

2. FRIED APPETIZERS:

Among the many wonderful features of Iraqi cuisine are its delectable fried appetizers, each different from the other and all bursting with flavor. A typical Iraqi meal will usually begin with several different types of these delicious tidbits, and one must exercise great discipline in order to save room for the main course!

None of these dishes is easy to make, but the result is well worth the effort. Most of these can be made in large quantities and then frozen and kept for considerable periods of time. The quantities given below allow for this, thereby rendering the work more efficient. Of course, these quantities can be proportionally reduced if the cook does not wish to store the items. One important thing to remember is that these dishes can only be frozen at particular stages of their preparation, and the stage is different for each dish. If you wish to freeze them, make sure to do so at the appropriate point as set forth within each recipe.

An Arabic term that will recur in this section, as well as in many of the main courses, is "hashwa". "Hashwa" means "filling" or "stuffing", and it is used to describe the inner contents of any stuffed or filled dish, from chicken to dumplings.

1. ***Samboosak Mil-Tawa*** (Chick pea dumplings)

This is an Iraqi cousin of the Indian *samosa* and of the *sambosa* of various countries, including Ethiopia and Afghanistan. The filling and spicing, however, is unique to the Iraqi variant.

Hashwa (Filling):

½ lbs. dry chickpeas, washed and soaked overnight in a pot
2 small onions (or 1 ½ medium), finely chopped
3 large eggs
1-2 tablespoons corn or canola oil
1 flat teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon pepper
½ teaspoon cayenne
1 heaping tablespoon freshly ground cumin

Boil chickpeas in the same water in which they were soaking overnight. Water should be 1 inch higher than chickpeas. Boil until *al dente* – they should not be too soft. Spill out water and leave in pot until cooler (about 15 minutes). Chop in food processor until chopped into fine pieces – not a paste. Remove from food processor and set aside. Place onions, oil, pepper, and cayenne in a large frying pan and sauté on medium flame until onions are golden brown. Beat eggs in a bowl and add a dash of pepper. Push onions to side of pan and add eggs, scrambling vigorously as eggs begin to set. When eggs harden, mix with onions; eggs should be scrambled into very small pieces. Lower flame to medium-low and gradually add chickpeas, folding into egg-onion mixture until all chickpeas added. Add salt, mix, and shut off flame. Let cool for about ½ hour and add cumin, folding in the cumin until evenly distributed. When finished, mixture should give off a fragrance of cumin. (If not, then cumin is weak and you should add a little more.) If not ready to make dough and fill, then refrigerate. (If refrigerating overnight, then transfer mixture to bowl, cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate.)

Dough:

2 cups white, all-purpose flour (yeast free)
2-3 teaspoons lemon juice
2 teaspoons corn or sesame oil (in Iraq, sesame used)
½ teaspoon salt
¾ cup water

Put flour in a large bowl. Add all other ingredients, with water being the last added. Knead until smooth (about 5 minutes). Consistency should be not too hard and not too soft. If it is too hard, add a drop of water; if too soft, add flour. Let dough rest for about 15 minutes in the same bowl, making sure to cover bowl with light towel (so as to prevent drying of dough).

Preparation, Filling, and Frying:

Small rolling pin
Smooth surface for working dough
2 cups corn oil

Tear dough into pieces and, using considerable pressure, knead pieces into balls about 1 inch in diameter, roughly the size of an acorn (much smaller than a walnut, larger than a hazelnut). Coat smooth work surface and rolling pin with corn oil and flatten 10 of the round balls, one after another, into circles that are roughly 2 inches in diameter. Stack them in order of work. After flattening all 10, go back through the same 10 in the same order (beginning with the first one on which you worked) and flatten them further into a 4-inch diameter circle (they should be as close to perfect circles as possible). In this second go around, do not apply too much pressure in the center of the circle; instead work the extremities more than the center to expand the circle. (This delicate process requires a small, light rolling pin.) After further flattening all 10, go back through the

same 10 in the same order and fill in this manner: Put 1 heaping teaspoon of hashwa in the middle of the dough circle and fold dough over into a perfect semi-circle, crimping the edges all the way around the circumference (not the diameter) of the semi-circle. Lay the completed *samboosak* in a plate glazed with corn oil and repeat with the next one. After filling all 10, repeat process with another 10 dough balls. Do this until all the dough or all the hashwa is finished. Put 1 cup corn oil into a deep frying pan and set on medium flame. When oil is very hot, drop as many *samboosak* into pan as will fit (do not stack). Fry *samboosak* until brown, turning them as many times as required so that both sides are fried evenly. Remove to paper towel-lined plate. Repeat until all *samboosak* are fried. If oil gets low, add more. Remove to serving dish and serve.

If not ready to serve, let *samboosak* completely cool, then place in ziplock bag and freeze. These may not be frozen before frying. When ready to serve, defrost and re-heat in oven or toaster oven. (*Samboosak* best when served immediately after frying.)

Yield: 35-40 *Samboosak*

2. **Burag** (Iraqi Meat “Cigars”)

These “cigars” are not to be confused with the famous Moroccan cigars. The filling and spices of *burag* are completely different. However, Moroccan cigar dough, which can be purchased commercially, is an excellent substitute for *burag* dough. Some even prefer it, because the cigar dough is thinner and fries crispier. Serve with *turshi* or *'amba*.

Hashwa (Filling):

1 lbs. ground meat, lean (can substitute ground chicken breast, or mix the two)
2 medium-sized onions, finely chopped
2 tablespoons corn or canola oil
½ teaspoon black pepper
⅓ teaspoon cayenne
1 flat teaspoon salt (slightly less if using kosher meat)
2 tablespoons diced celery root (optional)
3-4 heaping tablespoons dark celery leaves (from top of celery root), finely chopped
(Can substitute almonds and raisins for celery leaves)

If using celery root, put celery root in a pan with ¼ cup water and set on high flame until all water evaporates, then sauté with onions. (Skip step if not using celery root.) Sauté onions with oil, pepper, and cayenne on medium flame until onions golden brown. Add meat and immediately stir continuously, using the edge of a spatula to break up the meat balls that form as the meat cooks. Make sure the meat is separated into very small bits. When the meat is cooked, add celery leaves and stir until they are soft. Add salt, stir well, and remove pan from flame. Let cool to room temperature. If not ready to make dough, refrigerate.

Dough:

2 cups white, all-purpose flour (yeast free)
2-3 teaspoons lemon juice
2 teaspoons corn or sesame oil (in Iraq, sesame used)
½ teaspoon salt
¾ cup water

Put flour in a large bowl. Add all other ingredients, with water being the last added. Knead until smooth (about 5 minutes). Consistency should be not too hard and not too soft. If it is too hard, add a drop of water; if too soft, add flour. Let dough rest for about 15 minutes in the same bowl, making sure to cover bowl with light towel (so as to prevent drying of dough).

Note: Instead of making the dough, you may also use commercially available dough for Moroccan “cigars”, which produces very nice and crispy *burag*.

Preparation, Filling, and Frying:

Small rolling pin
Smooth surface for working dough
1 cup corn flour
1 cup corn oil

Tear dough into pieces and, using considerable pressure, knead pieces into balls about 1 inch in diameter, roughly the size of an acorn (much smaller than a walnut, larger than a hazelnut). Coat smooth work surface and rolling pin with corn flour (not corn oil) and flatten 10 of the round balls, one after another, into circles that are roughly 2 inches in diameter. Stack them in order of work. After flattening all 10, go back through the same 10 in the same order (beginning with the first one on which you worked) and flatten them further into a 5-inch diameter disk (they need not be perfect circles). In this second go around, do not apply too much pressure in the center of the circle; instead work the extremities more than the center to expand the circle. (This delicate process requires a small, light rolling pin.) After further flattening all 10, go back through the same 10 in the same order and fill in this manner: Put 1 heaping teaspoon of *hashwa* toward one side of the dough disk, fold over the two sides slightly, and roll dough up into a cigar-shaped object (like a very small burrito or a short taquito) – slightly under 3 inches in length. When placing the teaspoon of *hashwa* on the dough, make sure it is spread out in a line along the length of the “cigar” so that distribution is even; also, place the *hashwa* closer to where you start to roll the dough. (For example, you can place the *hashwa* closer to you, in a line from your right to your left, then fold the right and left edges toward the center and roll the dough away from you.) Place each burag in a tray lined with plastic wrap, wresting each next to the other with the edge of the dough down, so that none of them unwraps. After filling all 10, repeat process with another 10 dough balls. Do this until all the dough or all the *hashwa* is finished. (If not ready to fry, these can be frozen on the tray; once frozen, remove the *burag* from the tray, and place in zip

lock bag in the freezer until ready to fry.) Put one cup corn oil into a deep frying pan and set on medium flame. When oil is very hot, drop as many *burag* into pan as will fit (do not stack). (Be especially careful if *burag* is frozen, as this will cause oil droplets to spatter.) Fry *burag* until brown, turning them as many times as required so that all sides are fried evenly. Remove to paper towel-lined plate. Repeat until all *burag* are fried. If oil gets low, add more. Remove to serving dish and serve.

Yield: About 35 *Burag*

3. ***Kubba Pateta* / Potato Chops** (Patties made from potato)

This *kubba* (meaning “ball” or “patty”), which is made from potatoes, is a famous Iraqi patty that was seen both in Jewish and non-Jewish homes throughout the country. The English term “Potato Chops” was often used, especially among Jews and Christians. Serve with Salim’s Sauce, *turshi*, or *‘amba*.

Note: Prepare the *hashwa* (filling) while the potatoes are in the refrigerator (see instructions, below, for potato dough).

Hashwa (Filling):

1 lbs. ground meat, lean (can substitute ground chicken breast, or mix the two)
2 medium-sized onions, finely chopped
2 tablespoons corn or canola oil
½ teaspoon black pepper
⅓ teaspoon cayenne
1 flat teaspoon salt (slightly less if using kosher meat)
2 tablespoons diced celery root (optional)
3-4 heaping tablespoons dark celery leaves (from top of celery root), finely chopped
(Can substitute almonds and raisins for celery leaves)

If using celery root, put celery root in a pan with ¼ cup water and set on high flame until all water evaporates, then sauté with onions. (Skip step if not using celery root.) Sauté onions with oil, pepper, and cayenne on medium flame until onions golden brown. Add meat and stir immediately and continuously, using the edge of a spatula to break up the meat balls that form as the meat cooks. Make sure the meat is separated into very small bits. When the meat is cooked, add celery leaves and stir until they are soft. Add salt, stir well, and remove pan from flame. Let cool to room temperature. If not ready to make potato dough, refrigerate.

Potato Dough (outer layer):

2 lbs. red peel or Idaho potatoes
¼ cup rice meal (measured after grinding)
¼ cup + 2 tablespoons matzah meal

¼ cup + 1 tablespoon corn meal (extra if needed)
1/5 cup plain breadcrumbs
1 large egg, beaten
1 flat teaspoon salt
dash pepper

Wash potatoes well and boil them whole, with skin, until *al dente*. (Boiling with the skin prevents the potatoes from becoming mushy.) Remove potatoes from the water and peel them, then refrigerate them whole for at least 2 hours, so that they are cold. (Hashwa can be made while potatoes are refrigerating.) Remove potatoes from refrigerator and grate them, or process them in food processor. Texture of potatoes should be completely smooth, but not like mashed potatoes or a paste. Put potatoes into a bowl. Add egg, rice meal, salt, pepper, 2 tablespoons matzah meal. Knead by hand until ingredients are well distributed. Leave standing for approximately 15 minutes.

Preparation, Filling, and Frying:

2 cups corn or canola oil (In Iraq, sesame oil was often used)

Take in your hands a quantity of potato preparation 2 ½ inches in diameter and ¼ inch thick. Use thumbs of your hands to form dough into a shallow bowl. Place about 1 tablespoon of *hashwa* in the center of the depression. Fold outside edges of "bowl" over filling until filling is entirely encapsulated. Flatten into an oval-shaped patty whose measurements are roughly 2 ½ inches in length, 1 ½ inches in width, and ¾ inch thick. In a separate plate, mix the remaining matzo meal (¼ cup), breadcrumbs, and cornmeal, and distribute evenly on dish. Take newly completed *kubba* patty and gently push one surface into the meal/crumb mixture, then turn over the patty and repeat with the other surface. The patty should end up covered with the meal and crumbs. Place the finished *kubba* patty in a separate plate. Repeat process until all the potato dough or *hashwa* is finished. (Note: These patties may not be frozen.) Put approximately 1 cup of the oil in a deep frying pan (there should be about ½ inch of oil in the pan) and set pan on high flame. When oil is very hot, drop as many *kubba* into pan as will fit (do not stack). Fry *kubba* until brown, turning them as many times as required so that all sides are fried evenly. Remove to paper towel-lined plate. Repeat a second time. After frying 2 or 3 batches, the oil becomes black and must be changed. Discard the old oil, wipe the pan with a paper towel, add the second cup of oil and wait until it's very hot before resuming. Fry remaining *kubba*, as above, until all are fried. Remove to serving dish and serve. (If not serving all, *kubba* can be covered and refrigerated for up to a few days. They may be reheated in an oven or toaster oven.)

Yield: About 35 Potato Chops

4. ***Kubba Burghul*** (Bulgar wheat patties)

This is a famous dish in the cuisine of almost every Arab country. Each country, how-

ever, has its own variation on the same basic concept. For example, Lebanese *kubba burghul* is often seen in the shape of a large egg, and the Syrians often use a fine bulgar wheat mixed with farina. Within Iraq there are several different types of *kubba burghul*, relating to different regions in the country (*kubba Mosul*, for example, from the north of Iraq, is large and very flat, with a rich center), as well as to different ethnicities. What typically makes the Iraqi version unique is the use of *Bharat*, the signature combination of seven different spices (see recipe above). Rachel's recipe for *kubba burghul* represents a typical Baghdadi Jewish version of this wonderful dish.

Serve with *turshi* or *'amba*.

Hashwa (Filling):

1 lbs. lean ground beef
¼ lbs. ground chicken breast
2 medium sized onions, finely chopped
⅓ cup pine nuts or shredded almonds (pine nuts preferred)
(Optional: ⅓ cup raisins)
2 tablespoons corn or canola oil
1 teaspoon salt (slightly less if using kosher meat)
2 pinches black pepper
2 pinches cayenne
2 teaspoons *Bharat* (see recipe, under "Spices")

Place onions, oil, cayenne, and pepper in frying pan and sauté on medium flame. When onions golden brown, add meat and chicken and stir immediately and continuously, using the edge of a spatula to break up the meat balls that form as the meat and chicken cooks. Make sure the meat and chicken is separated into very small bits. When the meat is cooked, add salt and pine nuts (or almonds) (and raisins, if used) and stir. Remove from flame and let cool in pan. When cool, add *Bharat* and stir. Refrigerate until ready to fill.

Burghul Dough:

2 cups medium-coarse bulgar wheat, washed and well-strained
1 cup fine bulgar wheat, soaked for ½ hour, strained, and hand squeezed
(If fine bulgar wheat not available, use 3 cups medium-coarse)
¾ lbs. lean ground beef – must be very well ground (use food processor if needed)
¼ lbs. ground chicken breast – must be very well ground (use food processor if needed)
1 teaspoon salt

Put all ingredients in a bowl and knead well. Take mixture and grind in food processor until a paste. (For this quantity, two batches in food processor may be needed.)

Filling and Frying:

1 cup corn or canola oil (In Iraq, sesame oil was often used)

Take in your hands a quantity of *burghul* dough 2 ½ inches in diameter and roughly ¼ inch thick. Use thumbs of your hands to form the dough into a shallow bowl. Keep wetting your hands as you handle the dough, or it will stick to your hands. Place about 1 tablespoon of *hashwa* in the center of the depression. Fold outside edges of “bowl” over filling until filling is entirely encapsulated. Flatten into a round patty that has a diameter of 2 ½ inches and is about ¾ inch thick. Lay *kubba* on a tray lined with plastic wrap. Repeat process until all the *hashwa* or dough is finished. Put tray in the freezer. When *kubba* are frozen, remove from tray and, if needed, store, in freezer in airtight bag or container.

Some Iraqis use an alternative method of filling the *kubba*, which produces a slightly large and flatter patty, which tends to be crispier when fried: Lay a sheet of plastic wrap on a smooth table and slightly wet the exposed surface of the wrap. Put 6 balls of *burghul* dough onto it, equally spaced. They should be about walnut size, and with room in between them for flattening. Flatten the dough balls with your fingertips, pressing evenly, so that you work each ball into a flat, thin circle, about 3 ½ inches in diameter. Choose 1 row of three dough circles and place 1 tablespoon of *hashwa* on each of the 3 circles in the row. Arrange filling so that it evenly covers the dough circles, but leave a ¼ inch diameter around the patties for crimping. Using the plastic wrap, fold over the 3 empty dough circles onto the filled circles and peel the plastic away. For each patty, crimp the edges of the dough circles with your fingers so as to connect the top with the bottom. Tilt the plastic wrap to remove each *kubba*, placing on a plastic lined tray. Place the tray in a freezer, then remove the frozen *kubba* for storage or frying.

When ready to prepare, defrost *kubba* completely. Put oil in a deep frying pan and set on low flame. When oil is very hot, drop in as many *kubba* as will fit (do not stack). Fry for about 3 minutes, turning *kubba* over in the middle of the time, then raise flame to medium. Continue to fry until dark brown, turning as many times as needed to insure even frying. This will require maybe another 7 minutes. Remove *kubba* to paper towel-lined plate. Repeat process until all the *kubba* (or as many as will be served) are fried. Remove to serving dish and serve.

Yield: About 25-30 Kubba (Less if using the plastic wrap method to fill)

Note: An alternative presentation of *kubba burghul* is known as “*Kubba Burghul Bis-Siniyi*”, or “*kubba burghul* in a tray”. This is a faster, though far less preferable, method of preparation. Instead of filling individual patties, coat a pyrex tray with ¼ cup oil, divide the *kubba* dough into 4 equal parts, and flatten ¼ of the dough in the pyrex, so that it evenly covers the bottom of the tray. Distribute ½ the quantity of meat over the dough. Use a rolling pin to flatten another ¼ part of the dough on a sheet of plastic wrap. Flatten the dough to the size and shape of the pyrex tray, then lift the plastic wrap and flip it over, so that the dough sits over the meat in the pyrex. Peel away the plastic wrap. Place the tray in a freezer for 15 minutes, then brush another ¼ cup oil over the top of the dough. Use a sharp knife to cut the contents of the tray into diamond-shaped

pieces (like baklava/baqlawwa). Do this by making lengthwise cuts down the entire length of the dish, with approximately 2 inches between each cut. Then cut diagonally, again with approximately 2 inches between each cut. Repeat this process in another pyrex tray for the remainder of the meat and dough. After cutting, the tray can be covered and frozen until ready to prepare. When ready, brush another ¼ cup oil on top (no need to do this if not freezing for a length of time) and bake at 350 degrees until the top is dark brown. If it looks dry, brush with more oil. Serve in the trays.

5. **Syrian Kubba Burghul** (Syrian bulgar wheat patties)

Although this is not originally an Iraqi preparation, many Iraqis would occasionally make this form of *kubba*, using the Iraqi *Bharat*. Therefore, Rachel decided to include it.

Hashwa (Filling):

1 lbs. lean ground beef
2 medium sized onions, finely chopped
⅓ cup pine nuts or shredded almonds (pine nuts preferred)
(Optional: ⅓ cup raisins)
2 tablespoons corn or canola oil
1 teaspoon salt (slightly less if using kosher meat)
2 pinches black pepper
2 pinches cayenne
2 teaspoons *Bharat* (see recipe, under “Spices”)

(Same as with regular *kubba burghul*.) Place onions, oil, cayenne, and pepper in frying pan and sauté on medium flame. When onions golden brown, add meat and stir immediately and continuously, using the edge of a spatula to break up the meat balls that form as the meat cooks. Make sure the meat is separated into very small bits. When the meat is cooked, add salt and pine nuts (or almonds) (and raisins, if used) and stir. Remove from flame and let cool in pan. When cool, add *Bharat* and stir. Refrigerate until ready to fill.

Burghul Dough:

3 cups fine bulgar wheat, washed well, soaked for 1 hour, strained, and hand squeezed
1 cup white flour (some use 1 cup cream of farina, but flour preferable)
1 ½ teaspoons salt
1 teaspoon corn oil

After straining washed and soaked bulgar wheat, pick up handfuls of it and squeeze with both hands over a sink, so as to drain as much water as possible. Place *burghul* in a bowl and add all other ingredients. Knead until dough smooth. Let dough rest for 15 minutes.

Filling, Boiling, and Frying:

- 1 quart chicken stock (not essential, but highly preferable)
- 1 cup corn or canola oil (In Iraq, sesame oil was often used)

Here too, there are several ways one can fill the *kubba*. The preferred method is as follows: Lay a sheet of plastic wrap on a smooth table and slightly wet the exposed surface of the wrap. Put 6 balls of *burghul* dough onto it, equally spaced. They should be about walnut size, and with room in between them for flattening. Flatten the dough balls with your fingertips, pressing evenly, so that you work each ball into a flat, thin circle, about 3 ½ inches in diameter. Choose 1 row of three dough circles and place 1 tablespoon of *hashwa* on each of the 3 circles in the row. Arrange filling so that it evenly covers the dough circles, but leave a ¼ inch diameter around the patties for crimping. Using the plastic wrap, fold over the 3 empty dough circles onto the filled circles and peel the plastic away. For each patty, attach the edges of the dough circles with your fingers so as to connect the top with the bottom; this may be done using downward pressure – no need to pinch dough. Tilt the plastic wrap to remove each *kubba*, placing on a plastic lined tray. Place the tray in a freezer, then remove the frozen *kubba* and, if needed, store in freezer in an airtight bag or container.

Boil chicken stock or water in a large pot (can mix chicken stock with water, if not enough stock); if using water only, add some salt. Drop the frozen *kubba* into the water, several at a time, and just so many as to cover the bottom of the pot (do not stack). As the *kubba* rise in the water (after about 10 minutes), remove each, one by one, with a spatula that has drainage slits. Allow each *kubba* to drain and place it in a flat plate. After removing all, repeat process until all the *kubba* (or as many as will be served) are boiled. Make sure to change the place so that the boiled *kubba* do not sit in a pool of water.

Put oil in a deep frying pan and set on medium flame. When oil is very hot, drop in as many *kubba* as will fit (do not stack). Fry until medium brown, turning as many times as needed to insure even frying. Remove *kubba* to paper towel-lined plate. Repeat process until all the *kubba* (or as many as will be served) are fried. Remove to serving dish and serve.

Note, these *kubba* can be eaten after boiling. Although frying them is traditional, a boiled *kubba* can make a lighter and healthier snack. In such a case it is all the more recommended to have boiled it in chicken stock. In fact it can be boiled and then eaten inside chicken soup, in which case it makes a wonderful addition to the soup. Using water to boil the *kubba* is inferior, but the difference will be slightly masked when the *kubba* are fried. If one is to eat them without frying them, then the difference will be more pronounced.

Yield: About 15-20 *kubba*

6. ***Kubbat Halab*** (Patties of Aleppo, Syria)

This famous *kubba* from Aleppo is not Iraqi, but became popular among many in Iraq.

7. ***'Arooq ('Arooq B'ruz)*** (Rice patties filled with meat)

This is an exquisite preparation that will be unfamiliar to most non-Iraqis. It is a spectacularly tasty patty that is among the favorites in Rachel's family.

Rice Dough:

4 cups long grain rice (preferably Australian), washed well and soaked for at least 4 hrs.
½ lbs. ground chicken breast
¼ lbs. ground turkey breast (if turkey not available, use ¾ lbs. chicken breast)
¼ lbs. ground beef
1 ½ teaspoons salt

If ground chicken, turkey, or beef is not smooth, then grind further in food processor until completely smooth. Put in a bowl with salt. Drain water from rice and add to bowl with ground meat. Knead very gently (so as not to break the rice grains) until meat is completely distributed. If the mixture is too dry, add a few drops of water. Let it sit while making *hashwa*.

Hashwa (Filling):

1 ¼ lbs. lean ground beef
2 ½ medium sized onions, finely chopped
2-3 teaspoons corn or canola oil
½ teaspoon salt (slightly less if using kosher meat)
½ teaspoon black pepper
½ teaspoon cayenne
1 teaspoon *Bharat* (see recipe, under "Spices")
2 tablespoons *Numi Basra*, coarsely ground

Put meat in a bowl. Use a food processor to chop onion finely, but not so finely so as to create a paste. Handful by handful, take chopped onions out of food processor and use both hands to squeeze over a sink. A lot of liquid should come out. Add the squeezed onions to the meat. Add all other ingredients. Knead well until everything is mixed.

Filling, Boiling, and Frying:

1 quart chicken stock (not essential, but highly preferable)

1 cup corn or canola oil (In Iraq, sesame oil was often used)

Tear the rice dough into balls, each slightly bigger than a golf ball. When the entire quantity is divided, it should yield about 30-35 balls. Pick up one dough ball and use the thumbs of your hands to form it into a shallow bowl. Place about 1 tablespoon of *hashwa* in the center of the depression. Fold outside edges of "bowl" over filling until filling is entirely encapsulated. Flatten into a round patty that has a diameter of 2 ½ inches and is about 1 inch thick. Lay 'arooq on a tray lined with plastic wrap. Repeat process until all the dough balls are finished. Put tray in the freezer. When the 'arooq are frozen, remove from tray and, if needed, store in freezer in an airtight bag or container.

Boil chicken stock or water in a large pot (can mix chicken stock with water, if not enough stock); if using water only, add some salt. Drop the frozen 'arooq into the water (they must be frozen when before they are boiled), several at a time, and just so many as to cover the bottom of the pot (do not stack). As the 'arooq rise in the water (after about 10 minutes), continue to boil them until the rice is cooked (maybe 5 more minutes). Do not overcook, or rice will be mushy. Remove each, one by one, and place in a sieve for drainage (it is fine to stack them in the sieve, as the patties are not delicate). When the 'arooq in the sieve sufficiently drain, remove them from the sieve and allow them to cool on a flat plate. Repeat process until all the 'arooq (or as many as will be served) are boiled.

Put oil in a deep frying pan and set on low flame. When oil is very hot, drop in as many 'arooq as will fit (do not stack). Raise flame to medium. Fry until brown and crispy, turning as many times as needed to insure even frying. Remove 'arooq to paper towel-lined plate. Repeat process until all the 'arooq (or as many as will be served) are fried. Remove to serving dish and serve.

Note, 'arooq can be eaten after boiling. Although frying them is traditional, a boiled 'arq can make a lighter and healthier snack. In such a case it is all the more recommended to have boiled it in chicken stock. Using water is inferior, but the difference will be slightly masked when the 'arooq are fried. If one is to eat them without frying them, then the difference will be more pronounced.

Yield: About 30-35 'arooq

8. '**Arooq B'semak** (Rice patties filled with fish)

A fish variation on meat 'arooq, this dish is considered a true delicacy among Iraqi Jews.

Hashwa:

1 lbs. halibut
2 medium size onions, finely chopped

1 tablespoon oil
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon pepper
½ teaspoon cayenne
1 tablespoon *Numi Basra*

Cut fish into small pieces that are slightly bigger than the chopped onion. Put onions, oil, pepper, and cayenne in a frying pan and sauté on medium flame until onions are golden brown. Add fish and stir until ready, about 5 minutes. Remove from flame. When cool, add *Numi Basra* and stir well. Let cool and refrigerate.

Rice Dough:

4 cups long grain rice (preferably Australian), washed well and soaked for at least 4 hrs.
1 ¼ lbs. boneless carp or halibut fish
(However, if fish not rubbery, add 1 piece of chicken breast, less than ½ breast, and commensurately less fish; chicken will make it much easier to work with)
3 scallion stalks, chopped finely
¼ to ½ bunch fresh cilantro leaves, chopped finely
Celery leaves from 2 or 3 celery stalks, chopped finely **[Q:CELERY ROOT OR STALK?]**
1 ½ teaspoons salt
½ teaspoon pepper
1 tablespoon cumin

Cut fish (and chicken, if being used) into chunks and place into food processor together with scallions, celery leaves, and cilantro. Puree until mixture becomes smooth (do not puree past that point). Drain rice completely so that no extra water remains. Place rice in a bowl, together with pureed fish paste. Add salt, pepper, and cumin. Knead very gently (so as not to break the rice grains) until all is mixed well and fish paste is completely distributed with rice.

Filling, Boiling, and Frying:

1 quart chicken stock (not essential, but highly preferable)
1 cup corn or canola oil (In Iraq, sesame oil was often used)

Tear the rice dough into balls, each slightly bigger than a golf ball. When the entire quantity is divided, it should yield about 30-35 balls. Pick up one dough ball and use the thumbs of your hands to form it into a shallow bowl. Place slightly less than 1 tablespoon of *hashwa* in the center of the depression. Fold outside edges of “bowl” over filling until filling is entirely encapsulated. Flatten into a round patty that has a diameter of 2 ½ inches and is about 1 inch thick. Lay ‘*arooq* on a tray lined with plastic wrap. Repeat process until all the dough balls are finished. Put tray in the freezer. When the ‘*arooq* are frozen, remove from tray and, if needed, store in freezer in an airtight bag or container.

Boil chicken stock or water in a large pot (can mix chicken stock with water, if not enough stock); if using water only, add some salt. Drop the frozen *'arooq* into the water, several at a time, and just so many as to cover the bottom of the pot (do not stack). As the *'arooq* rise in the water, continue to boil them until the rice is cooked (a few more minutes). Do not overcook, or rice will be mushy. Remove each, one by one, and place in a sieve for drainage (it is fine to stack them in the sieve, but keep in mind that these patties are more delicate than are regular *'arooq*). When the *'arooq* in the sieve sufficiently drain, remove them from the sieve and allow them to cool on a flat plate. Repeat process until all the *'arooq* (or as many as will be served) are boiled.

Put oil in a deep frying pan and set on low flame. When oil is very hot, drop in as many *'arooq* as will fit (do not stack). Raise flame to medium. Fry until brown and crispy, turning as many times as needed to insure even frying. Remove *'arooq* to paper towel-lined plate. Repeat process until all the *'arooq* (or as many as will be served) are fried. Remove to serving dish and serve.

Note, *'arooq b'semak* can be eaten after boiling. Although frying them is traditional, a boiled *'arooq b'semak* can make a lighter and healthier snack. In such a case it is all the more recommended to have boiled it in chicken stock. Using water is inferior, but the difference will be slightly masked when the *'arooq* are fried. If one is to eat them without frying them, then the difference will be more pronounced.

Yield: About 30-35 *'arooq b'semak*