pots she uses are big. Today her daughters Fawza, Fatma, Shamsa, and Darweed do some of the cooking. They are very proud to take on the job, and have a lot of fun cleaning up together with all the soapy water; washing everything (the floor, the sink, the gas burners) with a lot of soapy, sudsy water.

Here are a few of Aziza's recipes that I have gleaned from her over the years, when I have eaten over at her house. I will be adding more recipes to this section in the future. Aziza also knows herbal remedies for quite a few ailments and I will be creating a section in the future to document that too.

There is one thing that will be different in this recipe section from a regular cookbook- there will be no formal, exact measurements because Aziza does not measure. You will have to experiment with the measurements. I will try and give you some idea of what they are. In the Bedouin way of life, instinct is everything; start developing yours in this cooking exercise. For example, when I write to add salt to taste, add as much or as little that tastes good to you.

Current List of Recipes

1. Bamia
2. Hummus
3. Tomato and Cucumber Salad
4. Sweet tea

Bamia

Ingredients

1. Bamia freshly picked from your home garden
2. Cloves of dried garlic from your home garden
3. Olive oil freshly pressed from homegrown olives
4. Salt

Pick fresh bamia from your home garden, wash it and cut it up into small pieces, a half an inch big. Peel and cut a few cloves of garlic into very small pieces. Heat olive oil in a frying pan, and add cut up garlic. After garlic has cooked a bit, add pieces of bamia and a little salt. Cook the bamia just until it is soft but not brown. Serve with pita, hummus, and tomato and cucumber salad. Enjoy!

Hummus

Ingredients

1. 2-3 cups dried chickpeas
2. A big pot of water
3. Salt
4. Lemon
5. Cloves of dried garlic from your home garden
6. Olive oil freshly pressed from homegrown olives

Take 2-3 cups of dried chickpeas and wash them. Remove any tiny stones that might be amongst them. Put them in a large pot, with a little salt and boil for hours until the chickpeas are soft. Make them into a paste with a little water from the pot. Add olive oil, cloves of garlic, and salt and lemon – according to your taste. Start by adding small quantities of each and see how you like it. Enjoy!

Serve in small dishes together with pita bread and tomato and cucumber salad.

Tomato and Cucumber Salad

Ingredients

1. 5 tomatoes freshly picked from your home garden
2. 3 cucumbers freshly picked from your home garden
3. Olive oil freshly pressed from homegrown olives.
4. Salt
5. Lemon freshly picked from the tree

Take a sharp knife and a wooden cutting board. Take the tomatoes and cut them into slices and then cut each slice by its length and width into small squares, an eighth of an inch thick. Peel the cucumbers and cut them into long strips and then cut each strip by its length and width into squares an eighth of an inch thick. You will now have a lot of little squares of tomatoes and cucumbers. Sprinkle salt (to taste) on the vegetables, pour 2-3 tablespoons of olive oil on them, and squeeze ½ to a whole lemon on it. Take a big spoon and mix it all up, and you have a healthy salad!

Sweet Tea

Ingredients

1. Fresh water
2. Regular tea bags
3. Sugar
4. Fresh Mint picked from your home garden
5. Lemon freshly picked from the tree

Boil water on fire, and meanwhile put two teabags, sugar (to taste) and 3-5 fresh mint sprigs into teapot.

When water boils, add it to teapot, cover teapot, and let the tea brew for a few minutes. Serve in small glass cups.

You can also add pieces of lemon into the individual cups to add flavor.