

4. OTHER CLASSICS

1. **Mhasha** (Array of stuffed vegetable skins)

Every Arab country considers stuffed grape leaves to be part of its cuisine, as do the Turks and the Greeks (“Dolma” and “Dolmades”). The dish probably has its origins in the Ottoman culinary tradition, which explains its ubiquity in the Middle East. The Iraqi version, as with so many other dishes, is substantially more complex. First of all, the Iraqi dish involves stuffing many different kinds of vegetable skins, and not only grape leaves. Secondly, the filling itself is both complicated and delicate, making for a wonderful dish in both taste and presentation.

Hashwa (Filling):

1 ¾ cups long grain, white basmati rice, washed and soaked for 30 minutes
1 lbs. medium-lean meat, cut into very small cubes
1 very large lemon
4 cloves garlic, finely diced
½ bunch mint leaves, washed and coarsely chopped
Finely diced beet cores (see below) OR 1-2 heaping teaspoons tomato paste
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon pepper
¼ cayenne
1 tablespoon corn oil

Vegetable Skins:

2 large onions
10 *silq* leaves (“*silq*” is the Arabic word for the leaves known as chard, Swiss chard, or silverbeet)
10 grape leaves (Note: If *silq* is not available, use a total of 20 grape leaves)
3 medium size beets
2 fresh red pimento (“gamba”) peppers
1 large, firm tomato
1 *kusa* (zucchini or white squash), peeled

Ingredients for cooking:

Juice from 1 large lemon
½ cup red wine, sweetened with silan or sugar
1 heaping teaspoon tomato paste
2-3 tablespoons oil
A few dashes salt

Initial preparation:

Peel and wash beets. Put them in a pot of water, set on high flame, and cover. When water boils, lower flame and boil for 15 minutes. Remove beets to colander. Wash the *silq* leaves very well and soak them in water. If the grape leaves are not already soaking in a jar (this is how most grape leaves are available), wash them very well and soak them in water.

Hashwa:

Drain rice so that little liquid remains and place in mixing bowl. Add meat, garlic, and mint. Take lemon and, rather than simply squeezing it, cut it into sections and pull out the citrus content in little bits, so that the content is shredded into fine pieces. (This method of preparation is called “*mfalas*” in Arabic.) Take care not to include the bitter rind or membranes of the fruit. Add the shredded lemon to the bowl with the other ingredients. If using tomato paste instead of beet residue, add tomato paste to the mixing bowl. If using beet residue, take the cooked beets and use a pairing knife to cut a “cap” in each. Slant the knife severely toward the center of the beet while cutting around the top. (The angle of the cut will prevent that cap from falling into the beet once it is cored.) Core the beets, but do not leave the skin too thin – there should be a thick shell of beet remaining all around it. Finely dice the removed beet cores and add it to the bowl. Add salt, pepper, cayenne, and oil. Mix everything together very well, but gently, taking care not to break the rice. (Note: Before hashwa is finished, begin boiling onions, see below.)

Preparation of Vegetables, Filling, and Cooking:

Prepare onions by cutting halfway into each onion, from top to bottom, but not more than half way into the body of the onion. Put the onions in a pot of water and boil. When the onions soften (after about 10 minutes), remove them from the water and place them in a colander. Drop the *silq* and grape leaves into the boiling water for a few seconds and then remove them to the colander with the onions.

Place the 2-3 tablespoons oil in a very wide, shallow saucepan. Distribute the oil evenly along the bottom of the saucepan. Begin filling the onions first. Remove a layer from one of the onions (the radius cut should allow the easy removal of a full layer) and open the layer so that it makes an onion skin of about 5 or 6 inches long. Place approximately 1 tablespoon of hashwa on the onion skin (depending on the size of the piece), toward one side of the skin. Tightly roll the onion skin around the hashwa, beginning with the end on which the hashwa was placed. The result should be an egg-shaped,

stuffed onion skin. Squeeze the stuffed onion skin, to ensure that it is fairly dense and tightly wrapped, and place it in the center of the saucepan. Repeat this process until all the layers of skin are removed from both onions and stuffed. Array the stuffed onion skins in the middle of the pan. Take a *silq* or grape leaf and lay it out on a countertop. Place 1 tablespoon of *hashwa* on one end, and flatten it out slightly in a line perpendicular to the length of the leaf. Fold the very end of the two sides of the leaf over the *hashwa* and then roll the leaf, beginning with the *hashwa* side. This method (much like rolling a burrito) should produce an item that appears like the familiar stuffed grape leaves from Turkey or Greece. Squeeze the stuffed leaf, to ensure that it is fairly dense and tightly wrapped, and place it in the saucepan next to the onion skins. Repeat process until all the *silq* and grape leaves are stuffed and arrayed in the saucepan surrounding the onion skins. Stuff the beets by removing the “cap”, filling the beets with *hashwa*, and replacing the cap. Set the beets in the saucepan, on the outside of the stuffed leaves. Next, cut a “cap” in the top of the red pimento peppers (see the explanation with respect to beets in the “*Hashwa*” section, above) and core the peppers. Stuff them by filling them with *hashwa* and replacing the cap. Place the pimentos in the saucepan, on the outside of the stuffed leaves. Cut a similar cap in the tomato and core it, making sure to leave a fairly thick tomato shell all around it. Chop the tomato core finely and sprinkle the core over the other stuffed vegetable skins in the saucepan. Fill the tomato with *hashwa* and place in the saucepan. Cut a slice off of the bigger end of the squash and core the squash. Fill with *hashwa*, replace the end slice (to cap the filled contents) and lay the squash gently in the saucepan. Note: It is not important for the tomato or the squash to touch the bottom of the saucepan, but ensure that the other items, especially the onion skins and leaves, are firmly touching the bottom of the pan.

Sprinkle salt over the contents of the saucepan. Mix lemon juice, sweetened red wine, tomato paste, and $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of water, and pour the mixture over the contents of the saucepan. Use a ceramic plate that can tolerate high heat and lay the plate upside down over the contents of the saucepan – it is important to use a plate large enough to cover the contents of the pan. (The plate serves the purpose of holding down the items so that they don’t rise in the boiling liquid and unravel.) Cover saucepan and place over medium flame. When liquid boils, lower flame to low. Cook for about 45 minutes. Toward the end of the cooking time, periodically move the saucepan around the stove burner to ensure good distribution of heat and even scorching of the stuffed vegetables. Check to make sure nothing is burning.

If ready to serve, cook until done. If not ready, only cook partially, leaving some liquid in the pan. When ready to serve, add a little water, reheat, and finish cooking. When finished, gently remove each stuffed item from the pan to a serving dish, arraying everything in a nice and aesthetic arrangement. Flip over the items from the pan to the serving dish, so the scorched brown side is up.

2. ***Ros Hamudh / Jeej Mai Naranj*** (Chicken with sweet and tangy citrus sauce)

This is a dish thought to have originated from Christian Iraqis, who call it “*Jeej mai nar-*

anj”, meaning “chicken in *naranj* juice”. Jewish Iraqis adopted it and call it “*Ros Hamudh*”, or “sour roast”. “*Naranj*” is the Arabic name for *citrus aurantium*, a citrus fruit that resembles an orange, but whose taste can best be described as a cross between an orange and a lemon. In English, the fruit is called Seville Orange, Sour Orange, Bigarade, or Neroli. If the fruit is not available, a worthy substitute can be made by mixing orange juice and lemon juice, to produce a citrus mixture that is more tangy than sweet.

This dish is pleasant, light, and very easy to prepare, which renders it a perfect project for the beginning Iraqi chef.

1 whole chicken, skinned and cut into 4 sections (discard skin)
½ teaspoon paprika
2 Tablespoons oil
1 cup fresh squeezed naranj (or orange/lemon juice mixture)
¼ teaspoon sugar
¼ teaspoon salt

Place oil and chicken pieces, meat side down, in a good thick-walled pot and set on medium flame. Sear chicken until slightly brown. Sprinkle paprika over the chicken, add ½ cup water, and cover. When water boils, lower flame to low. After water evaporates, allow chicken to scorch further on the bottom of the pot. Add naranj juice, salt, and sugar, and ¼ cup water. Raise flame to medium and cover. When liquid boils, lower flame to low. Allow to cook for approximately 10 minutes and shut off flame. There should be a good amount of fairly thin liquid remaining, and the flavor should be tangy and rich. If the sauce is too thick, add a little water and allow to boil before shutting flame. If the sauce is too thin, reduce a bit more before shutting flame.

Remove to serving dish and serve with white rice.

3. ***Ungriyi*** (Layered eggplant with meat and tomato)

2 medium size eggplants, with few seeds (taste raw to ensure not bitter)
1 lbs. lean, high quality stew meat, cut into small cubes, roughly ½ inch across
2 medium size onions, 1 slightly smaller than the other
2 medium size tomatoes or 1 large tomato, very ripe
1 ¼ teaspoons tomato paste
Juice from ½ lemon
¼ cup dry red wine (or sweet red wine, if no silan)
1 tablespoon silan (date honey)
Several teaspoons salt
½ teaspoon pepper
¼ - ½ teaspoon cayenne
3 tablespoons oil
Optional: ½ teaspoon tamarind paste

Peel eggplants and slice them lengthwise to a thickness of roughly $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ inch. Mix the eggplant slices in a bowl with 2 teaspoons salt. Allow to stand for at least $\frac{1}{2}$ hour, so that the liquid in the eggplant slices is drawn out by the salt. While the eggplants sit:

Chop the larger onion fairly finely and set aside. Put oil and meat into a sauce pan and sauté on medium flame until meat begins to brown. Add diced onion, pepper, and cayenne and sauté until the onions are golden. Add 1 cup of water, cover, bring to boil, and lower flame to low.

While meat is cooking, take eggplant slices, 3 or 4 at a time, and squeeze them over a sink, so that the excess liquid comes out. If needed, squeeze the slices between paper towels in order to draw out the liquid. Repeat until all the eggplant slices have been squeezed. Put $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of oil in a frying pan and set on medium flame. When the oil is very hot, place as many eggplant slices into the pan as will fit (do not stack the slices). Fry the eggplant slices until they are dark brown. Remove to a paper towel lined dish. Repeat until all the eggplant slices are fried. Set aside.

Cook the meat until it is tender. Reduce liquid until there is little left. Cut the smaller onion in half and then thinly slice each half, so that the outcome is semi-circular onion strips. Add the onion rounds to the sauce pan, raise flame to medium, and stir continuously for approximately 5 minutes, until the onion strips are golden. Peel the tomatoes, and finely cut $\frac{1}{2}$ the quantity of tomato into small pieces (set the remainder aside). Add the tomato pieces to the sauce pan and sauté until they are soft. Lower flame to low. Distribute the meat mixture so that it forms an even layer across the bottom of the sauce pan and cover the mixture with $\frac{1}{2}$ of the eggplant slices, laying the eggplant slices in the same direction. Slice the remaining tomato thinly and place on top of the eggplant, to create a layer of tomato. Cover the tomato layer with the remaining eggplant, laying these eggplant slices in a direction perpendicular to the eggplant slices in the layer below. Mix 1 teaspoon tomato paste with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water, lemon juice, red wine, and silan (and tamarind, if you are using it). Add a dash of salt over the eggplants in the sauce pan, then pour the tomato paste liquid over the top of the eggplants, taking care to pour gradually enough so that the liquid goes all over the eggplant. Cover the saucepan, lower flame to low, and let cook for about 15 minutes. Taste sauce and adjust flavors (if not tangy enough, add more lemon; if too tangy, add a little bit more salt).

Remove the contents of the saucepan onto a serving dish by sliding the *ungriyi*, in one section and without disturbing the integrity of the whole, onto a serving dish. You may use spatula to assist the movement, but do not attempt to lift the *ungriyi* with a spatula, as this will cause the structure to fall apart. Take care to maintain the integrity and appearance of the layered dish. Serve with white rice with *hkaka*.

4. ***Katless B'Mai Tamaṭa*** (Meat cutlets in tomato sauce)

2 lbs. of lean ground beef
1 large onion

1 – 1 ½ teaspoon *Bharat*
1 tablespoon corn or canola oil and some additional oil to coat saucepan
¼ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon pepper
¼ teaspoon cayenne
5 very ripe tomatoes or 1 medium can of peeled tomatoes

Put ground beef 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 onion out of food processor and use both hands to squeeze over a sink. A lot of liquid should come out. Add the squeezed onion to the meat. Add oil, salt, pepper, cayenne, and *Bharat*, and kneed together well until everything is evenly distributed. Tear off round balls of meat, and fashion each into a slightly flat, oblong (oval) patty, roughly 2 inches long, 1 inch wide, and ½ inch deep.

Peel tomatoes and blend in food processor until smooth. If using canned tomatoes, empty can into food processor and blend until smooth.

Prepare a good-sized saucepan by coating the bottom with a little bit of oil (an oil sprayer can be used for this). Set saucepan on medium flame and add as many cutlets as will fit (do not stack). Lightly sear cutlets on both sides – the meat should darken to a light brown. Do not overcook or the flavor will be too strong. Remove cutlets when ready and repeat process until all the cutlets are seared in the saucepan. When all the cutlets are finished and removed from the saucepan, deglaze the pan with the blended tomato and cover. Lower flame to medium-low. When the liquid boils, add all of the cutlets and cover. Cook for 30 to 45 minutes and shut off flame. If liquid is too thick, add a bit of water and bring to boil before shutting off flame. Remove to serving dish and serve.

Serve with white rice.

5. ***Pesuliyi B'laham / B'jeej*** (String beans with meat or chicken)
or ***Lubia B'laham / B'jeej*** (Fresh black eyed peas with meat or chicken)
or ***Baquilli B'laham / B'jeej*** (Fresh fava beans with meat or chicken)

These famous dishes have variants that appear in the cuisine of many Middle Eastern countries. Also in the Sephardi Jewish community, "*Fasoulia*" (string beans) is a well-known dish whose name derives from the same root word as the Arabic "*Pesuliyi*". In addition to *pesuliyi* (string beans), Iraqis often cooked with *lubia* (black eyed peas), and *baquilli* (fava beans). Whereas string beans are delicate and slightly sweet, black eyed peas have a subtle earthiness and fava beans a rich pungence. Keep in mind that while string beans are readily available, it may present a challenge to find fresh black eyed peas or fava beans that are still in their green stalks.

Apart from the different options with regard to type of bean stalk, one can make these

dishes with beef (“*laham*”) or chicken (“*jeej*”). Because of the sweetness of string beans, Rachel finds that chicken compliments *pesuliyi* very well, and that beef is superior with *lubia* and *baqulli*. Rachel recommends these combinations, but most of all she recommends that each cook experiment and come to his or her own conclusions.

1 lbs. fresh string beans OR fresh black eyed peas OR fresh fava beans (in the stalk)
¾ lbs. lean stew meat, cubed OR 1 chicken, cut into 4 sections
1 large onion, diced
2 ripe medium size tomatoes OR 1 medium can of canned tomatoes
1 heaping teaspoon tomato paste
2 tablespoons oil
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon pepper
¼ teaspoon cayenne

Wash bean stalks well and clip off ends. Wash again. If using string beans or black eyed peas, cut stalks into ½ inch long pieces. (Note, some prefer 1 inch long pieces.) If using fava beans, because they cannot be sectioned as finely, cut stalks into 1 inch long pieces. Set cut bean stalks aside.

If using meat, put oil and cubed beef in a pot and set on medium flame. Sauté until meat begins to scorch and add onions, pepper, and cayenne. Continue sautéing until the meat slightly darkens and the onions become soft and light brown in color. Add 1 cup of water and cover. When boils, lower flame to low. Cook until meat is tender.

If using chicken, put oil in a pot and lay chicken sections, meat side down, in the pot. Set on medium flame and allow the chicken to sear slightly. Add onions, pepper, and cayenne, and continue sautéing until the onions are soft and light brown in color. Add ½ cup water and cover. When water boils, lower flame to low. When water evaporates, raise flame to medium and arrange chicken so that the meat touches the bottom of the pot. Allow the chicken meat to scorch further, so that it takes on a reddish-brown color. Add ½ cup water and cover. When boils, lower flame to low and cook until chicken is ready.

Peel and finely dice the tomatoes. When the water in the pot evaporates, add the diced tomato pieces to the pot and sauté for a few minutes. (If using canned tomatoes, do not add the liquid from the can until after sautéing the tomato pieces for a few minutes.) Add bean stalks to the pot and stir. Dissolve tomato paste into 1 cup of water (or, if canned tomatoes were used, into the liquid from the can), and add to pot. Raise flame to medium and cover. When boils, lower flame to low. When the beans are *al dente*, add salt, stir, and shut off flame. (Note: The sauce in this dish should be quite thick; if too thin, uncover and reduce slightly; if too dry, add a bit of water, bring to boil, and then shut off flame.) Remove to serving dish and serve.

Serve with white rice.

6. *Kusa Muḥshi* (Stuffed squash in a tangy tomato sauce)

This is a well-known dish that is quite easy to make and very tasty. Unlike with *babinjan muḥshi* (below), the meat filling here is not precooked.

Hashwa (filling):

1 lbs. lean ground beef
1 large onion
1 tablespoon corn or canola oil
3 heaping tablespoons finely chopped celery leaves (or parsley)
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon pepper
¼ teaspoon cayenne

Put ground beef 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 onion out of food processor and use both hands to squeeze over a sink. A lot of liquid should come out. Add the squeezed onion to the meat. Add oil, salt, pepper, cayenne, and celery leaves, and knead together well until everything is evenly distributed.

Squash and sauce:

10 small and thin squash (such as white squash, each should be 5 inches in length) OR
5 large zucchinis, each cut in half (each half about 4-5 inches in length)
3 large over ripe tomatoes, peeled and diced finely (or 1 can of peeled tomatoes)
1 ½ teaspoons tomato paste
1 lemon
3 tablespoons corn or canola oil
3 tablespoons red wine sweetened with silan or sugar (or sweet red wine)
1 teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon pepper
¼ teaspoon cayenne

Wash the squash well and, rather than peel them, slightly scrape off the outer layer of peel. Core each squash, beginning from the thicker end or, if they have been cut in half, begin from the cut area. Leave approximately ½ inch in thickness at the far end of the squash, and about ¼ inch in thickness at the sides. Taste a bit of the coring before discarding it, to ensure that the squash is not bitter. (If the squash is bitter, discard it or it will ruin the dish.) Repeat this process until all the squash is cored.

In a wide and deep saucepan, put oil, tomatoes, pepper and cayenne. (If using canned tomatoes, do not add the liquid from the can until later.) Set on medium flame and sauté until tomatoes start to break down. Shut off flame and set aside.

Fill each squash by taking a chunk of meat, rolling it into a long, kabab-shaped object, and inserting it into the squash. The meat should fit tightly into the squash. For aesthetics, leave a little bit of meat protruding out of the open end of the squash, and round the end of the meat. Lay each filled squash in the saucepan.

Squeeze the lemon with a citrus juicer and mix the lemon, its pulp, the sweetened wine, salt, and 1 cup water. (If using canned tomatoes, use the liquid from the can instead of water). Into this mixture dissolve the tomato paste. Gently pour this liquid over all the squash in the saucepan. Set on medium flame and cover. When the liquid boils, lower flame to low and cook for about 20 minutes, until squash is soft. The sauce should be sufficiently reduced so that it is somewhat thick and very flavorful, but still abundant. Adjust lemon, salt, and wine to taste. Gently remove each squash to a serving dish, array them in a nice pattern, pour the liquid over the squash, and serve.

Serve with white rice.

7. ***Babinjan Muḥshi*** / ***Sheikh Muḥshi*** (Stuffed small eggplants in a tangy tomato sauce)

The name of this food, “*babinjan muḥshi*”, simply means “stuffed eggplant”, but many Iraqis, especially the Christians, referred to this breathtaking dish as “the sheik of the stuffed foods” (“*sheikh muḥshi*”). When one experiences the exquisite complexity and depth of this dish, its rather lofty name becomes easy to justify. This is without a doubt one of the finest and most impressive examples of Iraqi cuisine at its highest level.

This dish will be substantially tastier 1 or 2 days after it is first cooked. Rachel recommends preparing it a day or two early and reheating it when ready to serve.

Hashwa (filling):

- 1 lbs. lean ground beef
- 1 large onion, finely diced
- 2 tablespoons corn or canola oil
- 3 heaping tablespoons finely chopped celery leaves
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne
- ½ - 1 teaspoon very finely diced hot pepper (optional and recommended)

Put oil, onions, pepper, and cayenne in a good-quality frying pan and sauté on medium flame until the onions are soft and golden in color. Add diced pepper (if used) and ground meat. Mix well and continuously, breaking up the lumps of meat as they form. When the meat cooks, add celery leaves and mix. Allow to cook for a few more minutes, then add salt, mix well, and shut off flame.

Eggplants and sauce:

10 small and thin eggplants (each should be 6 inches in length)
3 large over ripe tomatoes, peeled and diced finely (or 1 can of peeled tomatoes)
1 ½ teaspoons tomato paste
1 lemon
3 tablespoons corn or canola oil
3 tablespoons red wine sweetened with silan or sugar (or sweet red wine)
1 teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon pepper
¼ teaspoon cayenne

Wash eggplants well and cut off their green stems. Use a vegetable peeler to peel the eggplants lengthwise, leaving even stripes of peel running down their lengths. (This is for aesthetic effect.) Take an eggplant and, at the end from which the stem was cut, create a “lid” by slicing off a single slice of about ¼ - ½ inch thick. Lay the lid aside and, from the same cut end, core the eggplant thoroughly and deeply. Leave approximately ½ inch in thickness at the far end of the eggplant, and about ¼ inch in thickness at the sides. Taste a bit of the coring before discarding it, to ensure that the eggplant is not bitter. (If the eggplant is bitter, discard it or it will ruin the dish.) Lay the cored eggplant, together with its lid, to the side. Repeat this process until all the eggplants are cored.

In a wide and deep saucepan, put oil, tomatoes, pepper and cayenne. (If using canned tomatoes, do not add the liquid from the can until later.) Set on medium flame and sauté until tomatoes start to break down. Shut off flame and set aside.

Fill each eggplant with the *hashwa* using a teaspoon. Use the handle of the spoon to poke into the *hashwa* and agitate the meat so as to pack it fairly densely into the eggplant. Fill the eggplant to the top and place the lid over the opening. Lay the eggplant in the saucepan, so the natural curve of the eggplant follows the curve of the saucepan. Repeat until all the eggplants are filled and place in the saucepan. Arrange the eggplants so that the end of one holds in place the lid of another.

Squeeze the lemon with a citrus juicer and mix the lemon, its pulp, the sweetened wine, salt, and 1 ½ cups water. (If using canned tomatoes, use the liquid from the can instead of water.) Into this mixture dissolve the tomato paste. Gently pour this liquid over all the eggplants in the saucepan. Set on medium flame and cover. When the liquid boils, lower flame to low and cook for about 15 minutes, until eggplants are soft. The sauce should be sufficiently reduced so that it is somewhat thick and very flavorful, but still abundant. Adjust lemon, salt, and wine to taste.

Again, it is recommended that this dish be prepared 1 or 2 days prior to serving. If so, then shut off flame just before the eggplants are fully cooked through and allow saucepan to cool. When cool, place the entire saucepan in a refrigerator. When ready to serve, add a little bit of water (roughly ¼ cup) and reheat on a low flame. When liquid

boils, taste it and adjust lemon, salt, and wine to taste. Shut off flame, gently remove each eggplant and lid to a serving dish, pour sauce over the eggplants, and serve.

Serve with white rice.

8. **Medias** (Eggplant and meat in a tangy tomato sauce)

[COMING SOON]

9. (Eggplant and meat “caterpillar” in a tangy tomato sauce)

[COMING SOON]

10. **Marag B'jeej** (Chicken tomato soup)

This pleasant, soothing dish can be eaten either as a soup or, if the liquid is reduced a bit, as a sauce dish over rice. Either way, it makes for a nice, light, and healthy meal.

1 whole chicken, skinned and cut into sections
2 small onions, one very finely diced and one whole
3 over ripe medium size tomatoes
1 medium size potato
¼ cup fresh, dry chick peas OR 1 can of chick peas
2 tablespoons oil
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon pepper
¼ teaspoon cayenne
(Optional: a bit of tomato paste.)

If using fresh, dry chick peas: Place chick peas in a small pot and fill pot with water. Allow to soak for at least 3 hours. Boil chick peas in the same water in which they were soaking. After 10 or 15 minutes, when the chick peas are soft, shut off flame, pour out hot water, and add cold water to the pot. Peel each chick pea and place in bowl. (If using canned chick peas, which is the less preferable alternative, open can and spill out liquid.)

Put oil, diced onion, pepper, and cayenne in a good pot. Lay the chicken sections in the pot, meat side down. Set on medium flame and sauté until onions golden brown. Add diced tomato and whole onion, and sauté until tomatoes soften and begin to break down. Add 1 ½ cups of water and cover. When liquid boils, add chick peas, cover, and lower flame to low. Peel and cube potato, add it to pot, and cover. Cook for about 10 minutes, until potatoes soft. Add salt and stir. If color not red enough, consider adding

a bit of tomato paste. If serving *marag b'jeej* as soup, make sure plenty of liquid remains in the pot. If serving as a main course to be eaten over rice, reduce liquid so that it is slightly thicker, but still abundant.

Remove to serving bowl and serve.

11. **Ros Jeej** (Roasted chicken)

[COMING SOON]

12. **Beit Wild** (Stuffed chicken egg tubes)

[COMING SOON]

13. **Salona** (Layered fish with tomatoes and cilantro)

[COMING SOON]

14. **Semak Masgouf** (Barbequed fish)

[COMING SOON]