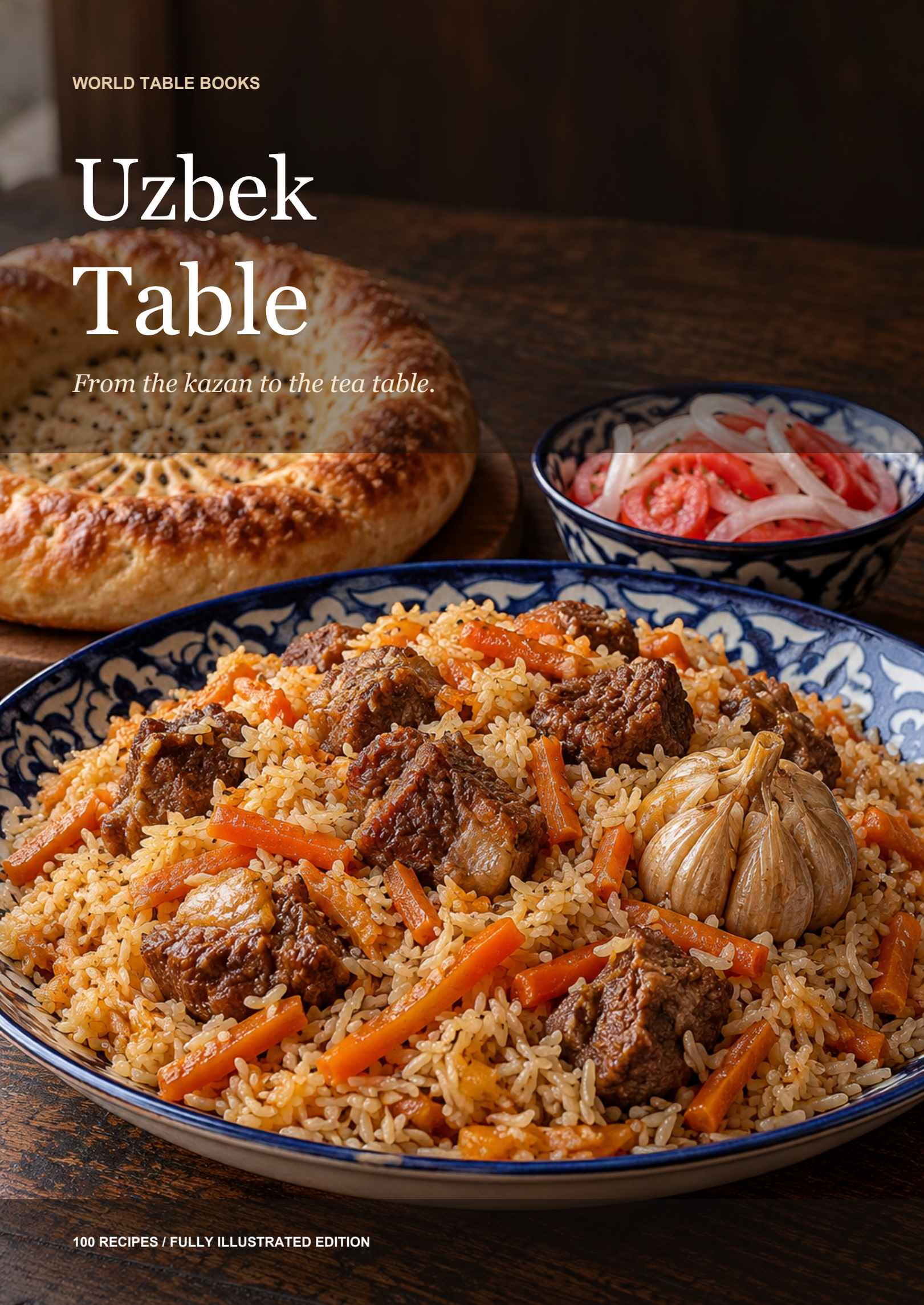


WORLD TABLE BOOKS

Uzbek Table

From the kazan to the tea table.

100 RECIPES / FULLY ILLUSTRATED EDITION

A PLACE AT THE TABLE

Uzbekistan, one dish at a time

A platter of plov, freshly steamed manti, a loaf with a golden rim and a little sweetness after dinner. Uzbek cooking brings together the patient simmer, the covered kazan, the hot oven and the outdoor grill.



This collection contains 100 complete English-language recipes across ten chapters. Explore rice, soup, noodles, dumplings, pastry, bread, slow cooking, the grill, vegetables, salads and the sweet table, with metric and US measurements throughout.

Each recipe includes a finished-dish illustration and four preparation views, alongside detailed quantities, timing, substitutions, storage guidance and approximate nutrition. Read the entire method before beginning and use the stated texture and temperature cues.

Cook patiently. Season thoughtfully. Share generously.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Precision without fuss

Read the entire method

Prep and cook times are estimates. Resting, chilling and freezing are additional when stated. Use the texture and temperature cues as well as the clock.

Weigh ingredients in their listed state

Metric weights are the reference. Meat and fish are raw unless specified; canned food is weighed drained; grains and pasta are dry unless specified. US ounces measure weight; US fluid ounces measure liquid volume.

Use the stated serving size

Nutrition is for one equal portion of the complete recipe, including listed sauces, grains and toppings. Piece, slice or cup counts define a serving where stated.

Treat nutrition as approximate

Calories, protein, carbohydrate and fat are estimates calculated from ingredient weights and reference composition data. Brands, substitutions, draining, cooking losses and portions change them. They are not laboratory results or personalized dietary targets.

Use a food thermometer

Poultry and reheated leftovers: 74 C / 165 F. Ground beef and lamb: 71 C / 160 F. Fish: 63 C / 145 F. Whole-cut beef and lamb: at least 63 C / 145 F, followed by a 3-minute rest. Egg dishes: 71 C / 160 F.

Store food promptly

Refrigerate perishables within 2 hours, or within 1 hour above 32 C / 90 F, in shallow containers at 4 C / 40 F or below. Storage notes assume clean handling.

Respect equipment limits

Oven and grill times vary with equipment and food thickness. Charcoal cooking is outdoors only. Photographs illustrate technique; measured quantities and written directions govern the recipe. Check all packaged ingredients for allergens.

INGREDIENTS & SUBSTITUTIONS

An Uzbek pantry

Rice and the kazan

Plov rice varies greatly. The plov recipes use ordinary long-grain white rice, not devzira. Rinse, soak and drain as directed. A tight lid, a heavy base and careful observation matter more than a fixed promise that all rice absorbs the same volume of water.

Lamb, beef and zira

Zira is cumin. Shoulder suits a slow simmer; leg or sirloin suits quick grilling. Weigh meat raw and boneless unless specified. Keep raw meat separate from salad ingredients, cooked food and serving utensils.

Dough, bread and pastry

Use metric flour weights as the reference. Hydration varies with flour and room humidity; make only the small water adjustments stated in the recipe. Dough rest relaxes gluten, and cold fat separates samsa layers.

Ovens and steamers

The bread and samsa in this collection are home-oven versions. They are not instructions for attaching dough to a tandyr wall. A steamer must hold food above boiling water and maintain a safe water reservoir throughout cooking.

Vegetables and the table

Cut carrots into batons for plov, large pieces for shurpa and small dice for dumpling filling. These cuts are functional, not interchangeable. Salt fresh tomato salad near serving time to preserve its texture.

Sweet dishes and substitutions

Holvaytar is spoonable flour halva; do not expect firm sesame-halva slices. Check flour, butter, yogurt and nuts for allergens. Substitutions can change cooking time, texture and nutritional estimates.

CLICK TO EXPLORE

A table of 100 recipes

Ten chapters, from the kazan to the tea table.

01 **Plov, Rice & Grains** 6
Recipes 001-010

02 **Soups & Broths** 37
Recipes 011-020

03 **Dumplings & Noodles** 68
Recipes 021-030

04 **Samsa & Savory Baking** 99
Recipes 031-040

05 **Breads & Breakfast** 130
Recipes 041-050

06 **Slow Braises & Kazan Cooking** 161
Recipes 051-060

07 **Grill, Fire & Roasting** 192
Recipes 061-070

08 **Vegetables, Beans & Sides** 223
Recipes 071-080

09 **Salads, Sauces & Fresh Plates** 254
Recipes 081-090

10 **Sweets & The Tea Table** 285
Recipes 091-100

Sample recipe finder 46

Click a chapter, recipe title or page number to jump directly to the relevant section. The Contents link in every footer brings you back here.

CHAPTER 01

Plov, Rice & Grains



Recipes in this chapter

001	Lamb Plov	7
002	Tashkent-Style Celebration Plov	10
003	Samarkand-Style Plov	13
004	Bukhara-Style Oshi Sofi	16
005	Bakhsh with Beef and Herbs	19
006	Quince Plov	22
007	Pumpkin Plov	25
008	Chickpea Plov	28
009	Shavlya	31
010	Moshkichiri	34

CHAPTER 01 / PLOV, RICE & GRAINS

Lamb Plov

Uzbekistan / A measured home-kazan version

Plov begins with zirvak: meat, onion and carrots cooked before the rice is added. This home version uses readily available long-grain rice; it does not claim the same water requirement as Uzbek devzira. Keep the layers intact until the final fold.

Serves 6 / Prep 25 min / Cook 90-110 min / Rest 15 min

APPROX PER SERVING / 699 kcal / Protein 24 g / Carbs 75 g / Fat 33 g



Ingredients

Boneless lamb shoulder, raw, 3 cm cubes
600 g / 21.16 oz

Long-grain white rice, dry
450 g / 15.87 oz

Carrots, peeled, 5 mm batons
600 g / 21.16 oz

Onion, thin half-moons
200 g / 7.05 oz

Sunflower oil
70 ml / 2.37 US fl oz

Whole garlic head, loose outer skins removed
1 / 60 g / 2.1 oz

Cumin seeds
4 g / 0.14 oz

Fine salt, divided
10 g / 0.35 oz

Water for zirvak
600 ml / 20.29 US fl oz

Boiling water for rice, start with this amount
300 ml / 10.14 US fl oz

Extra boiling water, only if required
up to 150 ml / 5.1 US fl oz

Equipment 5-6 L / 5-6 qt heavy pot with tight lid, sieve, spoon

STEP BY STEP

Lamb Plov

Preparation, cooking and the cues that matter.

01 Wash and soak the rice

Rinse rice in several changes of cool water until mostly clear. Cover with fresh water and soak 30 minutes while making the zirvak; drain thoroughly. Pat lamb dry. Cut carrots into batons, never grate them.

02 Brown the base

Heat oil in a 5-6 L / 5-6 qt heavy pot over medium-high heat. Brown lamb in two batches, 6-8 minutes each; set aside. Cook onion in the same oil 6-8 minutes until golden, then return meat and add carrots. Stir gently for 7-8 minutes.

03 Simmer the zirvak

Add 600 ml / 2.5 US cups water, cumin, 7 g salt and the whole garlic head. Bring to a simmer, partly cover and cook on low 30-40 minutes until lamb yields to a fork. Keep a visible shallow broth; do not boil dry.

04 Add rice in a level layer

Spread drained rice over the meat without stirring it into the lower layer. Dissolve remaining 3 g salt in 300 ml boiling water and pour gently over a spoon. Liquid should reach about 5-8 mm / 1/4 in above rice; add only enough of the reserve to reach that depth.

05 Absorb, then steam

Boil uncovered over medium heat 8-12 minutes, until surface water disappears. Taste a top grain: it should be nearly tender. If still hard and dry, add reserve water in 30 ml / 2 tbsp increments. Make five holes through rice with a spoon handle, cover tightly and cook on the lowest heat 15-20 minutes.

06 Rest and serve

Turn off heat and rest covered 15 minutes. Rice should be separate and tender, and lamb soft. Remove garlic, fold the layers together gently once and divide into six portions. Cool leftovers promptly in shallow containers rather than leaving the pot on the stove.

Cook's note Do not apply this water schedule to devzira without adjustment. Excess water and early stirring make dense rice. Beef shoulder may replace lamb but needs a longer zirvak simmer; wait for tenderness before adding rice.

ILLUSTRATED TECHNIQUE

Lamb Plov



01 / Brown lamb and onions in a heavy pot



02 / Add carrot batons and simmer the zirvak



03 / Spread drained rice as an unmixed top layer



04 / Make steam holes once surface water is absorbed

Storage & allergens

Cool in shallow containers and refrigerate within 2 hours at 4 C / 40 F or below. Use within 2 days; reheat once to 74 C / 165 F throughout. Freeze individual portions up to 2 months.

Contains: none of the major allergens as written. Check packaged ingredients.

CHAPTER 02

Soups & Broths



Recipes in this chapter

011	Qaynatma Shurpa	38
012	Qovurma Shurpa	41
013	Mastava	44
014	Moshkhurda	47
015	Chuchvara Soup	50
016	Chicken Ugra Soup	53
017	Kifta Shurpa	56
018	Piyova	59
019	Chalop	62
020	Chickpea and Lamb Soup	65

CHAPTER 02 / SOUPS & BROTHS

Qaynatma Shurpa

Uzbekistan / Gently simmered lamb and vegetables

Qaynatma shurpa is the clear, simmered style of shurpa. Large vegetables remain distinct rather than dissolving into the broth. Lamb shoulder gives dependable tenderness; choose well-trimmed pieces so the soup is rich without a thick layer of grease.

Serves 6 / Prep 20 min / Cook 115-140 min

APPROX PER SERVING / 488 kcal / Protein 26 g / Carbs 30 g / Fat 29 g



Ingredients

Boneless lamb shoulder, raw, 5 cm pieces
800 g / 28.22 oz

Cold water
2.5 L / 10.6 US cups

Onions, thick wedges
250 g / 8.82 oz

Carrots, 3 cm chunks
300 g / 10.58 oz

Potatoes, peeled, 5 cm pieces
600 g / 21.16 oz

Ripe tomatoes, quartered
300 g / 10.58 oz

Red bell pepper, large pieces
200 g / 7.05 oz

Cumin seeds
2 g / 0.07 oz

Black peppercorns
1 g / 0.04 oz

Fine salt, start with
10 g / 0.35 oz

Fresh cilantro, chopped
10 g / 0.35 oz

Equipment 5-6 L / 5-6 qt stockpot, ladle, skimmer, knife

STEP BY STEP

Qaynatma Shurpa

Preparation, cooking and the cues that matter.

01 Start in cold water

Place lamb and 2.5 L water in a 5-6 L / 5-6 qt pot. Bring slowly toward a simmer over medium heat, about 15 minutes. Skim foam with a spoon as it rises; do not stir it back into the liquid.

02 Cook the meat gently

Add onion and peppercorns. Reduce heat until only occasional bubbles rise. Partly cover and cook 60-75 minutes, skimming excess surface fat if desired. A fork should enter the lamb with little resistance before adding vegetables.

03 Prepare large vegetables

Cut carrots into 3 cm / 1.2 in pieces and potatoes into 5 cm / 2 in chunks. Cut peppers and tomatoes into large pieces. Similar sizes keep the vegetables intact and make portioning easier.

04 Add in stages

Add carrots, cumin and salt; simmer 10 minutes. Add potatoes and peppers, then simmer 20 minutes. Keep the broth gently moving, never rolling; top up with boiling water only if vegetables are no longer covered.

05 Finish the broth

Add tomatoes and simmer 10-15 minutes until a knife slides through potato centers and the lamb is tender. Taste a cooled spoonful of broth; adjust seasoning cautiously. Remove peppercorns where practical.

06 Divide and garnish

Distribute meat and vegetables evenly among six bowls, then ladle broth over them. Sprinkle with the measured cilantro. Refrigerate extras promptly, dividing the large batch into shallow containers to speed cooling.

Cook's note Boiling vigorously clouds the broth and breaks potatoes. Boneless beef shoulder can replace lamb, but allow extra time for tenderness before adding vegetables. No bread is included in the nutrition.

ILLUSTRATED TECHNIQUE

Qaynatma Shurpa



01 / Skim foam from lamb in a pot of water



02 / Simmer lamb with onion and peppercorns



03 / Add large carrot and potato pieces in stages



04 / Add quartered tomatoes near the end

Storage & allergens

Refrigerate promptly in shallow containers at 4 C / 40 F or colder; use within 3 days. Reheat cooked leftovers to 74 C / 165 F. Refrigerate within 2 hours, or 1 hour above 32 C / 90 F.

Contains: none of the major allergens as written. Check packaged ingredients.

CHAPTER 03

Dumplings & Noodles



Recipes in this chapter

021	Lamb Manti	69
022	Pumpkin Manti	72
023	Potato Manti	75
024	Beef and Pumpkin Manti	78
025	Hanum with Meat and Potato	81
026	Pumpkin Hanum	84
027	Chuchvara	87
028	Fried Chuchvara	90
029	Lagman with Cut Noodles	93
030	Shivit Oshi	96

CHAPTER 03 / DUMPLINGS & NOODLES

Lamb Manti

Uzbekistan / Hand-chopped lamb, steamed parcels

These large manti enclose hand-chopped lamb and plenty of onion in thin, firm dough. The dumplings steam above the water rather than boiling in it. Twenty-four parcels give six generous portions; the yogurt is measured separately and included in the nutrition.

Makes 24 / Serves 6 / Prep 65 min / Steam 40-45 min / Dough rest 30 min

APPROX PER SERVING / 605 kcal / Protein 26 g / Carbs 62 g / Fat 28 g



Ingredients

DOUGH: all-purpose flour
400 g / 14.11 oz

DOUGH: water, room temperature
200 ml / 6.76 US fl oz

DOUGH: fine salt
5 g / 0.18 oz

Extra flour for rolling, allowance
20 g / 0.71 oz

FILLING: lamb, about 20% fat, finely hand-chopped
600 g / 21.16 oz

FILLING: onions, finely diced
500 g / 17.64 oz

FILLING: cumin seeds, lightly crushed
3 g / 0.11 oz

FILLING: black pepper
1 g / 0.04 oz

FILLING: fine salt
7 g / 0.25 oz

Sunflower oil, for steamer trays
15 ml / 0.51 US fl oz

Plain yogurt, to serve
180 g / 6.35 oz

Equipment Rolling pin, knife, tiered steamer, food thermometer

STEP BY STEP

Lamb Manti

Preparation, cooking and the cues that matter.

01 Knead a firm dough

Dissolve 5 g salt in 200 ml water. Add to 400 g flour and mix until no loose flour remains. Knead 8-10 minutes until smooth and firm. If crumbs will not bind, add water 5 ml / 1 tsp at a time; cover and rest 30 minutes.

02 Chop the filling

Cut cold lamb into 4-5 mm / 3/16 in pieces and onions into similarly small dice. Mix with cumin, pepper and 7 g salt. Keep covered in the refrigerator while rolling dough; do not puree the onions.

03 Roll and portion

Divide dough into four parts, keeping unused parts covered. Roll each about 2 mm / 0.08 in thick with a little of the dusting flour. Cut six 10 cm / 4 in squares from each part, rerolling rested scraps as needed, for 24 squares total.

04 Close each parcel

Divide filling into 24 portions, about 46 g / 1.6 oz each. Put one in the center of each square. Bring opposite corners together, then the remaining corners; pinch all seams closed. Join adjacent outer corners in pairs to make a squat, closed parcel.

05 Steam above boiling water

Brush steamer trays with the 15 ml oil. Space dumplings 2 cm / 3/4 in apart; steam in one layer per tier over steadily boiling water, covered, for 40-45 minutes. Water must stay below the trays; check the reservoir without allowing it to dry out.

06 Check and serve

Probe the filling of a central dumpling: finely chopped meat must reach 71 C / 160 F. If needed, steam another 5 minutes and recheck. Rest 2 minutes, lift carefully and serve four manti per person with 30 g / 1.1 oz yogurt.

Cook's note Ground lamb is a practical substitute but gives a finer texture. Thick wrappers become heavy; overfilled or floury seams leak. Yogurt may be replaced with an appropriate dairy-free alternative.

ILLUSTRATED TECHNIQUE

Lamb Manti



01 / Knead a smooth firm dough ball



02 / Hand-chop lamb and finely dice onion



03 / Pinch a square wrapper into a closed manti parcel



04 / Space manti on an oiled perforated steamer tray

Storage & allergens

Refrigerate cooked manti within 2 hours and use within 2 days; re-steam until 74 C / 165 F. Freeze raw assembled manti on a tray, then bag for up to 2 months; steam from frozen, allowing extra time and checking the center.

Contains: wheat, milk. Check packaged ingredients.

CHAPTER 04

Samsa & Savory Baking



Recipes in this chapter

031 Layered Lamb Samsa 100

032 Pumpkin Samsa 103

033 Beef Samsa 106

034 Potato Samsa 109

035 Spring Greens Samsa 112

036 Chicken Samsa - Home Variation 115

037 Round Lamb Samsa 118

038 Yupqa with Beef 121

039 Gushtli Non 124

040 Parmuda Samsa 127

CHAPTER 04 / SAMSA & SAVORY BAKING

Layered Lamb Samsa

Uzbekistan / Layered pastry, home-oven method

This layered samsa is baked on a metal tray in a home oven. Melted butter stands in for the sheep fat often used to laminate the pastry. Cold dough, small pieces of lamb and firmly sealed triangular parcels help preserve both the layers and the juices.

Makes 12 / Serves 6 / Prep 55 min / Bake 35-40 min / Rest 30 min / Chill 45 min

APPROX PER SERVING / 675 kcal / Protein 24 g / Carbs 67 g / Fat 34 g



Ingredients

DOUGH: all-purpose flour
450 g / 15.87 oz

DOUGH: water
225 ml / 7.61 US fl oz

DOUGH: fine salt
5 g / 0.18 oz

Unsalted butter, melted and cooled, for layers
90 g / 3.17 oz

Extra flour for rolling
15 g / 0.53 oz

FILLING: lamb, about 20% fat, hand-chopped
500 g / 17.64 oz

FILLING: onion, finely diced
500 g / 17.64 oz

FILLING: cumin seeds, crushed
3 g / 0.11 oz

FILLING: fine salt
6 g / 0.21 oz

FILLING: black pepper
1 g / 0.04 oz

Egg for brushing, beaten
1 large / 50 g / 1.8 oz

Sesame seeds
8 g / 0.28 oz

Equipment Rolling pin, knife, heavy baking tray, rack, thermometer

STEP BY STEP

Layered Lamb Samsa

Preparation, cooking and the cues that matter.

01 Make and rest the dough

Dissolve dough salt in 225 ml water. Mix into 450 g flour, then knead 8-10 minutes to a smooth firm dough. Cover and rest 30 minutes. Melt butter and cool until fluid but barely warm; hot fat softens dough too much.

02 Laminate and chill

Roll dough into a rectangle about 60 x 45 cm / 24 x 18 in, using dusting flour sparingly. Brush evenly with the butter. Roll from the long edge into a tight 60 cm / 24 in log. Cover and refrigerate 45 minutes until the fat is firm.

03 Prepare filling and oven

Mix 4-5 mm / 3/16 in lamb pieces with finely diced onion, cumin, filling salt and pepper. Refrigerate. Heat a conventional oven to 220 C / 425 F and line a heavy metal tray with parchment rated for that temperature.

04 Roll twelve wrappers

Cut the chilled log into twelve equal 5 cm / 2 in pieces. Stand each on its cut face, press flat, then roll into a 15 cm / 6 in round, leaving its center slightly thicker than the edges. Keep remaining pieces cold and covered.

05 Fill and seal triangles

Divide filling into twelve equal portions, about 84 g / 3 oz each. Put one portion in each round. Fold three sides inward and pinch every seam firmly to form a closed triangle. Set seam-side down with 3 cm / 1.2 in between parcels; brush lightly with egg and sprinkle sesame.

06 Bake, check and rest

Bake 10 minutes at 220 C / 425 F, then reduce to 200 C / 390 F for 25-30 minutes until deeply golden. Check a center parcel: filling must reach 71 C / 160 F. Rest on a rack 10 minutes; serve two per person.

Cook's note Beef with similar fat content can replace lamb. Warm fat smears instead of separating layers. Avoid wet onion puree and weak seams. These instructions are for a tray, not attaching pastry to the wall of a tandyr.

ILLUSTRATED TECHNIQUE

Layered Lamb Samsa



01 / Brush a thin rectangular dough sheet with butter



02 / Roll the buttered sheet into a tight log



03 / Flatten a cut spiral and add lamb onion filling



04 / Seal triangular samsa and arrange seam-side down

Storage & allergens

Refrigerate promptly for up to 2 days. Reheat at 180 C / 355 F until filling reaches 74 C / 165 F. Freeze cooled samsa up to 2 months; thaw in the refrigerator before reheating.

Contains: wheat, milk, egg, sesame. Check packaged ingredients.

CHAPTER 05

Breads & Breakfast



Recipes in this chapter

041	Obi Non - Oven Method	131
042	Sutli Patir	134
043	Katlama with Onion	137
044	Plain Katlama	140
045	Jizzali Non	143
046	Pumpkin Katlama	146
047	Qatlama with Herbs - Home Variation	149
048	Tukhumbarrak	152
049	Shirguruch	155
050	Non Qovurdoq	158

CHAPTER 05 / BREADS & BREAKFAST

Obi Non - Oven Method

Uzbekistan / Water bread adapted for a home oven

Obi non has a generous rim around a thin, stamped center. This home-oven version uses a preheated metal tray and a fork instead of a traditional bread stamp. It will not reproduce a tandyr exactly, but the measured dough and shaping method make a useful everyday bread.

Makes 2 loaves / Serves 8 / Prep 25 min / Bake 18-22 min / Rise 85-110 min

APPROX PER SERVING / 258 kcal / Protein 8 g / Carbs 47 g / Fat 4 g



Ingredients

Bread flour
500 g / 17.64 oz

Water, 30-35 C / 86-95 F
300 ml / 10.14 US fl oz

Instant yeast
7 g / 0.25 oz

Fine salt
9 g / 0.32 oz

Sunflower oil, dough and finishing
20 ml / 0.68 US fl oz

Extra flour for shaping
15 g / 0.53 oz

Water for brushing
15 ml / 0.51 US fl oz

Sesame seeds
8 g / 0.28 oz

Equipment Bowl, fork or bread stamp, heavy metal tray, heat-rated parchment, rack

STEP BY STEP

Obi Non - Oven Method

Preparation, cooking and the cues that matter.

01 Mix a soft dough

Combine flour and instant yeast. Dissolve salt in the 300 ml warm water, then add to flour with 10 ml / 2 tsp oil. Mix until all flour is wet. Knead by hand 8-10 minutes until elastic; dough should be slightly tacky, not stiff.

02 Allow the first rise

Cover the bowl and leave in a warm place for 60-80 minutes until roughly doubled. Judge volume rather than the clock. If the room is cool, allow longer; do not put dough on a hot radiator or in an oven that is switched on.

03 Preheat and divide

Heat a conventional oven to 240 C / 465 F with a heavy metal tray inside for 30 minutes. Divide dough into two equal pieces, approximately 410 g / 14.5 oz each, and round them. Cover and rest 10 minutes.

04 Shape the rim and center

On lightly floured parchment flatten each ball into a 20 cm / 8 in round. Press a 12 cm / 4.7 in center down to about 5 mm / 1/4 in thick, leaving a 3-4 cm / 1.2-1.6 in wide puffy rim. Prick the depressed center closely with a fork without flattening the rim.

05 Proof and bake

Cover loosely and proof 15-20 minutes. Brush with the 15 ml water and sprinkle sesame. Slide parchment onto the hot tray, keeping hands clear of hot edges. Bake 18-22 minutes until deeply golden and the base sounds hollow; parchment must be rated for the oven temperature.

06 Finish and portion

Transfer to a rack and brush both loaves with the remaining 10 ml oil. Cool at least 20 minutes before tearing or cutting. Divide each loaf into four equal portions; the serving size is one quarter of a loaf.

Cook's note Prick the center thoroughly to prevent a domed loaf. A preheated metal tray helps brown the underside. Variation: All-purpose flour can replace bread flour; hold back 15 ml / 1 tbsp water until you feel the dough.

ILLUSTRATED TECHNIQUE

Obi Non - Oven Method



01 / Knead a soft bread dough



02 / Round the risen dough into two balls



03 / Press a broad thin center and prick it with a fork



04 / Bake round loaves with thick rims on a metal tray

Storage & allergens

Cool fully and keep wrapped at room temperature up to 2 days. Freeze portions up to 2 months. Warm at 160 C / 320 F for 8-10 minutes, lightly covered to avoid drying.

Contains: wheat, sesame. Check packaged ingredients.

CHAPTER 06

Slow Braises & Kazan Cooking



Recipes in this chapter

051	Dimlama	162
052	Basma - Layered Lamb and Vegetables	165
053	Kazan Kebab with Potatoes	168
054	Lamb Neck Kabob	171
055	Lamb and Chickpea Nukhut Shurak	174
056	Beef Jarkop	177
057	Chicken Dimlama	180
058	Lamb Qovurdoq	183
059	Stuffed Grape Leaves	186
060	Stuffed Bell Peppers	189

CHAPTER 06 / SLOW BRAISES & KAZAN COOKING

Dimlama

Uzbekistan / Lamb and vegetables in a covered pot

Dimlama relies on a closely covered pot and the moisture released by its vegetable layers. This version browns the lamb first and includes a modest water allowance to protect the bottom on a home stove. Keep the pieces large and resist frequent stirring.

Serves 6 / Prep 30 min / Cook 110-135 min

APPROX PER SERVING / 533 kcal / Protein 25 g / Carbs 41 g / Fat 30 g



Ingredients

Boneless lamb shoulder, raw, 4 cm cubes
700 g / 24.69 oz

Sunflower oil
30 ml / 1.01 US fl oz

Onions, thick slices
300 g / 10.58 oz

Carrots, 2 cm chunks
300 g / 10.58 oz

Potatoes, peeled, 4 cm pieces
700 g / 24.69 oz

Tomatoes, thick slices
400 g / 14.11 oz

Red bell pepper, large pieces
250 g / 8.82 oz

Cabbage, large pieces, a few whole leaves reserved
500 g / 17.64 oz

Garlic cloves, peeled
20 g / 0.71 oz

Cumin seeds
3 g / 0.11 oz

Ground coriander
2 g / 0.07 oz

Fine salt, divided between layers
10 g / 0.35 oz

Black pepper
1 g / 0.04 oz

Water
100 ml / 3.38 US fl oz

Cilantro, chopped
12 g / 0.42 oz

Equipment 6-7 L / 6-7 qt heavy pot with tight lid, knife, serving spoon

STEP BY STEP

Dimlama

Preparation, cooking and the cues that matter.

01 Prepare substantial pieces

Pat lamb dry. Cut potatoes about 4 cm / 1.5 in across; keep carrots, peppers and cabbage in large pieces. Reserve enough outer cabbage leaves to cover the upper layer. Mix salt with cumin, coriander and pepper for even seasoning.

02 Brown meat and onion

Heat oil in a 6-7 L / 6-7 qt heavy pot over medium-high heat. Brown lamb in two batches, about 8 minutes each. Return all lamb, add onion and cook 5 minutes. Reduce heat and sprinkle a quarter of the seasoning over the base.

03 Build the vegetable layers

Add carrots and potatoes, then another quarter of seasoning. Add peppers, garlic and tomatoes with the next quarter. Place chopped cabbage above, season with the remainder, and cap with reserved whole leaves. Do not press the stack tightly or fill above the safe lid space.

04 Cover and develop steam

Pour 100 ml / 3.4 US fl oz water down the side. Cover tightly. Heat on medium-low for 10-15 minutes until steam is audible, then reduce to the lowest steady heat. The vegetables will release more liquid; this is not an open-pot boil.

05 Cook until genuinely tender

Cook covered 80-100 minutes. At 80 minutes check quickly: potatoes should yield to a knife and lamb should pull apart easily. If the bottom is dry, add 30-60 ml / 2-4 tbsp boiling water down the side. Replace the lid and cook longer if needed.

06 Lift out in portions

Turn off heat and wait 5 minutes. Lift vegetables and meat onto a large platter, retaining the cabbage leaves, and spoon the pot juices over them. Divide equally among six plates and finish with the measured cilantro.

Cook's note Frequent lid lifting loses steam. A thin pot can scorch before the meat softens. Beef shoulder may replace lamb, but allow more time; a vegetable-only version requires a separate cooking schedule and nutrition.

ILLUSTRATED TECHNIQUE

Dimlama



01 / Brown lamb cubes in a heavy pot



02 / Layer onions carrots and potatoes over meat



03 / Add tomatoes peppers garlic and cabbage leaves



04 / Check tender vegetables after covered slow cooking

Storage & allergens

Refrigerate promptly in shallow containers at 4 C / 40 F or colder; use within 3 days. Reheat cooked leftovers to 74 C / 165 F. Refrigerate within 2 hours, or 1 hour above 32 C / 90 F.

Contains: none of the major allergens as written. Check packaged ingredients.

CHAPTER 07

Grill, Fire & Roasting



Recipes in this chapter

061	Lamb Shashlik	193
062	Beef Shashlik	196
063	Chicken Shashlik	199
064	Minced Lamb Kabob	202
065	Liver Shashlik	205
066	Lamb Chops with Zira - Home Variation	208
067	Roasted Lamb Shoulder - Home Oven Method	211
068	Oven Quail Kabob	214
069	Grilled Fish with Zira - Home Variation	217
070	Grilled Tomatoes and Peppers	220

CHAPTER 07 / GRILL, FIRE & ROASTING

Lamb Shashlik

Uzbekistan / Onion-and-zira lamb skewers

Lamb shashlik is cooked over heat rather than flames. This version uses boneless leg, crushed onion and zira, with a small measured amount of oil. It does not include separate tail-fat pieces, making the ingredients easier to find while keeping the cooking method clear.

Makes 8 skewers / Serves 4 / Prep 25 min / Grill 12-16 min / Marinate 4-8 h / Rest 3 min

APPROX PER SERVING / 504 kcal / Protein 38 g / Carbs 10 g / Fat 34 g



Ingredients

Boneless lamb leg, raw, trimmed, 3 cm cubes
800 g / 28.22 oz

Onion, thinly sliced, for marinade
300 g / 10.58 oz

Sunflower oil
20 ml / 0.68 US fl oz

Cumin seeds, lightly crushed
3 g / 0.11 oz

Ground coriander
2 g / 0.07 oz

Black pepper
1 g / 0.04 oz

Fine salt
8 g / 0.28 oz

Onion, fresh thin rings, to serve
100 g / 3.53 oz

Equipment 8 flat metal skewers, outdoor grill or grill pan, tongs, thermometer

STEP BY STEP

Lamb Shashlik

Preparation, cooking and the cues that matter.

01 Cut consistent pieces

Trim tough silverskin but leave a little soft fat on lamb. Cut into 3 cm / 1.2 in cubes so the skewer cooks evenly. Do not use shoulder on this short grill schedule; it needs different treatment for tenderness.

02 Make the onion marinade

Crush sliced marinade onion with salt in a bowl until juicy. Mix in oil, cumin, coriander and pepper, then fold in lamb thoroughly. Cover and refrigerate at 4 C / 40 F or below for 4-8 hours.

03 Prepare a safe cooking zone

Set an outdoor charcoal or gas grill for medium-high direct heat, roughly 200-230 C / 390-445 F at grate level, with a cooler side available. Let charcoal burn to glowing embers without active flames. Charcoal cooking is outdoors only.

04 Thread eight skewers

Remove onion pieces from lamb so they do not burn. Divide meat evenly among eight flat metal skewers, leaving small gaps between cubes. Discard the marinade and wash hands, boards and utensils that touched raw meat.

05 Grill and check the center

Cook over direct heat 12-16 minutes, turning every 2-3 minutes until browned on several sides. Move to the cooler area if fat flares. Check the largest cubes from the side with a thermometer: reach at least 63 C / 145 F; appearance alone is not a reliable check.

06 Rest and serve

Rest 3 minutes on a clean platter. Serve two skewers per person with the fresh 100 g onion rings divided equally. For a stovetop adaptation, use a preheated grill pan and work in batches, following the same internal temperature and rest requirement.

Cook's note Boneless beef sirloin is a suitable variation; use the same temperature check. Do not put cooked meat back in the marinade bowl. Nutrition includes the measured oil as a conservative estimate although some marinade is discarded.

ILLUSTRATED TECHNIQUE

Lamb Shashlik



01 / Crush sliced onion with cumin and seasoning



02 / Mix raw lamb cubes with the onion marinade



03 / Thread evenly sized lamb pieces on flat metal skewers



04 / Turn skewers over glowing charcoal without flames

Storage & allergens

Refrigerate cooked leftovers promptly and use within 3 days. Reheat to 74 C / 165 F. Keep raw marinating lamb refrigerated; never reuse its onion marinade as a serving sauce.

Contains: none of the major allergens as written. Check packaged ingredients.

CHAPTER 08

Vegetables, Beans & Sides



Recipes in this chapter

071 Vegetable Dimlama 224

072 Mash and Pumpkin Stew - Home Variation 227

073 Chickpeas with Tomato and Zira - Home Variation 230

074 Pan-Fried Potatoes with Onion 233

075 Qovurma Eggplant 236

076 Baked Pumpkin with Onion 239

077 Braised Cabbage with Tomato - Home Variation 242

078 Green Bean Qovurma - Home Variation 245

079 Eggplant-Stuffed Peppers - Home Variation 248

080 Rice-Stuffed Tomatoes - Home Variation 251

CHAPTER 08 / VEGETABLES, BEANS & SIDES

Vegetable Dimlama

Uzbekistan / Meat-free home variation

Vegetable dimlama uses the layered-pot technique without meat. Tomato and cabbage release moisture beneath a tight lid, while potatoes make the dish substantial. Gentle heat preserves recognizable pieces rather than a stirred vegetable puree.

Serves 4 / Prep 25 min / Cook 55-65 min / Rest 5 min

APPROX PER SERVING / 336 kcal / Protein 8 g / Carbs 59 g / Fat 9 g



Ingredients

Onion, thick half-moons
300 g / 10.58 oz

Potatoes, peeled, 4 cm chunks
700 g / 24.69 oz

Carrots, thick slices
250 g / 8.82 oz

Tomatoes, thick slices
400 g / 14.11 oz

Red bell pepper, broad strips
250 g / 8.82 oz

Cabbage, thick wedges
400 g / 14.11 oz

Garlic cloves, peeled
20 g / 0.71 oz

Sunflower oil
35 ml / 1.18 US fl oz

Water
120 ml / 4.06 US fl oz

Cumin seeds
3 g / 0.11 oz

Fine salt
7 g / 0.25 oz

Ground black pepper
1 g / 0.04 oz

Cilantro, chopped
20 g / 0.71 oz

Equipment Heavy pot with fitted lid, broad spoon, knife

STEP BY STEP

Vegetable Dimlama

Preparation, cooking and the cues that matter.

01 Cut substantial pieces

Prepare vegetables as listed, keeping potato chunks similar in size. Reserve two broad outer cabbage leaves from the weighed cabbage and cut the remainder into thick wedges. Mix salt, cumin and pepper in a small bowl.

02 Soften the onion

Heat oil in a heavy 4-5 L / 4-5 qt pot over medium. Cook onion 7-8 minutes until softened. Scatter a little of the seasoning over it; do not brown it darkly, as it continues cooking under the vegetables.

03 Layer the vegetables

Add carrots, tomato, pepper and garlic. Place potatoes above them, followed by cabbage wedges. Distribute remaining seasoning between the layers. Pour water down the side; cover vegetables with the reserved cabbage leaves.

04 Cover and simmer

Fit the lid tightly and heat over medium-low until steam forms. Reduce to low and cook 45-55 minutes without stirring. If the base sounds dry after 30 minutes, add 30-50 ml / 2-3 tbsp hot water down the side.

05 Check tenderness

Pierce a potato in the upper layer: it should yield without a hard center. Check carrot as well. Continue covered 5-10 minutes if needed. Excessive stirring breaks the vegetables, so make only one brief check.

06 Rest and serve

Rest off heat covered for 5 minutes. Lift vegetables gently into four bowls, including the tender cabbage covering leaves. Spoon on a little cooking juice and scatter the measured cilantro.

Cook's note A close-fitting lid matters more than extra water. Add only enough water to prevent the base catching; the vegetables produce much of their own cooking liquid. Variation: Butternut squash can replace potatoes by weight; check tenderness sooner because it softens faster.

ILLUSTRATED TECHNIQUE

Vegetable Dimlama



01 / Soften thick onion half-moons



02 / Layer roots, tomato, peppers and garlic



03 / Cover with cabbage leaves and a fitted lid



04 / Lift cooked vegetable layers into serving bowls

Storage & allergens

Refrigerate promptly in shallow containers at 4 C / 40 F or colder; use within 3 days. Reheat cooked leftovers to 74 C / 165 F. Refrigerate within 2 hours, or 1 hour above 32 C / 90 F.

Contains: none among the listed ingredients. Check packaged ingredients.

CHAPTER 09

Salads, Sauces & Fresh Plates



Recipes in this chapter

081	Achichuk	255
082	Tashkent Salad	258
083	Radish and Suzma Salad	261
084	Tomato and Cucumber Salad	264
085	Carrot and Radish Salad - Home Variation	267
086	Cabbage and Herb Salad - Home Variation	270
087	Roasted Eggplant Salad	273
088	Suzma with Herbs	276
089	Lazjan - Uzbek-Uyghur Chili Sauce	279
090	Quick Vinegar Onions	282

CHAPTER 09 / SALADS, SAUCES & FRESH PLATES

Achichuk

Uzbekistan / Thin tomato-and-onion salad

Achichuk is a fresh companion to rich plov: tomatoes, very thin onion and a little chili release their own dressing. No oil, vinegar or lemon is needed here. Slice with a sharp knife and season shortly before serving so the salad stays bright and crisp.

Serves 4 as a side / Prep 15 min / Cook 0 min / Rest 5 min

APPROX PER SERVING / 38 kcal / Protein 2 g / Carbs 8 g / Fat 0 g



Ingredients

Ripe firm tomatoes
600 g / 21.16 oz

White onion, peeled
100 g / 3.53 oz

Fresh green chili, deseeded
8 g / 0.28 oz

Fine salt
3 g / 0.11 oz

Black pepper
0.5 g / 0.02 oz

Cold water for rinsing onion
250 ml / 8.5 US fl oz; discarded

Equipment Sharp knife, board, bowl, sieve

STEP BY STEP

Achichuk

Preparation, cooking and the cues that matter.

01 Select and clean produce

Wash tomatoes and chili under running water and dry. Choose ripe but firm tomatoes; very soft fruit collapses into pulp. Peel the onion and use a clean board and sharp knife.

02 Slice the tomatoes

Halve tomatoes, remove the hard stem cores and slice into thin half-moons, about 2 mm / 1/16 in. Work with the cut face stable on the board. Collect the tomato juices rather than pouring them away.

03 Make fine onion strands

Halve onion from root to stem and slice crosswise as thinly as practical, ideally 1 mm. If particularly sharp, rinse in the listed cold water for 30 seconds, then drain well; do not add that water to the salad.

04 Prepare the chili

Remove stem and seeds, then slice chili into fine rings or slivers. Wash hands and knife afterward and avoid touching your eyes. Use a milder chili for less heat; the listed 8 g is the complete allowance.

05 Fold and briefly rest

Combine tomatoes, their juice, drained onion and chili in a shallow bowl. Add salt and pepper, then fold gently with two spoons rather than squeezing. Rest 5 minutes so a little natural juice collects.

06 Serve as a side

Divide into four equal portions immediately, lifting slices with a slotted spoon if desired and distributing their juices. Do not leave dressed salad beside a hot stove while finishing the main course; refrigerate if service is delayed.

Cook's note Salt shortly before serving; prolonged standing draws out tomato juice and softens the slices.
Variation: Omit chili for a milder salad; keep the remaining ingredient quantities.

ILLUSTRATED TECHNIQUE

Achichuk



01 / Slice ripe tomatoes into thin half-moons



02 / Cut white onion into very fine strands



03 / Deseed green chili and cut thin slivers



04 / Fold sliced vegetables with salt in a shallow bowl

Storage & allergens

Best freshly mixed. Refrigerate covered at 4 C / 40 F or below and use within 1 day; expect a softer texture. Do not freeze.

Contains: none of the major allergens as written. Check packaged ingredients.

CHAPTER 10

Sweets & The Tea Table



Recipes in this chapter

091	Holvaytar	286
092	Chak-Chak	289
093	Bogirsoq	292
094	Quince Murabbo	295
095	Apricot Murabbo	298
096	Rice Pudding with Raisins - Home Variation	301
097	Dried Apricot and Raisin Compote	304
098	Quince Compote	307
099	Green Tea for the Table	310
100	Ayran with Mint - Home Variation	313

CHAPTER 10 / SWEETS & THE TEA TABLE

Holvaytar

Uzbekistan / Warm flour halva with walnuts

Holvaytar, also written halvaytar, is a spoonable flour sweet rather than a firm sesame block. Here flour is toasted in butter before warm syrup is stirred in gradually. The walnuts are optional as a substitution choice, but included in this measured version and its nutrition.

Serves 6 / Prep 10 min / Cook 25-30 min / Cool 10 min

APPROX PER SERVING / 238 kcal / Protein 2 g / Carbs 33 g / Fat 11 g



Ingredients

All-purpose flour
60 g / 2.12 oz

Unsalted butter
60 g / 2.12 oz

White sugar
150 g / 5.29 oz

Water
500 ml / 16.91 US fl oz

Fine salt
0.5 g / 0.02 oz

Walnuts, chopped, to finish
30 g / 1.06 oz

Equipment Two saucepans, spatula, whisk, six shallow bowls

STEP BY STEP

Holvaytar

Preparation, cooking and the cues that matter.

01 Prepare warm syrup

Put sugar, water and salt in a saucepan. Stir over medium heat until dissolved, then simmer 2 minutes. Remove from heat and keep warm. Use a roomy second pan because adding liquid to the flour mixture releases steam.

02 Melt butter gently

Melt butter in a 24 cm / 9.5 in heavy pan over medium-low heat. Add flour and stir with a silicone spatula until a smooth paste forms. Break up dry pockets against the pan base.

03 Toast to a nutty color

Cook 10-15 minutes, stirring continuously across the corners and base, until the paste becomes golden tan with a toasted aroma. Lower heat if dark spots appear. Do not aim for smoke or a burnt smell; scorched flour cannot be rescued with sugar.

04 Add syrup cautiously

Take the pan off heat. Add warm syrup in six to eight small additions, stirring each smooth before adding more. Stand back from steam and splashes. If lumps persist, use a whisk carefully before returning the pan to heat.

05 Simmer to a spoonable texture

Cook over low heat for 6-10 minutes, stirring often, until glossy and thick enough that a spatula leaves a brief trail. It should pour slowly into a shallow dish, not set like dough. It thickens further as it cools.

06 Portion and finish

Rest 10 minutes until warm rather than scalding. Divide into six shallow bowls and scatter 5 g / 0.18 oz walnuts over each. Serve with a spoon; no bread or additional nuts are included in the serving calculation.

Cook's note For a nut-free variation omit walnuts and use clean equipment; nutrition changes. Clarified butter can replace butter, making the mixture richer. Adding syrup all at once causes lumps and hot splashes.

ILLUSTRATED TECHNIQUE

Holvaytar



01 / Dissolve sugar in water in a small saucepan



02 / Stir flour into melted butter in a wide pan



03 / Toast the flour paste to golden tan



04 / Whisk warm syrup gradually into the toasted paste

Storage & allergens

Refrigerate within 2 hours in a covered container and use within 3 days. Rewarm gently with a little water, stirring until 74 C / 165 F, then cool to a comfortable serving temperature. Texture changes after freezing.

Contains: wheat, milk, walnuts. Check packaged ingredients.

Sample recipe finder

Ten complete recipes, one from every chapter. Click a title to open it.

Achichuk 39

Dimlama 27

Holvaytar 43

Lamb Manti 15

Lamb Plov 7

Lamb Shashlik 31

Layered Lamb Samsa 19

Obi Non - Oven Method 23

Qaynatma Shurpa 11

Vegetable Dimlama 35

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