



**Cook**

# Ethiopian

**in America**

Recipes with love from

**The Robot Book  
Club**

# **Cook Ethiopian in America**

*Authentic Spices, Stews, and Breads for the Everyday Kitchen*

The Robot Book Club

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# Preface

This book, and The Robot Book Club, is an experiment large scale AI generation. Every page, from layout to images to copy, was generated with zero human review.

The authoring and publishing teams were implemented in the Kaya scripting language. They were given only the input: Ethiopian Home Cooking.

This is the only page authored by a human: Hello there!

— Ted Benson

# Prologue

The memory, for many, is a ghost. It's the phantom scent of simmering *berbere* from a grandmother's kitchen, miles and decades away. It's the hypnotic rhythm of onions, scraped and stirred for hours, building a flavor foundation that feels, frankly, impossible to replicate in a thirty-minute dash between school pick-up and soccer practice. This isn't just about missing a meal; it's about a yearning for a lineage, a taste of home in a world that often demands quick compromises.

This book isn't a museum piece for curious tourists. It's for the diaspora, for the sons and daughters who grew up with Ethiopian aromas woven into their suburban fabric, yet found the ancestral techniques too vast, too demanding, for their American lives. We're not stripping away authenticity or watering down tradition. We're translating it. We're taking the long, slow secrets, the kind only grandmothers whisper, and making them sing on a Tuesday night.

The true heart of it all? That slow, dark fire of a thousand stews: *Kulet*. And the golden soul of *Niter Kibbeh*. These aren't just ingredients; they're the keys, batch-prepped, ready to transform the intimidating into the achievable. This is how heritage finds its way onto the weeknight table, how a vegan fasting meal becomes a quick, righteous dinner, using the same humble lentils and collards that have sustained generations.

And *Injera*? We talk about *Injera*. The spongy, sour truth of it. The effort, the occasional heartbreak of wild fermentation, and yes, the blessed, reliable auntie who sells it by the stack at the market. Because sometimes, knowing when to buy is just as authentic, and often wiser, than knowing when to bake.

This is the food that binds. The bold flavors, the communal plates, the stories simmering in every pot, from weekend breakfasts to blended holiday tables where *Doro Wat* shares space with macaroni and cheese. It's a path to bringing it

all back. Not a copy, but a continuation. A taste of where you're from, right here, right now, for the next generation.





# The Grandmother's Fridge: Batch-Cooked Foundations

*The weekend prep secrets to cooking complex, authentic Ethiopian stews on a modern weeknight schedule.*

The truth about the complex, soul-stirring stews the matriarchs conjured on a Tuesday night is that they had a system. To cook like them in the modern American world—between the commute, the grind, and the sheer chaos of the

week—requires a tactical retreat to Sunday afternoon. The deep, unapologetic punch of an everyday Ethiopian dinner doesn't come from a magic trick. It comes from the fridge.

Here is where the real work lives: a stockpile of spiced, clarified niter kibbeh and thick, slow-cooked mother sauces blitzed down to their glorious, concentrated essence in a standard food processor. Put in the time on the weekend, and eat like royalty the rest of the week. These are the foundations. Build them well.





# Misir Wot

*mi-sir wot*

The smell of Berbere blooming in hot oil is the undeniable, immediate scent of an Ethiopian home. If you grew up with it, you know exactly what I'm talking about. But making a proper kulet—the intensely caramelized onion foundation of any good wot—takes the kind of patience you simply do not have on a Tuesday night. The grandmothers know the secret: you make a massive batch of the base on Sunday, keep it in the fridge, and execute this flawless, deeply nostalgic red lentil stew in the time it takes to boil water. No shortcuts on the flavor, just a smarter use of your time.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>6 large</b>	red onions <i>peeled and roughly chopped</i>	<b>3 tbsp</b>	tomato paste
<b>1 cup</b>	neutral vegetable oil	<b>1 cup</b>	red split lentils <i>rinsed aggressively until water runs completely clear</i>
<b>1/2 cup</b>	authentic Berbere spice	<b>3 cup</b>	hot water
<b>3 tbsp</b>	garlic <i>minced or puréed</i>	<b>1 tsp</b>	kosher salt
<b>2 tbsp</b>	ginger <i>finely grated</i>	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	Mekelesha spice blend
		<b>1 tbsp</b>	Niter Kibbeh or ghee

## PREPARATION

- **Purée the chopped red onions in a food processor until they form a coarse, watery paste.**

We want total cellular collapse to create a seamless sauce base, and this modern hack cuts out an hour of knife work and tears.

- **Dry-sweat the onion purée in a large, dry Dutch oven over medium heat for 20 to 30 minutes.**

Do not add oil yet. Cover and let them cook in their own juices until the water evaporates and the onions reduce to a pale brown paste. This is the absolute core technique of authentic Ethiopian stew-making.

- **Pour in the vegetable oil and fry the onion paste for 10 minutes.**

Now that the water is gone, the concentrated onion sugars will caramelize rapidly in the fat and take on a deep, savory aroma.

- **Bloom the aromatics and Berbere spice in the hot fat.**

Stir in the tomato paste, garlic, and ginger for 2 minutes, then add the Berbere. Cook for 3 to 5 minutes until the oil turns a brilliant crimson and the raw chili smell softens.

- **Simmer the kulet with a splash of water, then cool and store.**

Add a half cup of hot water, reduce heat to low, and let it meld for 15 minutes into a dark red paste. This yields enough master base for three or four meals. Keep it in a mason jar in the fridge for up to two weeks.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Heat one cup of your batch-cooked kulet base in a medium saucepan over medium heat.**

The onions and spices are already deeply caramelized and bloomed; you just need to wake them up until the paste bubbles.

- 2. Stir the thoroughly washed red lentils into the hot kulet.**

Make sure you washed the lentils until the water ran perfectly clear, or your stew will turn into glue. Coat them completely in the red paste.

- 3. Pour in two cups of hot water, add the salt, and simmer over medium-low heat.**

Using hot water maintains your cooking temperature. Cover the pot and stir it occasionally, scraping the bottom so nothing sticks.

- 4. Cook until the lentils are creamy but still retain some textural integrity, about 15 to 20 minutes.**

Add the remaining half cup of hot water if it looks too dry before the lentils are tender. You want a thick stew, not a puréed soup.

- 5. Turn off the heat completely and stir in the Mekelesha spice and Niter Kibbeh.**

Mekelesha contains highly volatile essential oils, and boiling it destroys the aroma. Let the residual heat release the intoxicating cardamom and clove notes, then rest for 5 minutes before serving with injera or rice.

## CHEF'S NOTES

- **Cut the heat, not the flavor.**

If your family cannot handle the fiery heat of true Ethiopian Berbere, cut it 50/50 with mild, sweet paprika when making the kulet. You maintain the crucial red color and foundational flavor volume without the pain.

- **The Mekelesha hack.**

If you cannot source pre-made Mekelesha, a tiny pinch of ground cardamom, cinnamon, and clove is a highly effective, authentic-tasting American pantry substitution.



# Shiro Wot

*shee-roh waht*

If you've ever tried making Shiro at home and ended up with a gritty, disappointing chickpea soup, you're missing the two secrets of the Ethiopian grandmother: the powder and the purée. Real Shiro isn't born from raw flour off a baking aisle—it relies on Shiro Mitten, a complex, heavily roasted blend of legumes and up to fifteen indigenous spices. Combine that with onions broken down so thoroughly they surrender their physical form entirely, and you get the smooth, deeply spiced velvet you remember from home. Sourcing the right powder and cheating time with a blender turns a painstaking, ancient process into a thirty-minute weeknight miracle.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>1 med</b>	red onion <i>peeled and roughly chopped</i>	<b>1 1/2 tbsp</b>	Berberé spice blend
<b>4 med</b>	garlic <i>peeled</i>	<b>1/2 cup</b>	authentic Shiro Mitten
<b>1 clove</b>		<b>3 cup</b>	water <i>heated</i>
<b>1 inch</b>	fresh ginger <i>peeled</i>	<b>1 tsp</b>	kosher salt
<b>1 med</b>	Roma tomato <i>roughly chopped</i>	<b>2 tbsp</b>	Niter Kibbeh
<b>1/3 cup</b>	neutral cooking oil	<b>1 med</b>	jalapeño pepper <i>seeded and sliced lengthwise</i>

## PREPARATION

- **Keep Niter Kibbeh on hand.**

Clarifying spiced butter is a weekend project that pays dividends on a Tuesday. A jar in the fridge lasts for months and instantly upgrades weeknight meals with incredible aromatic depth.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Purée the aromatics to a watery paste.**

Throw the onion, garlic, ginger, and tomato into a blender or food processor, pulsing until completely smooth with absolutely no chunks remaining. Breaking down the cell walls now saves you thirty minutes of stirring at the stove.

- 2. Dry sweat the purée to cook out the harsh bite.**

Pour the onion mixture directly into a dry, heavy-bottomed pot over medium heat. Cook for 5 to 7 minutes, stirring frequently, until the water evaporates and it reduces to a thick, sweet-smelling paste. If it threatens to scorch, add a tiny splash of water.

**1. Bloom the spices into the fat.**

Add the neutral oil and Berbere spice to the paste, stirring constantly for 2 to 3 minutes. The oil will turn a brilliant, fiery red as the spices bloom, releasing an incredible aroma.

**2. Whisk in the Shiro Mitten and hydrate gradually.**

Lower the heat to medium-low. While whisking continuously, slowly rain the Shiro Mitten powder into the pot. Immediately begin adding the hot water, one cup at a time, whisking vigorously to prevent clumps from forming, then stir in the salt.

**3. Simmer until the oil separates.**

Let the stew bubble gently on low heat for 10 to 15 minutes, stirring occasionally so the bottom doesn't burn. You'll know it's ready when it reaches the consistency of a lush gravy and a shimmering border of oil separates at the edges.

**4. Finish with Niter Kibbeh and jalapeño.**

Remove from the heat and stir in the Niter Kibbeh. The residual heat melts the spiced clarified butter, releasing complex notes of cardamom and koseret. Lay the sliced jalapeño gently on top for a fresh, green aroma before serving with warm injera.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

● **Sourcing Shiro Mitten is non-negotiable.**

Do not attempt this with raw chickpea flour (besan). Authentic Shiro Mitten is deeply roasted and pre-seasoned with indigenous herbs like Besobela. Buy it from a local Ethiopian market or online; it lasts forever in the pantry.

● **Omit the Kibbeh for a vegan fasting variation.**

If you are cooking for an Orthodox fasting period or prefer a vegan dish, simply omit the Niter Kibbeh. Finish the stew with a drizzle of high-quality oil and a pinch of dried basil instead.



# Minchet Abish

*min-chet ah-bish*

If you want to know why a proper Ethiopian stew tastes like an absolute revelation, don't look at the meat. Look at the onions. The secret isn't what goes into the pot, but the slow, stubborn process of dry-roasting minced red onions into a dark, caramelized jam before a single drop of fat hits the pan. It demands patience, but master this foundational kulet and your kitchen will instantly smell like the real thing—a deeply spiced, complex bowl of comfort that tastes even better on day three.

## INGREDIENTS

**4 med** red onions  
*extremely finely minced*

**1 tbsp** garlic  
*minced into a paste*

<b>1 tsp</b>	ginger <i>peeled and minced into a paste</i>	<b>3 tbsp</b>	Nitir Kibbeh <i>divided</i>
<b>1/4 cup</b>	neutral cooking oil	<b>1 1/2 cup</b>	hot water
<b>4 tbsp</b>	Berberé spice blend	<b>1 pinch</b>	kosher salt <i>to taste</i>
<b>1/2 tsp</b>	ground fenugreek	<b>1 tsp</b>	Mekelesha
<b>1/2 cup</b>	crushed tomatoes	<b>6 large</b>	hard-boiled eggs <i>peeled and scored slightly with a knife</i>
<b>1 1/2 lb</b>	ground beef <i>85 percent lean</i>		

## PREPARATION

- **Mince the onions in a food processor.**

To save serious prep time on a weeknight and ensure the onions break down properly for the kulet, pulse your red onions in a food processor until extremely fine, stopping just short of a purée.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Dry-roast the onions to build the foundational kulet.**

Place a large Dutch oven over medium heat with no oil. Add the minced onions and a pinch of salt, stirring frequently until they release their moisture and begin to stick. Deglaze with a tablespoon of hot water whenever they catch, repeating this process for 15 to 20 minutes until the onions collapse into a dark, sweet paste.

- 2. Bloom the aromatics in oil.**

Pour the neutral oil into the onion paste, then stir in the garlic and ginger. Sauté for three minutes until the raw edge cooks off and the mixture is deeply fragrant.

- 3. Cook the raw heat out of the spices.**

Stir in the Berberé and fenugreek powder. The paste will become very thick and dry; cook it constantly for 5 to 7 minutes to bloom the oils, adding a splash of water if it threatens to scorch.

**1. Introduce acidity and spiced fat.**

Stir in the crushed tomatoes and 2 tablespoons of the Nitir Kibbeh. Let it bubble for five minutes so the acidic tomatoes can meld with the rich, herby butter.

**2. Brown the beef aggressively.**

Add the ground beef and attack it with a wooden spoon, breaking it apart until absolutely no lumps remain. Stir constantly until the meat is fully browned and takes on the deep crimson hue of the sauce.

**3. Simmer to develop the stew.**

Pour in 1 cup of the hot water, bring the pot to a gentle boil, then drop the heat to medium-low. Simmer uncovered for 20 to 30 minutes, adding a splash more water if needed, until you reach a rich, spoonable consistency.

**4. Apply the grandmother's finish off the heat.**

Turn off the stove and stir in the remaining 1 tablespoon of Nitir Kibbeh and the Mekelesha. The residual heat will warm the delicate, volatile spices without destroying their sweet aromas. Gently fold in the scored hard-boiled eggs to warm through and serve.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

● **Exploit the magic of batch cooking.**

This stew is structurally designed for the fridge. Make a double batch on Sunday; the fats solidify overnight, trapping the volatile aromatics and mellowing the chili heat into a profound, warming glow by day two.

● **Make your own Mekelesha pantry blend.**

If you cannot find pre-mixed Mekelesha, raid your baking cabinet. Mix together 1/2 tsp ground cardamom, 1/2 tsp black pepper, 1/4 tsp ground cinnamon, 1/4 tsp ground cumin, 1/4 tsp ground cloves, and a pinch of nutmeg. Keep it in a tiny jar for finishing all your stews.

● **Substitute for Nitir Kibbeh.**

If you cannot source traditional Ethiopian spiced butter, high-quality Indian ghee mixed with a tiny pinch of ground cardamom serves as an acceptable baseline.



# Awaze Tibs

*uh-wah-zay teebs*

The prevailing myth of traditional Ethiopian cooking is that it demands endless hours over a hot stove, but the reality is built on a brilliant foundation of make-ahead flavor bases. If you have a jar of fiery awaze and a stash of spiced niter kibbeh in your fridge, this legendary stir-fry comes together in a blisteringly fast fifteen minutes. It is a fierce, deeply savory sear of beef that refuses to compromise on the authentic, visceral taste of home—perfectly engineered for a random Tuesday night.

## INGREDIENTS

**1 1/2 lb** beef ribeye or chuck roast  
*cut into 1-inch cubes*

**1 tsp** kosher salt

<b>2 tbsp</b>	neutral cooking oil	<b>3 tbsp</b>	water or beef broth
<b>1 large</b>	red onion <i>thinly sliced</i>	<b>2 med</b>	fresh tomatoes <i>deseeded and roughly chopped</i>
<b>4 cloves</b>	garlic <i>minced</i>	<b>2 med</b>	jalapeño or serrano peppers <i>sliced into long strips</i>
<b>1 tbsp</b>	fresh ginger <i>minced</i>	<b>1 large sprig</b>	fresh rosemary
<b>4 tbsp</b>	awaze paste	<b>2 tbsp</b>	niter kibbeh <i>cold</i>

## PREPARATION

- **Dry the meat thoroughly before cooking.**

Moisture is the enemy of a good sear, so use paper towels to pat the beef cubes completely dry before seasoning them lightly with the kosher salt.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Sear the beef over high heat without crowding the pan.**

Get a large cast-iron skillet smoking hot, add the neutral oil, and drop in the beef in a single layer, leaving it completely untouched for at least two minutes to build a proper crust.

- 2. Toss the meat to finish browning, then remove from the heat.**

Once deeply crusted on the bottom, toss the cubes to sear the remaining sides for another two minutes, then transfer the meat to a plate and leave the heat on.

- 3. Sweat the aromatics in the residual beef fat.**

Lower the heat to medium-high and sauté the sliced red onions for four to five minutes until deeply golden and sweet, then stir in the minced garlic and ginger for sixty seconds until highly fragrant.

- 4. Awaken the awaze paste and deglaze the skillet.**

Push the onions to the edge, drop the awaze directly into the center to sizzle for thirty seconds, then pour in the water or broth to scrape up the browned bits and create your sauce base.

**1. Marry the beef, sauce, and fresh finishers.**

Return the seared beef and its resting juices to the pan, tossing thoroughly in the vibrant red sauce, then add the chopped tomatoes, sliced jalapeños, and strip the rosemary leaves directly into the mix.

**2. Apply the grandmother's finish with cold niter kibbeh.**

Cook for just two more minutes until the tomatoes soften slightly but hold their shape, then kill the heat entirely and stir in the cold spiced butter to mount the sauce into a glossy, luxurious finish.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

● **Respect the sear by working in batches if necessary.**

If you add too much meat to the pan at once, the temperature plummets and the beef steams in its own juices, resulting in a gray, tough disappointment rather than a savory, crusty tibs.

● **Give yourself permission to outsource the injera.**

True injera requires days of fermentation, so buy it fresh from a local Ethiopian market, or serve this over steamed basmati rice or warm sourdough bread in a pinch.

● **Cool the fire with a bit of yogurt.**

Awaze paste can vary wildly in heat; if your batch packs too much of a punch, balance the plate with a dollop of plain, unsweetened yogurt to cool the palate.



# Tikil Gomen

*tih-kil go-men*

If Doro Wat is the fiery, swaggering king of the Ethiopian table, Tikil Gomen is its quiet, enduring matriarch. In the Orthodox tradition, where over two hundred fasting days a year demand strict vegan discipline, this golden, turmeric-laced stew of cabbage, potatoes, and carrots is the cornerstone of the daily spread. It's deeply savory, mildly sweet, and smells exactly like a Tuesday night back home. The secret isn't in some complex spice blend, but in the grandmotherly alchemy of sweating onions in a bone-dry pan until they collapse into sweet, jammy submission.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>1 large</b>	yellow onion <i>finely diced</i>	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	black pepper <i>freshly ground</i>
<b>3 tbsp</b>	neutral oil <i>such as canola, sunflower, or light olive oil</i>	<b>2 med</b>	Yukon Gold potatoes <i>peeled and cut into 3/4-inch cubes</i>
<b>4 cloves</b>	garlic <i>minced or crushed into a paste</i>	<b>3 med</b>	carrots <i>peeled, halved lengthwise, and cut into 1/4-inch half-moons</i>
<b>1 tbsp</b>	fresh ginger <i>peeled and finely grated</i>	<b>1/2 cup</b>	water
<b>1 tsp</b>	ground turmeric	<b>1/2 large</b>	green cabbage <i>cored and chopped into rough 1-inch squares</i>
<b>1 tsp</b>	kosher salt	<b>1 whole</b>	jalapeño <i>sliced in half lengthwise, seeds and ribs removed</i>

## PREPARATION

- **Mise en place is essential.**

The key to building flavor in this dish happens quickly once the oil hits the pan. Have your garlic, ginger, and spices measured out and ready to go before you begin dry-sweating the onions.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Sweat the onions in a dry pan.**

Heat a large, heavy-bottomed pot or Dutch oven over medium heat. Do not add any oil. Toss in the diced onions and cook dry, stirring frequently, for 5 to 7 minutes until they hiss, release steam, and begin to stick. Add a drop of water if they threaten to burn, scraping up any browned bits, until the onions are soft, translucent, and significantly reduced in volume.

**1. Bloom the aromatics.**

Pour the neutral oil into the collapsed onions, fry for a minute, then add the minced garlic and grated ginger. Cook for 60 seconds until incredibly fragrant, then stir in the turmeric, salt, and black pepper, letting the spices bloom in the hot oil for another 30 seconds.

**2. Simmer the roots.**

Toss the potatoes and carrots into the pot, coating them thoroughly in the golden spice paste. Pour in the water, scrape the bottom of the pot to release any stuck bits, cover tightly, and lower the heat to medium-low. Let the roots steam for 10 to 12 minutes until the potatoes just begin to yield.

**3. Fold in the cabbage.**

Remove the lid and add the chopped cabbage. It will look like entirely too much for the pot, but use tongs to fold it into the root vegetables so it catches the turmeric oil. Place the two halves of the jalapeño on top of the mix.

**4. Braise until tender.**

Cover the pot again and simmer for another 10 to 15 minutes, stirring occasionally. The cabbage will release its own juices and shrink down into sweet, tender ribbons. Once the potatoes are completely soft, discard the jalapeño halves, adjust the salt if necessary, and serve warm.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

● **Use waxy potatoes.**

Starchy Russets will disintegrate into a gritty mash over the 30-minute braise. Yukon Golds or red waxy potatoes maintain their structural integrity while turning perfectly creamy on the inside.

● **Don't skip the jalapeño.**

It isn't there to add heat. The residual warmth of the stew gently softens the halved pepper, releasing a bright, floral aroma that perfectly cuts through the heavy earthiness of the root vegetables and turmeric.

- **A strictly fasting dish.**

Because this is traditionally a vegan dish eaten during Orthodox fasting days, using neutral oil is completely authentic. If you aren't strictly fasting, swirling a teaspoon of niter kibbeh (Ethiopian spiced butter) into the pot at the very end adds incredible richness.



# Inguday Tibs

*in-goo-die tibs*

It hits you the moment you walk through the door: that intoxicating cloud of toasted berbere, blistering onions, and garlic. Tibs is a high-heat cornerstone of the Ethiopian kitchen, and during the hundreds of Orthodox fasting days, heavy, earthy mushrooms take the stage. Conjuring that exact ghost on a Tuesday night in an American kitchen requires two grandmotherly secrets. First, hydrating your berbere into a wet paste—awaze—so the complex spices bloom instead of burning to ash. Second, dry-sweating the water out of the mushrooms before they ever touch oil, ensuring they sear rather than acting like greasy sponges.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>2 tbsp</b>	berbere spice blend	<b>3 med</b>	garlic <i>crushed or mashed</i>
<b>3 tbsp</b>	dry red wine <i>or water</i>	<b>1 tsp</b>	fresh ginger <i>peeled and finely grated</i>
<b>3 tbsp</b>	olive oil <i>divided</i>	<b>1 med</b>	Roma tomato <i>finely diced</i>
<b>1 lb</b>	portobello or cremini mushrooms <i>wiped clean, stems and gills removed if using portobellos, cut into bite-sized wedges</i>	<b>2 med</b>	jalapeño peppers <i>sliced lengthwise into thin strips</i>
<b>1 large</b>	red onion <i>halved and thinly sliced into half-moons</i>	<b>1 sprig</b>	fresh rosemary
		<b>to taste</b>	sea salt
		<b>1 tbsp</b>	lemon juice <i>freshly squeezed</i>

## PREPARATION

- **Mix the awaze paste.**

In a small container, thoroughly combine the berbere spice blend, one tablespoon of the olive oil, and the red wine to form a thick, wet paste.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Sweat the mushrooms to remove their excess water.**

Place a large, dry skillet over medium-high heat and cook the mushrooms in a single layer with a pinch of salt until they release their water and brown slightly, then remove them to a plate.

- 2. Coax the onions into a deeply golden base.**

In the same skillet, heat one tablespoon of the olive oil and the sliced onions, adding a splash of water to scrape up the brown bits whenever they start to stick, until the onions are soft and significantly reduced in volume.

**1. Bloom the aromatics.**

Push the onions to the edges of the pan, add the final tablespoon of oil to the center, and stir in the crushed garlic and grated ginger until intensely fragrant.

**2. Introduce the awaze paste and tomato.**

Stir the prepared awaze paste into the onions to toast for a minute, then immediately add the diced tomato to deglaze the pan and create a thick, violently red sauce.

**3. Execute the high-heat marriage.**

Crank the heat to high, return the mushrooms to the pan alongside the rosemary sprig and jalapeños, and toss aggressively for two to three minutes until the peppers are just tender but still bright green.

**4. Finish with acid.**

Remove the skillet from the heat, discard the woody rosemary stem, and squeeze the fresh lemon juice over the top before serving immediately alongside fresh injera.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

● **Source authentic berbere.**

Do not substitute generic chili powder. Berbere is a complex blend containing fenugreek, cardamom, and clove; seek out a local Ethiopian market or order from a reputable specialty spice vendor.

● **Choose the right pan.**

A wide cast-iron or heavy-bottomed stainless steel pan is essential. Ethiopian cooking relies heavily on the fond (the caramelized bits on the bottom), and a heavy pan allows for the water-sweating technique without scorching your base.

● **The wine deglaze is a modern diaspora trick.**

Traditional tibs utilizes water or tej (honey wine), but first-generation chefs often use a dry red like Pinot Noir to mimic the fermented depth of traditional homeland ingredients.



# Fasolia

*fa-so-li-ya*

If you grew up in an Ethiopian household, you already know the smell of this dish. It's the earthy, sweet, garlicky anchor of the injera platter. A lot of restaurants serve fasolia swimming in oil, but the grandmothers know the real secret: dry-roasting the onions first. It drives off the water and concentrates their sweetness, building a deeply caramelized foundation that makes ordinary supermarket vegetables taste exactly like home. Make a big batch, because it tastes even better on day two.

## INGREDIENTS

**1 large** red onion  
*halved and thinly sliced*

**1 lb** green beans  
*tough ends trimmed and cut in half*

<b>1 lb</b>	carrots <i>peeled and cut into 2-inch matchsticks</i>	<b>1 tsp</b>	ground turmeric
<b>4 med clove</b>	garlic <i>finely minced</i>	<b>1 tbsp</b>	tomato paste
<b>1 tbsp</b>	fresh ginger <i>peeled and grated</i>	<b>1 tsp</b>	kosher salt
<b>1/4 cup</b>	neutral oil	<b>1/2 cup</b>	water <i>divided</i>
		<b>2 med</b>	fresh jalapeños <i>sliced lengthwise into quarters</i>

## INSTRUCTIONS

### 1. **Dry-roast the onions in a heavy pot without any fat.**

Place a large Dutch oven or heavy-bottomed pot over medium heat. Add the sliced onions and a pinch of salt with zero oil. Stir frequently for 4 to 5 minutes until they release their water, shrink, and begin to toast.

### 2. **Introduce the oil and aromatics.**

Pour in the oil. The pan will immediately sizzle. Sauté for 2 to 3 minutes until the onions absorb the fat and turn deeply caramelized, then stir in the minced garlic and grated ginger for 1 minute.

### 3. **Build the golden base.**

Stir in the turmeric and tomato paste. Let the mixture cook for 2 minutes, stirring well to toast the spices and slightly darken the tomato paste.

### 4. **Give the carrots a head start.**

Add the carrot sticks and toss them thoroughly in the spiced oil. Pour in 1/4 cup of the water to deglaze the pan and create steam, then cover the pot and cook for 5 to 7 minutes.

### 5. **Add the green beans and braise patiently.**

Toss in the halved green beans and the remaining salt. Reduce the heat to medium-low, cover tightly, and simmer for 15 to 20 minutes. Forget the Western concept of tender-crisp; you want these vegetables meltingly soft. If the pot looks dry at any point, splash in the remaining water.

**1. Finish with fresh jalapeños.**

In the final 2 minutes of cooking, fold in the sliced jalapeños so they soften just slightly while keeping their bright green color and herbal heat.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

● **Elevate it with Niter Kibbeh.**

If you aren't strictly observing a vegan fast, swap one tablespoon of the neutral oil for Niter Kibbeh (Ethiopian spiced clarified butter). It brings an immense, savory depth to the dish.



# Defen Misir

*defen misir*

The secret to an authentic Ethiopian stew isn't rushing the process; it's knowing the hard work was already done on Sunday. By relying on a batch-cooked kulet—onions dry-sweated into a dark, sweet, patient paste—this deeply earthy, berbere-spiced brown lentil stew comes together in the time it takes to boil the legumes. It is the uncompromising, exact taste of the homeland, reverse-engineered for a busy weeknight.

## INGREDIENTS

**1 cup** whole brown lentils  
*rinsed and picked over for stones*

**3 1/2 cup** water or low-sodium  
vegetable broth  
*divided*

<b>1 cup</b>	batch-cooked berbere kulet	<b>3 med</b>	garlic
<b>2 tbsps</b>	Niter Kibbeh or neutral vegetable oil	<b>cloves</b>	<i>minced</i>
<b>1 tsp</b>	fresh ginger	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	salt
	<i>grated</i>	<b>1/4 tsp</b>	Mekelesha spice blend
		<b>1 med</b>	fresh jalapeño
			<i>seeded and sliced lengthwise into quarters</i>

## PREPARATION

- **Puree six large red onions in a food processor to begin the Kulet foundation.**  
True Ethiopian flavor relies on onions cooked down until they practically disappear. Doing this on a weeknight is nearly impossible, so build a batch on Sunday. A food processor replicates the traditional fine hand-dicing in seconds.
- **Dry-sweat the onions without oil over medium-low heat.**  
Place the pureed onions in a dry pot. Stir frequently for 30 to 40 minutes. Do not rush this. They will release their water and eventually collapse into a dark, sweet paste.
- **Fry the paste with fat and spices.**  
Add 1/2 cup of Niter Kibbeh (or oil) and 1/2 cup of Berbere spice to the pot. Stir and fry for 15 minutes, adding splashes of water to prevent burning. Let it cool, then store in a jar in the fridge for up to two weeks, or freeze in ice-cube trays for instant use.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Boil the lentils until tender but structurally intact.**  
In a medium saucepan, bring the rinsed lentils and 3 cups of the water to a boil. Reduce the heat, cover, and simmer for 25 to 30 minutes. Drain any excess liquid. Boiling them separately ensures they don't scorch your precious kulet base while they soften.

**1. Wake up the aromatics.**

Heat a heavy-bottomed pot or Dutch oven over medium heat. Melt the Niter Kibbeh or oil, then add the minced garlic and grated ginger, sautéing for just 60 seconds until highly fragrant.

**2. Incorporate the foundation.**

Add 1 cup of your batch-cooked berbere kulet to the pot. Stir to combine with the aromatics, letting the paste heat through and bubble gently for 2 to 3 minutes.

**3. Simmer and marry the flavors.**

Fold the cooked, drained lentils into the spicy kulet. Add the remaining 1/2 cup of water or broth to loosen the stew to your desired consistency. Reduce the heat to low, cover, and let it simmer for 10 minutes so the lentils can absorb the deep flavors of the berbere and caramelized onions.

**4. Apply the finishing touches.**

Remove the lid and stir in the salt, the Mekelesha spice, and the sliced jalapeños. Cook for 2 more minutes. The jalapeño isn't just for heat; it provides a fresh, bright, grassy crunch against the earthy stew.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

● **The Mekelesha substitution.**

Mekelesha is a traditional finishing blend meant to preserve delicate aromatic oils. If you don't have it on hand, a tiny pinch of ground cardamom and clove makes an excellent weeknight substitute.

● **Leveraging the pressure cooker.**

Modern diaspora cooks enthusiastically utilize the Instant Pot to save time. Sauté your aromatics and kulet, add raw washed lentils and broth, then seal and cook on high pressure for exactly 12 minutes.





# Qurs: The Slow Saturday Morning

*Robust, savory Ethiopian breakfasts meant to be shared with the family on a lazy weekend morning.*

Monday through Friday, breakfast is just a frantic pit stop. You grab a piece of toast, slam a coffee, and get to the grind. But Saturday morning is a reclamation of time. It's when the kitchen wakes up slowly, filling the house with the unmistakable scent of clarified butter, toasted spices, and the quiet rhythm of something older.

This isn't the kind of brunch that comes with bottomless mimosas. This is qurs—the robust, communal anchor of an Ethiopian weekend. Whether it's the volcanic warmth of spiced fava beans, a proper genfo with its golden well of

niter kibbeh, or torn flatbread soaking up the defiant heat of berbere, these are the dishes that demand you sit down, share the plate, and remember exactly who you are.





# Chechebsa

*che-cheb-sa*

If you grew up in an Ethiopian household, the weekend didn't begin with an alarm clock; it began with the smell of fenugreek and cardamom sizzling in fat, followed by the sharp, smoky sting of berbere hitting a hot pan. Chechebsa is the ultimate comfort breakfast, a savory, spiced bowl of torn flatbread that tastes unmistakably of home. Traditionally reliant on a labor-intensive clarified butter called niter kibbeh, the modern workaround leans on blooming spices in high-quality jarred ghee to capture that complex flavor in minutes. The real secret, however, isn't in the pan—it's in your hands, gently massaging the spiced fat directly into the crumb of the bread until it yields like a savory pudding.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>1 1/2 cup</b>	all-purpose flour	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	ground cardamom
<b>1/2 tsp</b>	kosher salt	<b>1/4 tsp</b>	ground fenugreek
<b>1 1/2 cup</b>	water	<b>1 tbsp</b>	berbere spice blend
<b>1 tbsp</b>	neutral oil	<b>1/2 cup</b>	plain whole-milk yogurt
<b>4 tbsp</b>	ghee	<b>2 tbsp</b>	honey

## INSTRUCTIONS

### 1. Mix the batter.

In a medium bowl, whisk the flour and salt, then gradually pour in the water, whisking vigorously to remove any lumps until you have a pourable batter slightly thicker than pancake mix.

### 2. Fry the flatbread.

Heat the neutral oil in a large non-stick skillet over medium heat, pour the batter into the center, and use the back of a spoon to spread it into a large, even circle about 1/4-inch thick.

### 3. Cook until golden.

Leave it undisturbed for 3 to 4 minutes until the top looks dry and the bottom develops golden-brown spots, then flip and cook for 2 more minutes before transferring to a cutting board to cool.

### 4. Tear the bread.

Once cool enough to handle, use your hands to tear the flatbread into small, bite-sized pieces roughly the size of a tortilla chip, and place them in a large mixing bowl.

### 5. Bloom the spices.

Wipe out the skillet and place it over medium-low heat. Melt the ghee, then stir in the cardamom, fenugreek, and berbere, letting them sizzle for exactly 60 seconds to release their oils without burning the paprika.

**1. Massage the bread.**

Remove from heat, pour the hot spiced butter over the torn bread, and let it rest for a moment so you don't burn your fingers. Get in there with your hands and gently squeeze the fat directly into the crumb of the bread, forcing the flavor inside.

**2. Serve with contrasting flavors.**

Divide the chechebsa into shallow bowls and top each with a generous dollop of cold yogurt and a heavy drizzle of honey.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

● **The Yetsom option.**

For a traditional fasting or vegan version, swap the ghee for an equal amount of olive oil; the spice blooming process remains exactly the same.

● **The Teff upgrade.**

For a deeper, earthier flavor that leans closer to the ancestral standard, substitute a half cup of the all-purpose flour with brown teff flour.



# Shahan Ful

*sha-han ful*

If you close your eyes and imagine the perfect, lazy Saturday morning in Addis Ababa, it smells exactly like this: onions caramelizing, berbere blooming, and the sharp, bright promise of something deeply comforting. We're not soaking dried beans for seven hours or burying earthenware pots in embers today; high-quality canned fava beans get you that exact, soul-warming taste of home in under twenty minutes. This is "Special Ful," loaded to the brim with raw vegetables, yogurt, and eggs to cut the heat. Put away the injera—this is canonically scooped up with warm, crusty French bread, a delicious phantom limb from the brief Italian occupation.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>2 tbsp</b>	olive oil	<b>2 tbsp</b>	ghee
<b>1 med</b>	red onion <i>finely diced, with 1/4 cup reserved for garnish</i>	<b>1 pinch</b>	ground cardamom
<b>3 large</b>	garlic cloves <i>finely minced</i>	<b>1 pinch</b>	ground fenugreek
<b>1 tbsp</b>	berbere spice blend	<b>1 pinch</b>	berbere spice blend <i>for the spiced butter</i>
<b>1/2 tsp</b>	ground cumin	<b>1/2 cup</b>	tomato <i>finely diced, for garnish</i>
<b>1 tbsp</b>	tomato paste	<b>1 med</b>	jalapeno <i>finely minced</i>
<b>1 med</b>	tomato <i>roughly chopped</i>	<b>1/4 cup</b>	plain whole-milk yogurt
<b>15 oz</b>	canned fava beans <i>undrained</i>	<b>2 large</b>	eggs <i>hard-boiled, peeled, and halved</i>
<b>1/4 cup</b>	water	<b>1 large</b>	French baguette <i>warmed in the oven</i>

## PREPARATION

- **Hard-boil the eggs ahead of time.**

Having the eggs boiled and peeled before you start the kulet ensures the fast 20-minute timeline of this recipe stays intact.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Build the aromatic foundation slowly.**

Heat the olive oil in a heavy-bottomed saucepan over medium heat, then add the diced red onion (save the reserved raw onion for later). Cook until deeply softened and translucent, about 6 to 8 minutes, before adding the minced garlic for one final minute.

**1. Bloom the spices to wake them up.**

Lower the heat slightly and stir the tablespoon of berbere and the cumin directly into the onions. Let them toast in the oil for 30 to 45 seconds until wildly fragrant, then stir in the tomato paste and chopped cooking tomato to meld for 2 minutes.

**2. Simmer and mash the beans into a porridge.**

Pour the entire can of fava beans and their starchy liquid into the pot along with the water. Bring to a gentle simmer and use the back of a wooden spoon or potato masher to roughly crush about half the beans directly in the pot, aiming for a thick, creamy texture. Simmer gently over low heat for 10 minutes.

**3. Hack the niter kibbeh.**

While the beans simmer, gently melt the ghee in a small pan or microwave and stir in the pinches of cardamom, fenugreek, and berbere to mimic the complex flavor of traditional clarified butter.

**4. Plate the Special Ful mosaic.**

Divide the piping hot stew into wide bowls, arranging neat piles of the reserved raw diced tomato, raw red onion, and minced jalapeno around the edges.

**5. Garnish and serve immediately with bread.**

Drop a dollop of yogurt in the center, nestle the halved hard-boiled eggs into the beans, and generously drizzle the spiced ghee over the whole bowl. Scoop it all up with torn pieces of the warm crusty baguette.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

● **Sourcing the right berbere is non-negotiable.**

Generic supermarket chili powders will entirely fail to replicate the complex flavor of this dish. Find a high-quality Ethiopian berbere blend online or at a local specialty market.

● **Respect the bannini.**

Do not bend over backwards trying to source injera for this on a weeknight.

Shahan Ful is one of the few Ethiopian dishes canonically eaten with crusty wheat bread.



# Yegebs Genfo

*yuh-gebs gen-fo*

If there is a dish that holds the absolute heart of an Ethiopian morning, it is Genfo. This is not a loose, sad bowl of gruel, but a dense, deeply satisfying mound of roasted grain that acts as a communal centerpiece. For generations, grandmothers spent days washing, sun-drying, and fire-roasting whole barley into a smoky, nutty flour called Beso. For the diaspora living on a modern schedule, the secret to reproducing this masterpiece without compromise is simple: buy authentic, pre-roasted Beso from a local specialty market, arm yourself with a heavy wooden spoon, and lean into the elbow grease. Armed with real roasted grain and spiced butter, you are exactly fifteen minutes away from a breakfast that smells exactly like home.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>2 cup</b>	water	<b>4 tbsp</b>	Niter Kibbeh
<b>1/2 tsp</b>	kosher salt	<b>1 1/2 tbsp</b>	Berberere
<b>1 1/2 cup</b>	Beso	<b>1/2 cup</b>	plain whole-milk yogurt

## PREPARATION

- **Lightly grease the inside of a small serving bowl and the outside of a small espresso cup.**

The cup, traditionally a finjal, will be used to stamp out the perfect center well for the porridge.

- **Boil an extra kettle of water and keep it nearby.**

You may need a splash of extra boiling water while stirring if your flour is particularly thirsty.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Bring the measured water and salt to a rolling boil in a sturdy pot over medium-high heat.**

- 2. Reduce the heat to medium-low, pour the Beso into the water in a steady stream, and immediately stir vigorously with a heavy wooden spoon.**

The mixture will seize up instantly and become incredibly thick. Do not stop stirring.

- 3. Smash the dough against the sides of the pot with the back of the spoon to aggressively work out any dry lumps.**

Cook and knead for 3 to 5 minutes until the dough pulls away cleanly from the pot and forms a smooth, glossy mass. If it is overly crumbly, add a small splash of hot water from your kettle.

- 4. Transfer the hot dough to the greased serving bowl and smooth it into a high, uniform mound with the back of a spoon.**

1. **Press the oiled espresso cup firmly into the dead center of the mound to create a deep, wide crater.**

You want the crater deep enough to hold a generous pool of butter, but be careful not to press all the way through to the bottom of the bowl.

2. **Melt the Niter Kibbeh in a small pan, stir in the Berbere until it becomes a rich crimson sauce, and pour it directly into the crater.**

3. **Spoon dollops of cold yogurt around the outer base of the porridge mound.**

Serve immediately to be eaten by hand, tearing pieces from the outside of the warm porridge to dip deeply into the molten spiced butter.

#### CHEF'S NOTES

- **Sourcing the right flour is absolutely non-negotiable.**

You must use authentic Ethiopian roasted barley flour, known as Beso, which can be found at local African specialty markets or online. Standard American raw barley flour will not gelatinize correctly and will turn into an inedible raw glue.

- **Vegan or fasting adaptation.**

During Ethiopian Orthodox fasting periods, it is perfectly traditional to substitute the Niter Kibbeh with robust extra-virgin olive oil.



# Enqulal Tibs

*en-qu-lal tibs*

If you grew up in an Ethiopian or Eritrean household, the smell of niter kibbeh hitting a hot pan on a Saturday morning is the smell of home. Western culinary schools demand eggs be cooked low, slow, and wet with heavy cream, but in Addis Ababa, they know better. You build a deep, heavy base of caramelized red onions and tomatoes, bloom your aromatics in spiced clarified butter, and cook the eggs firm enough to act like a sponge. They soak up the liquid gold without washing it away in a milky runoff. Keep a jar of this quick-infused ghee in your pantry, and this ten-minute masterpiece will ruin you for standard American diners forever.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>1 cup</b>	ghee	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	dried oregano
<b>3 small clove</b>	garlic <i>2 smashed, 1 finely minced</i>	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	ground turmeric
<b>1 med knob</b>	fresh ginger <i>1-inch piece sliced, 1/2 tsp finely grated</i>	<b>1 med</b>	Roma tomato <i>cored and finely diced</i>
<b>1 med</b>	red onion <i>1/4 cup roughly chopped, 1/2 finely diced</i>	<b>1 med</b>	jalapeño <i>seeded and finely chopped</i>
<b>1 small</b>	black cardamom pod <i>slightly smashed to open</i>	<b>5 large</b>	eggs <i>aggressively whisked until no white streaks remain</i>
<b>1 tsp</b>	fenugreek seeds	<b>1/4 tsp</b>	salt <i>plus more to taste</i>
		<b>1 large</b>	injera or French bread <i>warmed and torn for serving</i>

## PREPARATION

- **Make the Quick Niter Kibbeh ahead of time.**

In a small saucepan, combine 1 cup ghee, the smashed garlic, sliced ginger, roughly chopped red onion, black cardamom, fenugreek, oregano, and turmeric. Simmer over the lowest possible heat for 20 to 30 minutes, then strain into a glass jar and discard the solids.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Build the vegetable base.**

Place a medium non-stick skillet over medium heat and add 2 tablespoons of your infused Niter Kibbeh. Once shimmering, add the finely diced red onion and sauté until deeply softened and translucent, about 4 to 5 minutes.

- 2. Evaporate the tomatoes entirely.**

Add the diced tomato and a pinch of salt. Cook until the tomatoes break down entirely and all of their watery liquid has evaporated from the pan. If the pan is too wet, the eggs will boil instead of fry.

**1. Bloom the aromatics in the butter.**

Push the onion and tomato mixture to the edges of the pan. Drop the minced garlic and grated ginger into the center, letting them sizzle in the residual butter for 30 seconds before stirring everything together.

**2. Dry-scramble the eggs.**

Pour the whisked eggs into the hot skillet. Let them sit undisturbed for 10 seconds to form a base, then use a spatula to gently push and fold the eggs from the edges to the center. Cook them slightly firm so they absorb the spiced butter.

**3. Finish with fresh jalapeño off the heat.**

Right before the eggs are fully set—glossy but not runny—turn off the heat and fold in the chopped jalapeño. The residual heat finishes the eggs while keeping the pepper bright green and crisp.

**4. Serve immediately.**

Slide the eggs onto a platter and eat immediately, using torn pieces of injera or crusty French bread as an edible spoon.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

● **The secret is the sponge.**

Ethiopian scrambled eggs must be cooked slightly firmer than Western eggs, allowing the curds to absorb the spiced butter without washing it away.

● **Black cardamom is non-negotiable.**

Do not substitute sweet green cardamom; you need black cardamom's smoky, menthol-like backbone to replicate the traditional Ethiopian spice korerima.



# Kinche

*qin-che*

For a kid growing up in an Ethiopian household in the American Midwest, the smell of spiced butter melting into hot grains on a Saturday morning was better than any alarm clock. Kinche is often compared to oatmeal, but that does a disservice to its deeply savory, aromatic soul. Grandmothers in Addis Ababa simmer raw, hand-cracked wheat for an hour, but the pragmatic hack for a modern schedule is coarse bulgur. Parboiled before it is cracked, bulgur cooks in fifteen minutes while retaining a distinctive, satisfying chew. The magic here relies entirely on two absolute mandates: use the best Niter Kibbeh you have, and whatever you do, do not stir the pot.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>2 cup</b>	water	<b>3 tbsp</b>	Niter Kibbeh
<b>1/2 tsp</b>	sea salt	<b>1 pinch</b>	Mitmita
<b>1 cup</b>	coarse bulgur wheat		

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Bring the water to a rolling boil.**  
Set a medium, heavy-bottomed saucepan with a tight-fitting lid over medium-high heat.
- 2. Add the salt and bulgur wheat.**  
Give the water exactly one gentle stir to ensure the grains are evenly distributed, then leave them alone.
- 3. Cover tightly, reduce the heat to the absolute minimum, and do not stir.**  
Set a timer for 15 minutes. Stirring agitates the starches, turning the dish gummy and increasing the chance of scorching the bottom of the pan.
- 4. Remove from the heat and let the grains rest.**  
Once the water is absorbed and the grains look plump, take the pan off the stove. Leave the lid on for 5 minutes so the residual steam finishes the cooking process.
- 5. Fold in the spiced butter and serve.**  
Take off the lid and use a fork to gently fluff the solid Niter Kibbeh into the steaming grains until every kernel is glossy. Serve immediately in shallow bowls with a pinch of Mitmita on the rim.

## CHEF'S NOTES

- **The golden rule of bulgur.**  
You must use coarse bulgur wheat, usually labeled as Size 3 or 4 at Middle Eastern or specialty markets. Fine bulgur will turn to mush and ruin the texture.

- **The non-negotiable fat.**

Niter Kibbeh, an Ethiopian spiced clarified butter, is the entire flavor profile of this dish. Refer to the pantry staples chapter to make a batch, which keeps beautifully in the refrigerator for months.



# Beso Chibeto & Beso Drink

*beh-so chee-beh-toe ee-nah beh-so bit-bit*

If you grew up in an Ethiopian household, the smell of beso is the smell of a slow Saturday morning. Long before modern superfood protein shakes hit American gym culture, Ethiopian runners and grandmothers knew that roasted, stone-ground barley was the ultimate utilitarian fuel. Since the grain is pre-roasted, it requires no actual cooking; you simply hydrate and season it. It takes two essential forms: chibeto, a savory, fiery dough squeezed firmly in the fist to leave the indelible mark of the maker's hand, and bitbit, a nutty, restorative, honey-sweetened shake. Sourcing the right roasted flour and blazing-hot mitmita from your local market isn't a suggestion—it's the whole point.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>1 cup</b>	roasted barley flour for the chibeto	<b>4 tbsp</b>	roasted barley flour for the drink
<b>1/2 cup</b>	warm water	<b>2 cup</b>	cold whole milk
<b>2 tbsp</b>	Nit'ir Qibe <i>melted</i>	<b>1 tbsp</b>	honey
<b>1/2 tsp</b>	Mitmita	<b>1 pinch</b>	ground cardamom or cinnamon
<b>1/4 tsp</b>	salt		

## PREPARATION

- **Melt the clarified butter.**

Gently melt the nit'ir qibe in a small pan or microwave until fully liquefied before mixing into the dough.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Bloom the savory spices.**

In a medium bowl, combine the warm water, melted nit'ir qibe, mitmita, and salt, stirring well to awaken the spices in the warm fat.

- 2. Hydrate the chibeto dough.**

Pour in 1 cup of the roasted barley flour and knead it through your fingers until it achieves the texture of moist, crumbly sand.

- 3. Shape the chibeto by hand.**

Scoop a golf-ball-sized portion of dough into your hand and squeeze it firmly into a fist, ensuring the final piece retains the exact imprint of your fingers when you open your palm.

- 4. Build the drink base.**

In a large glass or shaker bottle, combine the remaining 4 tablespoons of roasted barley flour, honey, and a pinch of cinnamon or cardamom.

**1. Whisk into a paste to prevent lumps.**

Pour in a quarter cup of the cold milk and vigorously whisk with a fork into a thick, smooth paste before stirring in the remaining milk. Serve both immediately.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

- **Source real beso flour.**

Look for bags specifically labeled 'Beso' or 'Cooked/Roasted Barley Flour' at local Ethiopian markets. Do not use regular raw barley flour from an American health food store, as it will taste like raw flour and require cooking.

- **Use an authentic spice blend.**

Mitmita is a bright orange-red chili blend that is significantly hotter and saltier than berbere, heavily spiced with cardamom and cloves. It is mandatory for authentic flavor here.

- **Nit'ir Qibe alternatives.**

If you absolutely cannot find this Ethiopian clarified butter infused with herbs like koseret, melt high-quality unsalted grass-fed butter and stir in a tiny pinch of ground cardamom as a quick weeknight hack.



# Injera Firfir

*in-jer-a fir-fir*

If there is a scent that defines a slow Saturday morning in an Ethiopian-American household, it is the intoxicating aroma of spiced butter melting into blooming berbere. Born of necessity to save day-old flatbread from the bin, firfir is a masterclass in upcycling, transforming stale injera into a tangy, fiery, deeply comforting stew. The grandmotherly trick here is not a complex knife cut, but the patience to dry-sweat the onions into a sweet paste before a single drop of fat hits the pan. It is a dish of brilliant frugality that tastes like pure luxury.

## INGREDIENTS

**1 med** red onion  
*very finely minced*

**2 tbsp** niter kibbeh

<b>2 tbsp</b>	berbere	<b>3 large</b>	day-old injera <i>torn into 1 1/2 inch squares</i>
<b>2 cloves</b>	garlic <i>minced into a paste</i>	<b>1/4 tsp</b>	mekelesha spice blend
<b>1 tsp</b>	fresh ginger <i>finely grated</i>	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	kosher salt
<b>1 large</b>	roma tomato <i>finely diced</i>	<b>1 med</b>	jalapeño <i>sliced lengthwise, seeds removed if desired</i>
<b>1 cup</b>	water		

## PREPARATION

- **Prepare a quick niter kibbeh if you cannot find it locally.**

Melt 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter over low heat. Add 1/4 cup minced red onion, 2 smashed garlic cloves, 1 tbsp grated ginger, 1/2 tsp ground turmeric, 3 crushed black cardamom pods, 1/2 tsp dried oregano, and 4 whole cloves. Simmer gently on the lowest possible heat for 30 minutes, skim the foam, strain through a fine-mesh sieve, and discard the solids.

- **Mix a quick mekelesha finishing spice to capture the grandmotherly secret.**

In a spice grinder, pulse 1 tsp black peppercorns, 1 tsp cumin seeds, 1/2 tsp whole cloves, 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon, 1/2 tsp ground nutmeg, and the seeds from 2 Indian black cardamom pods.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Dry-sweat the onions to build the foundation.**

Place a large skillet over medium-low heat and add the minced onions without any oil or butter. Stir frequently until they release their water and become a soft, translucent paste, about 5 to 7 minutes, splashing in a tablespoon of water if they threaten to scorch.

**1. Melt the kibbeh and bloom the berbere.**

Once the pan is dry and the onions are soft, fold in the niter kibbeh. When it melts, stir in the berbere and cook continuously for 2 to 3 minutes to toast the spices, keeping a cup of water handy to splash in if the chilies begin to catch on the pan.

**2. Build the sauce base, or kulet.**

Stir in the garlic, ginger, and diced tomatoes, cooking until the tomatoes break down completely. Pour in the water and kosher salt, increase the heat slightly, and simmer for 5 minutes until it resembles a rich, loose tomato soup.

**3. Finish the sauce with mekelesha.**

Stir in the mekelesha, a fragrant finishing spice blend that loses its volatile magic if boiled too heavily, and drop the heat to the absolute lowest setting.

**4. Gently fold in the day-old injera.**

Add the torn injera squares to the simmering sauce and use a wooden spoon to fold them in with extreme care. The goal is for the spongy bread to drink up the bright red liquid without turning to mush; let it warm through for just 1 to 2 minutes.

**5. Garnish with fresh jalapeño and serve.**

Remove the pan from the heat, top with the sliced green jalapeño for a fresh, crunchy contrast, and serve immediately with extra fresh injera on the side.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

● **Never use fresh, warm injera for firfir.**

Fresh injera is too moist and will disintegrate into mush when introduced to the kulet. Ensure your injera is at least a day old and slightly stale so it maintains its structural integrity when drinking up the rich sauce.

● **Lean on your local Ethiopian market.**

To get the real taste of home, buy authentic berbere, injera, and niter kibbeh from a local diaspora grocer. Generic supermarket African spice blends will fall utterly flat.



# Fatira

*fah-tee-rah*

When you wake up missing the sounds and smells of your parents' kitchen, this is the remedy. Real Ethiopian grandmothers don't complicate fatira with yeast or hours of proofing. The secret is an unleavened dough, a mandatory twenty-minute rest to relax the gluten, and the alchemy of niter kibbeh. Stretched paper-thin with oiled hands and folded into flaky layers, it sizzles in the pan until golden, binds to a savory egg, and demands a heavy pour of floral honey. It requires almost no active time and delivers an undeniable taste of home.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>3 cup</b>	unbleached all-purpose flour	<b>4 tbsp</b>	Niter Kibbeh <i>melted</i>
<b>1 tsp</b>	fine sea salt	<b>4 large</b>	eggs
<b>1 tsp</b>	granulated sugar	<b>1/4 tsp</b>	salt
<b>1 cup</b>	warm water	<b>1/4 tsp</b>	black pepper
<b>6 tbsp</b>	neutral vegetable oil <i>divided</i>	<b>1/4 cup</b>	raw honey

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Mix the flour, salt, and sugar with the warm water and two tablespoons of oil to form a shaggy dough, then knead vigorously for five to seven minutes.**  
The dough should transition from sticky and rough to perfectly smooth, soft, and elastic.
- 2. Divide the dough into four equal balls, coat them thoroughly in oil to prevent a dry skin from forming, and let them rest covered on a plate for twenty minutes.**  
Do not skip this. The resting period relaxes the gluten network so the dough stretches willingly instead of snapping back.
- 3. Coat a wide stretch of counter and your hands with oil, then gently press and pull one dough ball outward from the center.**  
Leave the rolling pin in the drawer. Slide your oiled fingers underneath the edges and pull until the dough is paper-thin and translucent. Small tears will hide in the folds.
- 4. Brush one tablespoon of melted niter kibbeh across the stretched dough, then fold it into thirds vertically and horizontally to form a neat, multi-layered square.**  
Fold the top third down, the bottom third up, then the left side in and the right side over. Repeat this process with the remaining dough balls.

- 1. Heat a large cast-iron skillet over medium heat, place one folded dough square in the pan, and cook for two to three minutes until the bottom is beautifully golden and speckled with dark, crispy bubbles.**
- 2. Flip the flatbread, immediately pour one lightly whisked and seasoned egg over the top, and flip the entire bread over again so the egg cooks face-down against the hot iron.**

Cook for thirty to forty-five seconds just until the egg is set and fused to the crispy pastry, then remove to a cutting board. Repeat the cooking process for the remaining fatira.

- 3. Cut the fatira into smaller squares while piping hot and drizzle generously with raw honey.**

The heat will melt the honey down into the flaky, buttery crevices. Serve immediately alongside strong Ethiopian coffee or spiced black tea.

#### CHEF'S NOTES

- **On Niter Kibbeh.**

If you cannot find this Ethiopian spiced clarified butter at a local market or in your mother's fridge, melt high-quality ghee and steep it for five minutes with a pinch of ground cardamom and fenugreek to replicate the profile.

- **Make it ahead.**

For a weeknight dinner timeline, the dough can be mixed, oiled, and refrigerated overnight. Let it sit at room temperature for fifteen minutes before stretching to take the chill off.





# Ye'Tsom Weeknights: 30-Minute Vegan Dinners

*Drawing on the Ethiopian Orthodox fasting tradition, these naturally plant-based recipes are the ultimate answer to the Tuesday night dinner dilemma.*

The Ethiopian Orthodox calendar demands a staggering amount of sacrifice—over two hundred fasting days a year where meat and dairy are strictly banished from the table. But deprivation, in the hands of resourceful grandmothers, inevitably breeds culinary genius. This is Ye'Tsom, a tradition that transforms cheap pantry staples and humble roots into deeply complex, soul-soothing meals. It isn't some trendy plant-based lifestyle pivot; it is an ancient rhythm of faith and survival, quietly solving the modern weeknight dinner crisis.

By leaning on the pre-made flavor bases sitting in the door of the fridge, these workhorse dishes—fiery red lentils, garlicky collards, and mellow, earthy split peas—come together in the time it takes to wait for a mediocre takeout pizza. It is food born of strict restriction, engineered for everyday comfort, and served up unapologetically in under half an hour.





# Ye'abesha Gomen

*ye-ah-beh-sha go-men*

For a first-generation kid, the smell of garlic, ginger, and cardamom hitting hot oil is the universal signal that dinner is imminent. Ye'abesha Gomen isn't just a background side dish on the fasting platter; treated right, it is a deeply savory, aromatic revelation. The grandmotherly secret isn't a complex technique—it's *Yeqimem Zeyet*, an infused spiced oil that acts as the flavor engine and eliminates the gritty taste of raw, unbloomed spices. Roll the collards into tight cigars and slice them into thin ribbons, and you cut a grueling hour-long braise down to twenty minutes, delivering a nostalgic, unapologetically authentic taste of home on a Tuesday night.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>2 large bunches</b>	collard greens <i>washed and thick central stems removed</i>	<b>1/4 cup</b>	low-sodium vegetable broth or water
<b>4 tbsp</b>	Yeqimem Zeyet	<b>2 med</b>	jalapeños <i>seeds removed and sliced lengthwise into strips</i>
<b>1 large</b>	red onion <i>finely chopped</i>	<b>1 tsp</b>	kosher salt
<b>4 cloves</b>	garlic <i>minced</i>	<b>1 med</b>	lemon <i>juiced</i>
<b>1 tbsp</b>	fresh ginger <i>peeled and minced</i>		

## PREPARATION

- **Shred the greens into a fine chiffonade.**

Stack a few destemmed leaves on top of each other, roll them tightly like a cigar, and slice them crosswise into very thin, quarter-inch ribbons. This technique maximizes surface area and is the sole reason this dish can hit the table in under thirty minutes.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Build the flavor base slowly.**

Place a large, wide skillet or Dutch oven over medium heat. Add the Yeqimem Zeyet. Once shimmering and fragrant, add the chopped red onions and sauté patiently for 5 to 7 minutes until deeply softened, translucent, and slightly sweet.

- 2. Bloom the aromatics.**

Stir the minced garlic and ginger into the onions. Cook continuously for about 60 seconds until their sharp, raw edge mellows into a fragrant perfume, taking care not to let the garlic brown.

**1. Wilt the greens over high heat.**

Crank the heat to medium-high. Add the shredded collards to the skillet in handfuls, tossing continuously with tongs so every ribbon is coated in the spiced oil. Sauté for 3 to 5 minutes until the greens turn a glossy, vibrant green and reduce significantly in volume.

**2. Steam to tenderize.**

Pour in the vegetable broth and add the kosher salt. Immediately cover the skillet with a tight-fitting lid and drop the heat to medium-low. Let the greens steam and braise for 10 to 15 minutes, checking once to ensure the liquid hasn't entirely evaporated.

**3. Finish with a bright, vegetal crunch.**

Remove the lid. The greens should be completely tender but not mushy. Stir in the sliced jalapeños and cook uncovered for 2 more minutes to evaporate any remaining liquid and release the chili oils. Remove from heat, taste for salt, and finish with a light squeeze of fresh lemon juice.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

● **The Spiced Oil Shortcut**

If you don't have a batch of Yeqimem Zeyet in the fridge, heat 3 tablespoons of neutral cooking oil with 1 tablespoon of high-quality vegan butter. Before adding the onions, toast 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin, 1/2 teaspoon ground coriander, 1/4 teaspoon cardamom, and a pinch of ground fenugreek in the hot fat for 30 seconds to wake up the flavors.

● **The Telba Boost**

For a deeply traditional and nutritious variation, stir 1 to 2 tablespoons of roasted, ground flaxseed into the greens during the last 5 minutes of cooking. It thickens the pot liquor and adds an earthy, nutty depth that screams authenticity.



# Kik Aicha

*keek ah-lee-chah*

If the fiery red lentil stew is the beating heart of the Ethiopian fasting table, Kik Aicha is its comforting soul. This velvet-smooth yellow split pea stew is what Ethiopian kids grow up eating by the handful, scooped up in soft folds of sour injera. Traditionally, it takes a grandmother hours to melt onions into a sweet paste and simmer the peas until they collapse. This adaptation translates that generational secret for a frantic Tuesday night, relying on modern pressure cooking and a clever infusion of turmeric, ginger, and herbs into hot oil to mimic the complex depth of spiced butter without the dairy or the wait. It smells exactly like home.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>3 tbsp</b>	neutral cooking oil	<b>1 inch piece</b>	fresh ginger <i>peeled</i>
<b>1 tsp</b>	ground turmeric	<b>1 cup</b>	dried yellow split peas <i>rinsed thoroughly until the water runs clear</i>
<b>1/2 tsp</b>	dried oregano <i>crushed in your palms</i>	<b>3 cup</b>	water or low-sodium vegetable broth
<b>1/2 tsp</b>	dried basil	<b>1 tsp</b>	kosher salt
<b>1 pinch</b>	ground cardamom	<b>1 whole</b>	jalapeño pepper <i>stem intact, slit once down the side</i>
<b>1 large</b>	red onion <i>peeled and roughly chopped</i>		
<b>4 large cloves</b>	garlic <i>peeled</i>		

## PREPARATION

- **Rinse the yellow split peas thoroughly.**

Wash them in a fine mesh sieve under cold water until the water runs completely clear, removing excess surface starch and dust.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Pulse the red onion, garlic, and fresh ginger in a food processor until very finely minced.**

In a traditional kitchen, this takes serious knife skills, but a machine achieves the required melting texture in seconds.

- 2. Turn the pressure cooker to sauté and cook the raw onion puree in the dry pot for 4 to 5 minutes.**

This classic dry-sweat technique cooks off the sharp, sulfurous smell and evaporates the natural water without making the stew greasy. If it starts to stick, add a tiny splash of water and scrape the bottom.

- 1. Add the oil, turmeric, oregano, basil, and cardamom, and cook for 1 to 2 minutes while stirring constantly.**

The oil will turn a brilliant, staining gold as the spices become fat-soluble. This quick infusion mimics the complex depth of traditional spiced butter and builds the crucial flavor base.

- 2. Pour in the water or broth and vigorously scrape the bottom of the pot with a wooden spoon to lift any caramelized bits.**

Stir in the rinsed split peas and salt, then drop the slit jalapeño right on top to release a floral aroma without the heat. Cancel the sauté function.

- 3. Secure the lid, seal the valve, and pressure cook on high for 12 minutes.**

It will take about 5 to 7 minutes to come to pressure before the timer begins. Use this time to set the table or warm up the injera.

- 4. Perform a quick pressure release, open the lid, remove the jalapeño, and vigorously stir the split peas for 60 seconds.**

The stew might look watery at first, but don't panic. The mechanical action of stirring causes the pressure-softened peas to collapse and release their starches, instantly thickening the liquid into a creamy, luscious velvet. Taste and add more salt if needed.

#### CHEF'S NOTES

- **Legume age matters.**

Split peas can be notoriously stubborn if they have been sitting in the back of your pantry for two years. If you open the pot and they are still crunchy, simply add a half cup of water, seal it back up, and pressure cook for 5 more minutes.

- **Adjust the thickness as needed.**

This stew thickens significantly as it cools. If it looks like cement the next day in your fridge, just add a splash of water and reheat gently on the stove or in the microwave to return it to its creamy glory.



# Azifa

*ah-zee-fah*

If you grew up in an Ethiopian household, you know Azifa isn't some polite, French-style lentil salad. It's a sharp, tangy, profoundly savory mash built to cut through rich stews on a communal injera platter. The secret to that undeniable taste of home lies in doing two things right: mashing the warm lentils so they actually absorb the dressing, and taking two minutes to bloom your own Senafich. Skip the jarred Dijon. Hot water and ground mustard seeds create a complex, horseradish-like heat that brings the whole dish to life. Real food, done right, in thirty minutes.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>1 tbsp</b>	brown mustard seeds	<b>1 med</b>	red onion <i>very finely diced</i>
<b>2 tbsp</b>	hot water <i>just-boiled</i>	<b>2 med</b>	jalapeño peppers <i>seeded and finely minced</i>
<b>1 tbsp</b>	extra-virgin olive oil	<b>3 tbsp</b>	fresh lemon juice
<b>1 pinch</b>	salt	<b>2 tbsp</b>	extra-virgin olive oil
<b>1 cup</b>	whole green or brown lentils <i>rinsed and picked over</i>	<b>1 tsp</b>	salt
<b>2 1/2 cup</b>	water	<b>1 med</b>	firm tomato <i>seeded and finely diced</i>

## PREPARATION

- **Dice the red onion and jalapeños as finely as possible.**

The raw aromatics should provide a sharp, crunchy texture without overwhelming the palate with giant chunks.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Combine the lentils and water in a medium saucepan and bring to a rapid boil.**  
Reduce the heat to medium-low, cover, and simmer for 20 to 25 minutes until tender but not disintegrating.
- 2. While the lentils simmer, grind the mustard seeds to a fine powder and whisk with the hot water, a tablespoon of olive oil, and a pinch of salt.**  
Set this aside to rest. The hot water activates the mustard's enzymes to create that signature Ethiopian heat, while resting mellows the bitterness.
- 3. Drain any excess liquid from the cooked lentils, transfer to a mixing bowl, and firmly mash about half of them.**  
Use a potato masher or the back of a sturdy wooden spoon. You want a rustic, cohesive texture that scoops up easily with injera, not a loose salad.

- 1. Vigorously fold the bloomed mustard paste, diced red onion, minced jalapeño, lemon juice, remaining olive oil, and salt into the warm mashed lentils.**

Once the lentils have absorbed the dressing, gently fold in the diced tomato if using.

- 2. Serve immediately, or chill for ten minutes to let the flavors marry.**

It's best served cold or at room temperature alongside fresh injera.

#### CHEF'S NOTES

- **Do not substitute Dijon for the homemade Senafich.**

Prepared western mustards contain vinegar and wine, which fundamentally alter the pH and rob the dish of its authentic, sinus-clearing bite.



# Duba Wot

*doo-bah waht*

American pumpkin is a vehicle for sweet baking spices, but in Ethiopia, dense squash craves the complex, fiery heat of berbere. Duba Wot is an unsung hero of the Orthodox fasting season, a hearty stew that demands patience with its deeply reduced onion base—the kulet—and a strict, unyielding hand with water. This isn't a watery soup. It's a rich, clinging braise meant to be scooped up with injera. By throwing the onions in a food processor and utilizing pre-cubed squash, the ancient magic of an Ethiopian grandmother's kitchen fits neatly into a weeknight.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>2 large</b>	red onions <i>pulsed in a food processor or very finely minced</i>	<b>2 tbsp</b>	tomato paste
<b>3 tbsp</b>	neutral vegetable oil	<b>1 1/2 lb</b>	Kabocha or Butternut squash <i>seeded and cut into 1-inch cubes</i>
<b>4 med clove</b>	garlic <i>minced</i>	<b>1 cup</b>	hot water <i>freshly boiled</i>
<b>1 tbsp</b>	fresh ginger <i>grated or minced</i>	<b>1 tsp</b>	kosher salt
<b>2 tbsp</b>	Ethiopian berbere spice blend	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	ground kororima or cardamom

## PREPARATION

- **Use a food processor for the onions.**

Finely mincing the red onions in a processor saves valuable chopping time and drastically accelerates their reduction in the pan.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Sweat the onions in a dry pan to concentrate their sugars and build the foundation.**

Place a large, heavy-bottomed skillet over medium heat and add the minced red onions without oil. Stir frequently for about 5 minutes until their raw liquid evaporates and they turn translucent.

- 2. Introduce the oil and aromatics to bloom the flavors.**

Pour in the vegetable oil, coating the onions, and sauté for another 3 minutes until golden. Stir in the garlic and ginger, cooking for just 60 seconds until highly fragrant.

- 3. Bloom the berbere and tomato paste carefully to unlock their essential oils.**

Stir the berbere and tomato paste into the pan continuously for 2 minutes until the oil turns a deep, vibrant red. Spices burn easily; if the mixture begins to stick, deglaze with a tablespoon of hot water.

**1. Toss the squash in the rich kulet and braise.**

Add the cubed squash, ensuring every piece is coated in the spicy base, then pour in just enough hot water to come halfway up the squash without submerging it.

**2. Simmer the stew until the squash is tender and the sauce is thick.**

Add the salt, cover with a tight-fitting lid, and lower the heat to medium-low, simmering for 15 to 20 minutes until the squash is easily pierced with a fork but retains its shape.

**3. Finish with cardamom off the heat to preserve its delicate brightness.**

Remove the skillet from the heat, stir in the korerima, and let the stew rest for 5 minutes before serving hot with injera.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

● **Control the moisture strictly.**

The biggest mistake Western cooks make with wot is treating it like soup. Add only enough water to braise the squash so the sauce reduces into a thick, clinging stew.

● **Choose the right squash.**

Standard field pumpkins hold too much water and turn to mush. Seek out Kabocha squash for its firm texture and edible skin, or grab pre-cubed butternut squash to save time.



# Dinich Wot

*dee-nee-ch wot*

This is the dish that makes your kitchen smell exactly like your mother's on a Wednesday night. Dinich Wot is the unsung hero of the Ethiopian fasting table—unapologetically focused on tender potatoes swimming in a deeply reduced, fiery berbere gravy. To pull this off on a weeknight without standing over the stove for an hour, we're borrowing a modern hack: puréeing the onions to fast-track the foundational kulet. But the real secret is the dash of Mekelesha right at the end. That fragrant hit of warming spices is what triggers the nostalgia. Do not skip it.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>1 large</b>	red onion <i>roughly chopped</i>	<b>2 tbsp</b>	berbere spice blend
<b>3 tbsp</b>	neutral oil	<b>1 tbsp</b>	tomato paste
<b>4 med clove</b>	fresh garlic <i>minced</i>	<b>1 1/2 cup</b>	hot water
<b>1 tbsp</b>	fresh ginger <i>grated</i>	<b>1 tsp</b>	kosher salt
		<b>1 1/2 lb</b>	Yukon Gold potatoes <i>peeled and cut into 1.5-inch chunks</i>
		<b>1/2 tsp</b>	Mekelesha spice blend

## PREPARATION

- **Make a batch of Mekelesha to keep in the pantry.**

This finishing spice is the grandmother's secret. To make a quick batch: lightly toast 1 tbsp black peppercorns, 1 tbsp cumin seeds, 1 tbsp whole cloves, 2 cinnamon sticks, and the seeds of 5 Korerima (Ethiopian black cardamom) pods. Grind to a fine powder and mix with 1/2 tsp freshly grated nutmeg. Store in a glass jar.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Fast-track the kulet by pulsing the onion into a fine purée in a food processor.**  
This modern weeknight hack mechanically breaks down the cellular walls of the onion, bypassing thirty minutes of traditional hand-chopping and slow-cooking.
- 2. Dry-roast the onion purée in a wide skillet to boil off the water.**  
Pour the purée directly into a dry Dutch oven or heavy skillet over medium-high heat without any oil. Cook, stirring frequently, until the juice completely evaporates and the onion begins to stick to the bottom of the pan, about 5 to 7 minutes.

- 1. Add the oil to caramelize the onions, then bloom the aromatics and spices.**  
Reduce the heat to medium, pour in the oil, and cook until the onions turn a rich, golden brown. Stir in the ginger, garlic, and berbere, frying for a minute or two to cook out the raw flavor of the chilies and release their toasted oils.
- 2. Build the gravy with tomato paste and water, then simmer the potatoes.**  
Sauté the tomato paste for two minutes until it darkens, gradually pour in the hot water to create a smooth sauce, and bring to a gentle boil. Fold in the cubed potatoes so they are well-coated, cover tightly, and simmer for 12 to 15 minutes until fork-tender.
- 3. Thicken the sauce slightly and finish with the Mekelesha off the heat.**  
Remove the lid and gently smash a couple of potato cubes against the side of the pot to release a little natural starch. Turn off the heat completely, sprinkle the Mekelesha over the stew, fold it in gently, and let it rest for two minutes before serving to lock in the volatile aromatic oils.

#### CHEF'S NOTES

- **Always dry-roast your onions first.**  
Western stews usually start by sweating onions in oil. Ethiopian cooking boils the water out in a dry pan before the fat is introduced. This concentrates the natural sugars and creates the thick, jammy foundation known as the kulet.
- **Avoid Russet potatoes at all costs.**  
While cheap and ubiquitous, their high starch content will dissolve rapidly and turn your beautiful wot into a gummy, mashed-potato porridge. Spend the extra dollar on Yukon Golds or waxy red potatoes so they absorb the sauce while maintaining a distinct, satisfying bite.



# Timatim Fitfit

*tee-mah-teem fit-fit*

There is a specific, bracing tang you crave when staring down leftover injera on a weeknight. The mistake most people make when trying to recreate this classic Ethiopian palate cleanser is treating it like an Italian panzanella, drowning the porous teff bread in heavy oil and sharp vinegar. The grandmotherly trick to getting the injera perfectly soaked, springy, and bursting with flavor is a simple splash of cold water. It turns a harsh vinaigrette into a spiced, savory broth that the bread drinks up perfectly, delivering an immediate, transportive taste of home in under fifteen minutes.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>3 large</b>	vine tomatoes <i>cored and diced small</i>	<b>1 1/2 tsp</b>	berbere spice blend
<b>1/2 large</b>	red onion <i>finely diced</i>	<b>1/4 tsp</b>	mitmita spice blend <i>or substitute cayenne mixed with a pinch of ground cardamom</i>
<b>2 med</b>	jalapeños <i>seeded and finely minced</i>	<b>3 tbsp</b>	fresh lemon juice
<b>2 large cloves</b>	garlic <i>finely grated or minced</i>	<b>3 tbsp</b>	neutral oil
<b>1 tsp</b>	kosher salt	<b>1/3 cup</b>	cold water <i>filtered or ice water</i>
		<b>3 large</b>	teff injera <i>torn into 1 1/2-inch pieces</i>

## PREPARATION

- **Prep all your vegetables and tear the bread before you begin.**

Because the hydration timing is so crucial to the final texture, you don't want to be mincing jalapeños while your tomatoes are over-macerating.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Macerate the vegetables to draw out their natural juices.**

In a large serving bowl, combine the diced tomatoes, red onion, jalapeño, garlic, and salt. Toss well and let it sit for five minutes so the salt can pull the sweet liquid from the tomatoes.

- 2. Build the cold broth.**

Sprinkle the berbere and mitmita over the vegetables, then pour in the fresh lemon juice, oil, and the crucial cold water. Toss thoroughly until the spices dissolve into a bright, aggressively seasoned liquid.

- 3. Fold in the injera.**

Drop the torn pieces of injera into the bowl, using your hands to gently fold them into the tomato mixture until every single piece makes contact with the liquid.

**1. Let the dish rest before serving.**

Walk away for ten minutes, allowing the teff's honeycomb texture to act like a sponge and draw in that cold, spicy broth without degrading into mush.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

- **Source authentic 100% teff injera.**

Blended wheat injera contains gluten that turns gummy when hydrated; true teff keeps its spongy, yielding texture even when soaking wet.

- **Do not skip the water.**

The native Amharic secret to this dish is treating the dressing like a cold broth rather than a vinaigrette. Without the water, the porous bread will unevenly absorb pure oil and acid, ruining the mouthfeel.



# Buticha

*boo-tee-cha*

Forget the internet blogs telling you to toss canned garbanzos and mustard into a food processor—that's just hummus with a Hollywood makeover. Real Buticha is a completely different animal. It's a dense chickpea porridge, cooked out and chilled firm, then crumbled to mimic scrambled eggs before being aggressively tossed with raw, biting aromatics and a hard hit of lemon. To get this authentic fasting-day staple onto a weeknight table without waiting an hour for the paste to set, we rely on a dead-simple trick of culinary physics. By spreading the hot base thinly across a sheet pan and flash-chilling it in the freezer, you get the uncompromised taste of home from stove to plate in under thirty minutes.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>1 cup</b>	chickpea flour	<b>1 med</b>	jalapeño <i>seeded and very finely minced</i>
<b>2 cup</b>	cool water	<b>3 med</b>	garlic <i>crushed and minced</i>
<b>1/2 tsp</b>	salt	<b>clove</b>	
<b>1/2 tsp</b>	ground turmeric	<b>3 tbsp</b>	extra virgin olive oil
<b>1 tbsp</b>	neutral oil	<b>3 tbsp</b>	fresh lemon juice
<b>1/2 med</b>	red onion <i>very finely diced</i>		

## PREPARATION

- **Line a standard baking sheet with parchment paper.**

Clear enough space in your freezer to accommodate the pan, as this is essential for the 10-minute flash-chill.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Whisk the chickpea flour, cool water, salt, and turmeric together in a medium non-stick saucepan off the heat.**

Using cool water instead of hot prevents the flour from instantly clumping. Whisk vigorously until the mixture is completely smooth and lump-free.

- 2. Place the saucepan over medium heat, add the neutral oil, and stir constantly with a silicone spatula.**

The liquid will suddenly seize into a dense, glossy paste. Reduce the heat to medium-low and keep stirring for 5 to 7 minutes to cook out the raw, metallic taste of the flour, stopping only when the mass pulls away cleanly from the sides of the pan.

- 3. Immediately dump the hot paste onto the prepared sheet pan and spread it into an even 1/4-inch layer.**

Place the pan directly into the freezer for about 10 minutes, or until the paste is completely cold and firm to the touch.

- 1. In a medium bowl, combine the diced red onion, jalapeño, garlic, olive oil, and lemon juice.**

Stirring these together now allows the acid in the lemon juice to slightly tame the raw bite of the onion and garlic while the chickpea base chills.

- 2. Transfer the chilled chickpea slab to a cutting board and aggressively mash it with a fork until it breaks apart into tiny, distinct curds.**

You want a texture resembling scrambled eggs or large couscous. Fold the crumbles into the onion dressing until thoroughly coated, and serve immediately with fresh injera.

#### CHEF'S NOTES

- **Do not substitute whole canned chickpeas under any circumstances.**

The structural integrity of this dish relies on the active starches in raw chickpea flour gelatinizing and setting into a firm block. Blending canned garbanzos will just yield standard hummus.



# Ye'Fisik: Sunday Suppers and Sizzling Skillets

*Hearty, meat-based dishes that traditionally commanded respect and time, adapted for the American weekend.*

There is a primal shift in the atmosphere when the fast breaks and the meat finally hits the heat. Ye'Fisik is the heavy artillery. Historically, these are the dishes that demanded the surrender of an entire afternoon, commanding respect over low, slow embers. But the diaspora doesn't live in the old country, and Sundays in America require a different kind of hustle.

Here, the ancestral slow-braise of a proper doro wat meets the high-pressure alchemy of the modern kitchen, and the blistering heat of a seasoned cast-iron skillet steps in to violently sear off the siga tibs. It's the same unapologetic,

deeply spiced soul of an Ethiopian Sunday supper, engineered for the reality of the weekend. These are the centerpieces. The plates that stain the fingers and linger in the memory.





# Doro Wat

*dō-rō wät*

Doro Wat isn't just a stew; it's a culinary rite of passage. It's a dark, fiery, mahogany braise that smells exactly like Sunday suppers in Addis Ababa. The secret to that intense, soul-warming flavor is the *kulet*—a ridiculous mountain of red onions cooked down to a sweet, dark jam. Generations of women spent hours weeping over a cutting board to get it right, but the modern grandmother's secret is the food processor. It saves your sanity on a Tuesday night without sacrificing an ounce of that rich, slow-simmered, spice-bloomed depth. This is the real deal: tender chicken yielding to time, sharp *berbere* heat, and a late-stage hit of sweet aromatics that hits you right in the chest.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>2 lb</b>	bone-in skinless chicken thighs and drumsticks <i>scored to the bone</i>	<b>4 med</b>	garlic cloves <i>minced</i>
<b>2 med</b>	lemons <i>juiced</i>	<b>1 tbsp</b>	fresh ginger <i>grated</i>
<b>1 tbsp</b>	kosher salt	<b>2 tbsp</b>	tomato paste
<b>3 lb</b>	red onions <i>peeled and quartered</i>	<b>1/2 cup</b>	Berberé spice blend
<b>1/2 cup</b>	spiced ghee or Niter Kibbeh <i>divided</i>	<b>2 cup</b>	chicken stock
<b>2 tbsp</b>	neutral oil	<b>4 large</b>	eggs <i>hard-boiled, peeled, and lightly pierced with a fork</i>
		<b>1 tsp</b>	Mekelesha spice blend

## PREPARATION

- **If you cannot find pre-mixed Mekelesha, a quick homemade blend works perfectly.**

Grind together a pinch each of black peppercorns, green cardamom seeds, cinnamon, cumin, cloves, and nutmeg. It flawlessly replicates the warming, aromatic lift required at the end of the stew.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Massage the lemon juice and salt vigorously into the scored chicken, then let it rest at room temperature.**

This acid wash is non-negotiable. It not only cleans the meat of any gamey flavors, but gently denatures the surface proteins, opening the chicken up to absorb the rich, spicy gravy.

- 2. Pulse the quartered red onions in a food processor until they form a chunky, wet puree.**

Be careful not to blend them into absolute liquid; you want the texture of a very fine salsa. This shortcut saves thirty minutes of weeping over a cutting board.

- 1. Transfer the onion puree to a large, dry, heavy-bottomed Dutch oven and cook over medium-low heat without any oil.**

This is the most crucial step in Ethiopian cooking. Cook for 30 to 45 minutes, stirring frequently, until the cellular water evaporates and the onions reduce to a fraction of their volume, turning a deep, rosy pink.

- 2. Once the onions are dry and slightly sticking to the bottom, stir in half of the spiced ghee, the neutral oil, garlic, and ginger.**

The fat will instantly sizzle. Sauté this mixture for 5 to 10 minutes until the aromatics are incredibly fragrant and the onions take on a golden-brown, caramelized hue.

- 3. Stir in the tomato paste and Berbere spice blend, letting the mixture toast and darken.**

Stir continuously as the Berbere releases its complex, fat-soluble oils, turning the mixture into a thick, mahogany-colored paste. Let this simmer on low for 15 to 30 minutes, adding a splash of stock to deglaze if it threatens to scorch.

- 4. Nestle the chicken pieces into the thick red sauce, letting them sear for a few minutes before pouring in the chicken stock.**

The stock should come about halfway up the chicken—do not drown the meat, as this is a thick stew, not a soup. Bring to a gentle boil, reduce the heat to the lowest setting, cover, and simmer for 45 minutes, stirring occasionally.

- 5. When the chicken is tender and the oil separates at the top of the sauce, gently fold in the hard-boiled eggs.**

Stir in the Mekelesha spice blend and the remaining spiced ghee, then immediately turn off the heat. Let the residual heat steep the fragile aromatics into the gravy for 5 minutes before serving with plenty of fresh injera.

## CHEF'S NOTES

- **You can prepare the onion and spice base ahead of time for incredibly easy weeknight cooking.**

Doro Wat is famously better the next day. Make the kulet (the thick onion and spice gravy) on a Sunday, store it in the fridge, and simply drop in the chicken and eggs on a busy Tuesday night.



# Gomen be Siga

*go-men bay see-gah*

The beauty of traditional Ethiopian cooking lies in its unapologetic depth, born of patience and fire. But if you grew up on those rich, marrow-infused stews and now find yourself staring down a Tuesday night in the suburbs, patience is a luxury. This is the diaspora's ace in the hole: leveraging the high-pressure violence of an electric multicooker to collapse hours of slow-braising into minutes. The secret isn't overwhelming heat; it's the alchemy of bone-in beef rendering into spiced butter, tamed by the earthy, bitter bite of collard greens. It tastes exactly like home, without the wait.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>1 lb</b>	bone-in beef short ribs <i>cut into 1.5-inch pieces</i>	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	ground ginger
<b>2 med</b>	red onions <i>finely diced</i>	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	black pepper
<b>3 tbsp</b>	ghee or niter kibbeh <i>divided</i>	<b>1 tsp</b>	kosher salt
<b>4 med cloves</b>	garlic <i>finely minced</i>	<b>1/2 cup</b>	water or low-sodium beef broth
<b>1 tbsp</b>	fresh ginger <i>peeled and finely grated</i>	<b>1 large bunch</b>	collard greens <i>thoroughly washed, tough central stems removed, and roughly chopped</i>
<b>1/2 tsp</b>	ground cardamom	<b>2 small</b>	jalapeño peppers <i>sliced diagonally</i>

## PREPARATION

- **Fake the niter kibbeh.**

True niter kibbeh is non-negotiable for the flavor, but if you don't have a jar on hand, synthesize it. Melt half a cup of standard ghee over low heat with a smashed garlic clove, a thick slice of fresh ginger, a pinch of ground cardamom, and a pinch of cumin. Let it steep for ten minutes, strain out the solids, and you're in business.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Sweat the onions dry.**

Set your pressure cooker to its sauté function and drop in the diced onions without any oil. Let them cook for about five minutes, stirring frequently, until their water evaporates and they collapse into a sweet, translucent paste—a foundational, non-negotiable Ethiopian technique.

- 2. Bloom the aromatics.**

Add two tablespoons of the spiced butter to the onions, followed by the minced garlic and grated ginger, stirring until intensely fragrant.

**1. Brown the beef.**

Toss in the short ribs along with the cardamom, dry ginger, black pepper, and salt. Sear the meat until deeply browned on all sides, letting the Maillard reaction dictate the final savory depth of the stew.

**2. Force the braise.**

Pour in the water to scrape up any browned fond from the bottom, lock the lid, and cook on high pressure for 25 minutes. Let the pressure release naturally for 10 minutes to ensure the meat is completely yielding.

**3. Wilt the greens.**

Switch back to the sauté function to bring the reduced, gelatinous broth to a simmer. Fold in the collard greens a handful at a time, cover, and let them steam for five to seven minutes until tender but still holding their vibrant color and a slight bite.

**4. Finish and serve.**

Take the pot off the heat, stir in the final tablespoon of spiced butter for a glossy finish, and fold in the sliced jalapeños before serving immediately.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

● **Embrace the bone.**

While boneless chuck roast is easier to eat, bone-in short ribs are critical here. The marrow and gelatin extracted under pressure naturally thicken the sauce without any flour, providing that unmistakable, lip-smacking richness.

● **Split your greens.**

Traditional Ethiopian mustard greens have a sharper bite than American collards. If you want to replicate that complexity, use a 50/50 mix of standard collard greens and curly kale.



# Kitfo Leb Leb

*kit-fo leb-leb*

Raw meat on a weeknight is a tough sell, but Kitfo Leb Leb—the gently warmed cousin of the traditional Gurage tartare—is your gateway. The aunties know the secret isn't just sourcing pristine beef, it's the sequence. You never mix cold spiced butter into the meat. You must melt the niter kibbeh first, blooming the fiery mitmita and smoky korerima in the hot fat to extract their essential oils. Fold in the minced beef just long enough to kiss it with heat, leaving the inside rare, and your kitchen will smell exactly like home.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>1 lb</b>	lean beef <i>meticulously trimmed of all fat and cut into 1-inch cubes</i>	<b>1 large</b>	bunch collard greens <i>stems removed and leaves chopped fine</i>
<b>1/2 cup</b>	niter kibbeh	<b>2 tbsp</b>	niter kibbeh
<b>2 tbsp</b>	mitmita	<b>1 med</b>	red onion <i>finely diced</i>
<b>1/2 tsp</b>	korerima <i>freshly ground</i>	<b>3 small</b>	garlic cloves <i>minced</i>
<b>1 tsp</b>	kosher salt	<b>1 tsp</b>	fresh ginger <i>minced</i>
<b>1 qt</b>	full-fat buttermilk		

## PREPARATION

- **Process the trimmed beef into a coarse mince.**

Pat the beef completely dry. Working in small batches, pulse the cubes in a food processor 5 to 8 times until coarsely chopped. Do not process it into a paste. Let it sit at room temperature to take the chill off.

- **Simmer the buttermilk to make the quick ayib.**

Pour the buttermilk into a heavy-bottomed saucepan over medium-low heat. Do not stir. Let it sit for 15 to 20 minutes until the curds separate from the whey, then strain through a fine-mesh sieve and season with salt.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Sauté the aromatics and greens for the gomen.**

Melt two tablespoons of niter kibbeh over medium heat. Sauté the diced onion until translucent, add the garlic and ginger, then fold in the collard greens and a splash of water, covering to simmer until tender.

- 2. Bloom the spices in the melted niter kibbeh.**

Place a skillet over low heat and completely melt the half cup of niter kibbeh. Stir in the mitmita, korerima, and salt, cooking for 60 seconds to extract the essential oils.

**1. Fold the minced beef into the warm spiced butter.**

Keep the heat low and add the beef. Fold it swiftly and continuously for 1 to 3 minutes until the exterior turns light brown but the interior remains a vibrant, tender pink.

**2. Serve immediately with the fresh cheese and greens.**

Pull the skillet from the heat right away to prevent overcooking. Serve the warm kitfo alongside mounds of the cooling ayib, savory gomen, and fresh injera.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

- **Quality beef is non-negotiable.**

Because this dish is only kissed with heat, never use pre-packaged ground beef. Source a whole muscle cut like sirloin or tenderloin and mince it yourself.



# Yebeg Tibs

*yuh-beg tibs*

In Ethiopia, the sound of sizzling meat is the universal signal that a fast has ended or an honored guest has arrived. Too many Americanized versions reduce this celebratory dish to a heavy, wine-drenched stew, but real tibs is a lightning-fast exercise in high heat and precision. The secret isn't a complicated marinade; it is the grandmotherly trick of dry-roasting the onions in a smoking-hot skillet before the spiced butter ever hits the pan. It is loud, it is vibrant, and when done right, it tastes exactly like home.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>1 1/2 lb</b>	boneless lamb shoulder <i>trimmed of excess gristle and cut into 3/4-inch cubes</i>	<b>1 1/2 tbsp</b>	Berberere spice blend
<b>1 large</b>	red onion <i>sliced thin</i>	<b>1 tsp</b>	coarse kosher salt
<b>4 tbsp</b>	Niter Kibbeh or high quality ghee	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	black pepper
<b>3 med clove</b>	fresh garlic <i>minced</i>	<b>2 med</b>	jalapeno peppers <i>seeded and sliced into long strips</i>
<b>1 tbsp</b>	fresh ginger <i>finely grated</i>	<b>2 large sprig</b>	fresh rosemary <i>leaves stripped from the stem</i>
		<b>1 med</b>	Roma tomato <i>seeded and diced</i>

## PREPARATION

- **Master the weeknight Niter Kibbeh hack.**

If you do not have a jar of traditional Ethiopian spiced butter in the fridge, melt your four tablespoons of high-quality ghee with a tiny pinch each of garlic powder, ground ginger, turmeric, and ground cardamom before using.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Prep your station before you cook.**

Tibs moves incredibly fast once the fire is on. Have the cubed lamb seasoned lightly with the salt and pepper, and keep your sliced onions, garlic, ginger, and herbs in small bowls next to the stove.

- 2. Dry-roast the onions.**

Place your heaviest skillet over medium-high heat until smoking hot. Do not add oil or butter. Toss the sliced red onions directly into the dry pan for two to three minutes to burn off excess water and lightly char the edges.

**1. Bloom the aromatics.**

Push the charred onions to the edges and drop in the spiced butter. As soon as it bubbles, fry the garlic and ginger for thirty seconds until fragrant, then stir in the Berbere spice blend to create a rapid flavor base directly in the pan.

**2. Sear the lamb.**

Crank the heat to maximum and add the lamb in a single layer. Let it sit untouched for one minute to develop a hard brown crust, then toss vigorously for another three to four minutes so the inside remains tender and juicy.

**3. Finish with fresh herbs.**

In the final sixty seconds, toss in the rosemary leaves, jalapeno strips, and diced tomato. The residual heat will release the piney oils and take the raw edge off the pepper while leaving its vital crunch intact.

**4. Serve immediately.**

Remove from heat, adjust salt if necessary, and serve absolutely piping hot straight from the skillet alongside fresh injera or warm flatbread.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

● **Meat substitutions work well.**

If you cannot find a good cut of lamb, high-quality beef sirloin cut into the same bite-sized cubes makes an excellent substitute.



# Doro Tibs

*do-ro teebs*

Chicken tibs is the ultimate first-generation miracle dish—a brilliant evolution born from an American abundance of poultry meeting the uncompromising, fiery skillet techniques of traditional Ethiopian cooking. This isn't some watered-down imitation; it's the exact sizzling, berbere-laced plate an immigrant grandmother would whip up on a Tuesday night to feed her kids the genuine taste of Addis Ababa. The secret to making this sing isn't just sourcing good spices, it's trusting the process: skip the oil at the start and let the onions dry-sweat in the pan to unlock their deep, caramelized soul before the seasoned butter ever hits the heat.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>1 1/2 lb</b>	boneless skinless chicken thighs <i>cut into 1-inch bite-sized cubes</i>	<b>2 tbsp</b>	niter kibbeh
<b>1 tbsp</b>	fresh lemon juice	<b>4 clove</b>	fresh garlic <i>minced to a paste</i>
<b>1 tsp</b>	kosher salt	<b>1 tbsp</b>	fresh ginger <i>peeled and finely grated</i>
<b>2 tbsp</b>	berbere spice blend <i>divided</i>	<b>2 med</b>	roma tomato <i>finely diced</i>
<b>1 tbsp</b>	olive oil	<b>1 tbsp</b>	dry red wine
<b>2 med</b>	red onion <i>very finely chopped</i>	<b>2 med</b>	fresh jalapeño pepper <i>sliced lengthwise into thick strips</i>
		<b>2 sprig</b>	fresh rosemary

## PREPARATION

- **Marinate the chicken thighs.**

In a mixing bowl, massage the cubed chicken with the lemon juice, kosher salt, 1 tablespoon of the berbere, and the olive oil until evenly coated in a bright red hue, then set aside at room temperature for 15 to 30 minutes.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Dry-sweat the onions to build the foundation of the dish.**

Place a large, dry cast-iron skillet or heavy-bottomed Dutch oven over medium heat, add the finely chopped onions, and cook for 8 to 10 minutes, stirring frequently until they release their water and soften into a naturally sweet, caramelized state.

- 2. Bloom the aromatics in the spiced butter.**

Push the soft, translucent onions to the edges of the pan and melt in the niter kibbeh, immediately followed by the garlic, ginger, and remaining tablespoon of berbere, stirring for 1 to 2 minutes until it becomes a deeply fragrant, brick-red paste.

**1. Sear the marinated chicken until beautifully browned.**

Crank the heat to medium-high, spread the chicken pieces out in a single layer to let a crust develop for about 2 minutes, then begin to toss and stir-fry for 5 to 7 minutes.

**2. Deglaze with the tomatoes and wine.**

Fold in the diced tomatoes and wine to lift all the toasted spices from the bottom of the pan, lowering the heat to let it simmer for 5 minutes into a luxurious, clinging sauce.

**3. Toss in the fresh jalapeños and rosemary right before serving.**

In the final two minutes, stir in the sliced peppers and rosemary sprigs so the jalapeños retain their bright crunch and the rosemary releases its essential piney oils into the hot gravy.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

● **Don't skimp on the niter kibbeh.**

If you cannot find authentic Ethiopian spiced clarified butter at a local market, melt high-quality ghee with a tiny pinch of ground cardamom, fenugreek, and turmeric before adding it to the pan.

● **Serve immediately from the sizzling skillet.**

This 'juicy' variation of tibs is meant to be scooped up; pair it with fresh, spongy injera or a bed of steamed basmati rice for a realistic, deeply comforting weeknight meal.



# Ye'Siga Alichia

*ye-see-ga ah-lee-cha*

If the fiery, red kay wot is the extroverted life of the party, alichia is the warm, quiet embrace of an Ohio Sunday evening. Devoid of the fierce heat of berbere, this mild beef and potato stew leaves the cook nowhere to hide. It relies entirely on the earthy depth of turmeric, the sharp bite of fresh ginger, and the savory magic of niter kibbeh. Traditional grandmothers would spend hours hand-dicing mountains of onions for the foundational kulet paste, but modern working parents can weaponize the food processor to achieve that exact same soul-warming, gravy-like consistency in a fraction of the time.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>3 large</b>	yellow or red onions <i>peeled and quartered</i>	<b>1 lb</b>	beef chuck roast <i>cut into 1/2-inch cubes</i>
<b>3 tbsp</b>	niter kibbeh	<b>1 1/2 cup</b>	hot water
<b>2 tbsp</b>	fresh ginger <i>finely grated</i>	<b>2 med</b>	russet or yukon gold potatoes <i>peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes</i>
<b>1 1/2 tbsp</b>	fresh garlic <i>finely minced</i>	<b>2 large</b>	carrots <i>peeled and sliced into 1/2-inch thick rounds</i>
<b>1 1/2 tsp</b>	ground turmeric	<b>1 tsp</b>	korerima
<b>1 tsp</b>	kosher salt	<b>1 med</b>	jalapeno pepper <i>seeds removed and sliced into long strips</i>
<b>1/2 tsp</b>	black pepper <i>freshly ground</i>	<b>1 tsp</b>	niter kibbeh

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Pulse the onions in a food processor until they are very finely minced, almost resembling a coarse puree.**

This mechanical shortcut breaks down the allium cell walls quickly, replacing hours of hand-dicing and saving your weeknight timeline.

- 2. Dry-sweat the pureed onions in a heavy-bottomed Dutch oven over medium heat for 5 to 7 minutes.**

Do not add oil or butter yet. Cover the pot initially, then remove the lid and cook for another 5 minutes, stirring frequently until the water evaporates and the onions turn sweet, dense, and translucent.

- 3. Stir the first measure of niter kibbeh into the onions and let them fry gently for 2 minutes.**

Once the onion water has cooked out, the fat will coat them. If you don't have niter kibbeh, 3 tablespoons of neutral oil mixed with 1 tablespoon of unsalted butter will get you close.

- 1. Add the grated ginger, minced garlic, turmeric, salt, and black pepper, stirring continuously for 2 to 3 minutes.**

The turmeric will bloom in the hot fat, turning the paste a vibrant, beautiful golden-yellow.

- 2. Toss in the cubed beef and cook uncovered for 5 to 8 minutes.**

Stir well so every piece of meat is coated in the fragrant yellow paste. Let the beef lightly brown on the outside and release some of its juices.

- 3. Pour in the hot water, bring to a gentle boil, then reduce the heat to low, cover, and simmer for 40 minutes.**

The liquid should just barely cover the meat. Aliche is a thick, gravy-like stew, not a watery soup.

- 4. Submerge the cubed potatoes and carrots in the golden sauce, cover, and simmer for another 20 to 25 minutes.**

Cook until a fork easily pierces the vegetables. If the sauce ever looks too dry, splash in a few tablespoons of hot water.

- 5. Turn off the heat and stir in the korerima, sliced jalapeño, and the final teaspoon of niter kibbeh.**

Adding the smoky korerima and jalapeño off the heat preserves their volatile aromatics, giving the dish a fresh vegetal snap exactly the way it's done in Addis Ababa. Let the pot sit covered for 5 minutes before serving.

#### CHEF'S NOTES

- **Sourcing Kororima.**

Ethiopian false cardamom has a smoky, savory flavor unlike standard green cardamom. If you cannot find it at a local market, a tiny pinch of nutmeg and black cardamom is an acceptable substitute, but seek out the real thing if you can.

- **Niter Kibbeh alternative.**

If you don't have a batch of spiced butter on hand, substitute 3 tablespoons of neutral oil during the bloom phase, and stir in 1 tablespoon of unsalted butter mixed with a pinch of garlic powder and ginger at the very end.



# The Injera Reality: Bread Hacks and Fermentation

*An honest, highly functional guide to navigating notoriously difficult Ethiopian flatbread in an American climate.*

Let's be honest about the injera situation. Back in Addis, the high-altitude air and native wild yeast do half the heavy lifting. But in a drafty Midwestern apartment or a bone-dry suburban kitchen, coaxing out those perfectly sour,

spongy eyes from a batch of pure teff is a brutal battle against physics. It's a beautiful, maddening agony that every diaspora cook eventually confronts. The old guard might scoff at compromise, but survival has always meant adapting.

This isn't about chasing an impossible, grandmotherly perfection—it's about getting dinner on the table without losing your mind. Whether a cook is babysitting a three-day ferment, hacking the system with a Western sourdough mother, or simply tapping into the local Auntie Network for a fresh stack wrapped in plastic, there is no judgment here. Just the hard-earned, highly functional reality of keeping the lifeblood of the Ethiopian table flowing.





# Yemeteshebo Injera

*ye-met-be-sha in-je-ra*

Real injera takes three days, a wild sourdough starter, and a massive clay griddle. For the diaspora living in an American suburb on a busy weeknight, that simply isn't happening. But when the craving for spicy doro wat hits, you need the bread. This is the grandmotherly hack that saves the day: skillet injera. Using a standard frying pan, grocery store yeast, and a brilliant structural trick called the absit—a cooked dough binder that guarantees a soft, rollable flatbread—you get the unmistakable, sour, spongy tang of the homeland in under an hour. It is not the ancient way, but it is the real way people cook today.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>1 cup</b>	teff flour	<b>3 cup</b>	warm water <i>divided</i>
<b>1 1/2 cup</b>	all-purpose flour	<b>1 tbsp</b>	apple cider vinegar
<b>1 tsp</b>	instant active dry yeast	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	baking powder
<b>1 tsp</b>	kosher salt		

## INSTRUCTIONS

### 1. Whisk the dry base with most of the water.

In a large bowl, whisk the teff flour, all-purpose flour, yeast, salt, and 2 1/2 cups of the warm water until completely smooth.

### 2. Let the batter ferment.

Cover the bowl with a damp towel and let it rest in a warm spot for at least 1 hour, or up to 24 hours if you have the time.

### 3. Create the absit.

Bring the remaining 1/2 cup of water to a rolling boil in a small saucepan, then immediately whisk in exactly 1/2 cup of your resting batter.

### 4. Gelatinize the paste.

Whisk vigorously over the heat for 1 to 2 minutes until it seizes into a dense, translucent porridge, then remove from the heat and cool for five minutes.

### 5. Reintegrate the binder.

Spoon the cooled absit back into the main batter bowl and whisk vigorously until cohesive and completely lump-free.

### 6. Trigger the chemistry.

Just before cooking, whisk in the apple cider vinegar and baking powder to instantly activate the batter and create foamy bubbles.

**1. Heat and season the skillet.**

Heat a 10-inch or 12-inch non-stick skillet over medium-high until a drop of water dances on the surface, then wipe the pan very lightly with an oiled paper towel.

**2. Pour the spiral.**

Ladle a half cup of batter into the pan in a continuous spiral from the outside rim inward, quickly tilting the pan to fill any gaps.

**3. Let the eyes form uncovered.**

Cook without the lid for 30 to 45 seconds to allow the bubbles to aggressively burst across the surface as the edges begin to dry.

**4. Cover and steam the bread.**

Place a tight-fitting lid on the skillet, lower the heat to medium, and steam for 60 to 90 seconds until the top is fully opaque and springy.

**5. Remove the injera without flipping.**

Carefully slide the finished flatbread onto a platter and stack them under a clean kitchen towel to trap the residual heat and keep them soft.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

● **Wipe away lid condensation immediately.**

If moisture pools on the inside of your lid while steaming, quickly wipe it away with a towel so water does not drip back onto the injera and ruin its spongy texture.

● **Expect the first one to fail.**

Your first pour is a sacrifice to gauge the stove. If the bottom burns before the top steams, lower the heat. If the eyes do not form, turn it up.



# Kategna

*kah-teh-nyah*

This is the ultimate bread hack, born from necessity and a profound understanding of flavor. Day-old injera, its edges slightly weary, is resurrected by the sheer, unadulterated power of spiced butter and chili. It is the Ethiopian equivalent of buttered toast, if buttered toast could punch you in the mouth and hug you at the same time. Fast, resourceful, and fiercely nostalgic, this is what hospitality smells like when it is hot, crispy, and bleeding brick-red on your fingertips.

## INGREDIENTS

**2 large**

teff injera  
*ideally day-old*

**2 tbsp**

berbere spice blend

**4 tbsp**

niter kibbeh

**1 pinch**

kosher salt

## PREPARATION

- **Age the injera.**

If you only have freshly baked injera, leave it out on the counter for an hour before cooking to dry out the moisture, as day-old bread toasts significantly better.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Melt the niter kibbeh over low heat in a small skillet.**

The second it liquefies, kill the heat entirely. You want the butter warm enough to bloom the spices, but absolutely not hot enough to scorch the delicate chilies.

- 2. Stir in the berbere and kosher salt off the heat.**

Swirl the pan gently until it forms a fragrant, smooth, dark-red paste. Let the residual heat do the work, as burning the berbere turns it acrid and ruins the whole affair.

- 3. Lay the injera flat with the porous, bubbly side facing up.**

Using a spoon or a pastry brush, spread the spiced butter evenly across the surface. Those little air pockets are reservoirs for the fat, so fill them well, and make sure the edges get some love.

- 4. Fold the injera into half-moons or triangles and toast in a dry cast-iron skillet over medium heat.**

The fat is already inside the bread, so keep the pan dry. Toast for 2 to 3 minutes per side, pressing down lightly with a spatula, until the edges are violently crispy and the center remains warm and pliable.

- 5. Transfer to a cutting board, slice into wedges, and serve immediately.**

Serve it hot while the butter is still melting, ideally with a side of something cooling or sweet.

## CHEF'S NOTES

- **Cooling the fire.**

If you cannot find traditional Ethiopian Ayib cheese to balance the heat, crumbled high-quality Greek feta rinsed of its brine or a very dry cottage cheese is a stellar substitute.

- **The butter shortcut.**

No niter kibbeh on a weeknight? Take a jar of good Indian ghee, gently steep it with a smashed garlic clove, a slice of fresh ginger, and a pinch of turmeric and cardamom, then strain.

- **The swicy finish.**

A light drizzle of high-quality honey over the spicy Kategna right before serving provides an incredible sweet and spicy contrast.



# Telba Fitfit

*ye-tel-ba fit-fit*

Telba Fitfit isn't some festive, high-labor banquet dish; it's a brilliant, everyday hack born of necessity during Orthodox fasting seasons. It takes the leftover, slightly dry injera sitting in your fridge and turns it into a cool, flavor-packed sponge. The secret that separates the real thing from a generic imitation is the roast. Forget the pre-ground sawdust from the health food aisle—you must toast whole brown seeds in a dry skillet until they pop. Spiked with berbere and a quiet, old-school pinch of cinnamon, this cold dish is a perfect weeknight dinner when you refuse to turn on the stove.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>1/2 cup</b>	whole brown flaxseeds	<b>1 tsp</b>	Berberé spice blend
<b>1 1/4 cup</b>	cold water	<b>1/4 tsp</b>	ground cinnamon
<b>1/4 cup</b>	red onion <i>finely diced</i>	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	kosher salt
<b>1 small</b>	jalapeño pepper <i>stemmed, seeded if desired, and finely minced</i>	<b>1 tbsp</b>	olive oil
<b>1 small</b>	garlic	<b>2 large</b>	day-old injera <i>torn into 1-inch squares</i>
<b>clove</b>	<i>grated or finely minced</i>		

## PREPARATION

- **Roast and grind a large batch of flaxseed on the weekend.**

Store the resulting powder in an airtight jar in your pantry. When you need a fast weeknight meal, simply whisk the powder with water and toss with aromatics and leftover bread for dinner in under three minutes.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Toast the whole flaxseeds in a dry skillet.**

Place a cast-iron or heavy-bottomed skillet over medium-low heat. Stir the seeds constantly for 5 to 8 minutes until they smell intensely nutty, turn slightly glossy, and begin to audibly pop. Immediately pour them onto a plate to cool completely so they don't turn into an oily paste when ground.

- 2. Grind the cooled seeds into a fine powder.**

Transfer the thoroughly cooled flaxseeds into an electric spice or coffee grinder and pulse until pulverized into a fine, aromatic flour.

- 3. Whisk the ground flaxseed with cold water to create a slurry.**

In a large mixing bowl, slowly pour in the cold water while whisking continuously to avoid lumps. Let it sit for about 5 minutes to naturally thicken into a rich, gravy-like sauce.

**1. Stir in the aromatics and spices.**

Fold the diced red onion, minced jalapeño, grated garlic, berbere, cinnamon, salt, and oil into the thickened slurry, adjusting the seasoning as needed.

**2. Fold in the torn injera.**

Drop the pieces of leftover bread into the bowl and gently toss using your hands or a large spoon until every piece is coated in the dressing but not disintegrating.

**3. Chill the mixture before serving.**

Cover the bowl and refrigerate for 15 to 20 minutes. This allows the slightly dry injera to absorb the liquid and soften perfectly without turning to mush. Serve cold.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

● **The secret to the perfect texture is leftover bread.**

Slightly dry, day-old injera acts as a sponge, soaking up the dressing beautifully without dissolving. Freshly made injera holds too much moisture and will quickly turn to mush.

● **Do not use pre-ground flaxseed meal.**

The flavor profile relies entirely on the Maillard reaction from roasting the whole seeds yourself. Store-bought flax meal will taste like raw grass and ruin the dish.



# Ye'Tsom Dirkosh Firfir

*yeh-tsom deer-kosh feer-feer*

This is the ultimate bread hack from before 'bread hacks' were a thing. Long before modern refrigeration, Ethiopian grandmothers figured out that sun-drying leftover fermented injera was the key to preserving it for the pantry. Rehydrated in a fiery, onion-rich Berbere sauce, it transforms into a chewy, flavor-soaked marvel. The secret to making it taste exactly like the home you grew up in? Patience with your dry-sweated onions, and hitting the pot with Mekelesha—a warm, sweet spice blend—completely off the heat. Those fragile aromatics need to hit your nose before the fork even reaches your mouth.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>1 large</b>	red onion <i>very finely minced</i>	<b>1 1/2 cup</b>	warm water <i>divided</i>
<b>1/3 cup</b>	neutral oil	<b>1 tsp</b>	kosher salt
<b>2 tbsp</b>	berbere spice blend	<b>2 cup</b>	dirkosh <i>broken into rough 2-inch squares</i>
<b>1 large</b>	tomato <i>finely chopped</i>	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	mekelesha spice blend
<b>1 tbsp</b>	garlic paste	<b>1 med</b>	jalapeno pepper <i>seeded and sliced lengthwise into thin strips</i>
<b>1 tsp</b>	ginger paste		

## INSTRUCTIONS

### 1. Sweat the onions in a dry pan.

Place a heavy-bottomed pot or deep skillet over medium heat and add the minced onions with no oil. Stir continuously for 3 to 5 minutes to evaporate their water, which speeds up caramelization and prevents a boiled flavor later.

### 2. Add the oil and bloom the berbere.

Once the onions are translucent and slightly reduced, pour in the oil, stir to coat, and cook for 2 minutes. Add the berbere, lower the heat slightly so the paprika doesn't scorch, and toast for 2 minutes. If the paste sticks aggressively, deglaze with exactly one tablespoon of water and keep stirring to build a deep, brick-red base.

### 3. Build the aromatic sauce.

Stir in the garlic and ginger paste, cooking until highly fragrant, about 60 seconds. Add the chopped tomato and cook down for 5 minutes, allowing its acidity to meld with the earthy spices.

### 4. Hydrate the kulet.

Pour in 1 1/2 cups of the warm water and the salt. Bring the mixture to a gentle simmer over medium-high heat and let it reduce for 5 to 7 minutes until the sauce is rich, thickened, and vibrantly red.

**1. Fold in the dirkosh.**

Drop the heat to low and add the dirkosh pieces by the handful, folding them gently into the simmering sauce. The bread acts like a sponge, so stir until every piece is coated and softens to a satisfying chew without turning to mush. If it looks dry and the bread remains hard, splash in up to 1/4 cup more warm water.

**2. Finish off the heat.**

The moment the dirkosh is chewy and glossy, kill the heat completely. Gently stir in the mekelesha and sliced jalapeños. Hitting it with mekelesha off the heat preserves the delicate clove, cinnamon, and cardamom aromatics, beautifully perfuming the steam rising off the pot.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

● **The weeknight mekelesha hack.**

If you cannot find a pre-made Mekelesha blend at your local specialty market, mix 1/4 tsp ground black cardamom (or a mix of black and green) with a pinch each of cinnamon, clove, nutmeg, and black pepper. It gets you exactly where you need to be.

● **Sourcing or making dirkosh.**

You can buy imported 100% teff dirkosh from Ethiopian grocers, or simply make your own by tearing leftover fresh injera into pieces and baking at 200°F until completely brittle.



# Ayib

*ah-yeeb*

If you look up how to make Ayib online, you'll find a thousand blogs telling you to boil whole milk and squeeze a lemon into it. That's fine if you want Italian ricotta, but it has absolutely nothing to do with the brilliant, lactic tang of real Ethiopian cheese. In the highlands, Ayib is the final act of a long, zero-waste fermentation process, born from the sour buttermilk left over after churning butter. To capture that exact, refreshing acidity—the flavor that perfectly cools a fiery doro wat—we bypass the fresh milk entirely. A gallon of commercial cultured buttermilk, coaxed over a low flame until it breaks, flawlessly replicates the grandmotherly secret without days of waiting. It is the real taste of home, with zero compromises.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>1 gal</b>	full-fat cultured buttermilk	<b>1/2 med</b>	red onion <i>optional, for juice extraction</i>
<b>1/2 tsp</b>	kosher salt	<b>5 small</b>	tenadam (rue) seeds <i>optional</i>

## PREPARATION

- **Set up your straining station.**

Line a fine-mesh strainer or colander with a damp cheesecloth and set it over a large bowl.

- **Extract the onion juice.**

If using the onion flavor hack, grate the red onion on the finest side of a box grater. Press the mush through a small sieve to yield about 1 teaspoon of pure pink onion juice, discarding the solids.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Pour the buttermilk into a heavy-bottomed pot and set over medium-low heat.**

If using tenadam seeds, drop them in now, counting them so you can fish them out later. Do not stir vigorously, and absolutely do not let it boil. The goal is a gentle warming to about 110°F to 120°F.

- 2. Watch carefully for the separation.**

After 15 to 25 minutes, the buttermilk will break. Distinct white curds will float to the top, separating from the clear, yellowish whey underneath. Turn off the heat immediately once you see this.

- 3. Let the pot sit undisturbed for 10 to 15 minutes.**

This brief rest off the heat allows the fragile curds to firm up naturally.

**1. Strain the curds gently.**

Carefully ladle or pour the curds and whey into your prepared cheesecloth-lined strainer and let it drain for 30 to 45 minutes. Do not press the cheese with weights; ayib should be soft, fluffy, and slightly moist.

**2. Season and finish the cheese.**

Transfer the drained ayib to a mixing bowl. Sprinkle with the kosher salt and, if using, one teaspoon of juice extracted from a grated red onion—a brilliant grandmotherly trick to replicate the earthy depth of traditional smoked clay pots. Toss gently with a fork to maintain the crumbly texture.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

● **Mind the milk fat.**

Whole-milk cultured buttermilk yields the best texture. If you can only find low-fat buttermilk at the market, swap one quart of the buttermilk for a quart of fresh whole milk to improve your curd yield.

● **Save the whey.**

The yellowish liquid left behind is packed with protein. Use it as a liquid base for baking, cooking rice, or hydrating your next injera starter.





# The Blended Table: First- Generation Holidays

*A celebration of the Ethiopian-American holiday table, where heritage flavors sit naturally alongside classic American festive dishes.*

The immigrant experience isn't a museum exhibit; it's a living, breathing collision of worlds. Nowhere is that more obvious than the holiday table. You've got the sacred geometry of the American Thanksgiving—the turkey, the mac and cheese, the sweet potatoes—colliding head-on with the assertive, unapologetic heat of the homeland. It's a beautiful, necessary compromise.

Here, a berbere-rubbed bird sits next to a tray of macaroni engineered specifically to drag through the last pooling streaks of doro wat. These aren't fusion gimmicks concocted for a tasting menu. This is the authentic reality of the first-generation feast, where sweet potatoes get a heavy dose of alicha kulet, and heritage doesn't demand purity—it just demands a seat at the table.





# Ye'Turk Siga Tibs

*ye-toork see-gah teebs*

For kids of the diaspora growing up in the American suburbs, Thanksgiving meant a beautiful, chaotic collision of worlds. The calendar demanded a giant, unseasoned bird, but the palate yearned for the fiery depth of berbere and spiced butter. Enter Ye'Turk Siga Tibs. By taking lean turkey and applying the ancient, screaming-hot stir-fry technique of the homeland, this dish bridges the gap. It is a brilliant, weeknight-friendly adaptation, utilizing a hydrated awaze paste and a clever ghee hack to deliver the uncompromising, grandmother-approved flavor of Addis Ababa straight to the Ohio dinner table.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>2 tbsp</b>	berbere spice blend	<b>1/8 tsp</b>	ground cardamom
<b>1 tbsp</b>	olive oil	<b>1 med</b>	red onion <i>sliced thin</i>
<b>2 tbsp</b>	water	<b>4 med</b>	garlic <i>finely minced</i>
<b>1 1/2 lb</b>	boneless skinless turkey thighs <i>cut into 1-inch cubes and patted completely dry</i>	<b>1 inch</b>	fresh ginger <i>peeled and grated</i>
<b>1/2 tsp</b>	coarse kosher salt	<b>1 med</b>	Roma tomato <i>roughly diced</i>
<b>1 tbsp</b>	avocado oil	<b>2 med</b>	fresh jalapeños <i>sliced into thick rounds</i>
<b>2 tbsp</b>	ghee	<b>1 large</b>	fresh rosemary
<b>1/8 tsp</b>	garlic powder	<b>sprig</b>	

## PREPARATION

- **Create the awaze paste to protect the spices.**

Whisk together the berbere, olive oil, and water in a small bowl until it forms a thick, vibrant red paste, preventing the delicate spices from instantly burning when they hit the hot pan.

- **Prep the turkey and stage the vegetables.**

Toss the thoroughly dried turkey cubes with the kosher salt and ensure all chopped vegetables are sitting next to the stove, because tibs waits for no one.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Sear the meat aggressively over high heat.**

Heat a large cast-iron skillet over high until faintly smoking, add the avocado oil, and drop the turkey in a single layer. Let it sit untouched for 60 seconds to develop a deep brown crust, then toss rapidly for 1 to 2 minutes until browned but not fully cooked.

**1. Hack the niter kibbeh and build the aromatics.**

Push the turkey to the edges of the pan and drop the ghee into the center along with the cardamom and garlic powder. Once it foams, throw in the red onion and cook for 2 minutes until slightly softened but still retaining a bite.

**2. Bring the heat and toss in the awaze.**

Stir in the minced garlic and grated ginger for 30 seconds to release their oils, then pour in the prepared awaze paste. Toss everything wildly until the turkey and onions are gorgeously coated in the fiery sauce.

**3. Execute the rosemary trick and deglaze the pan.**

Add the diced tomato and jalapeños, then lay the whole sprig of fresh rosemary directly on top of the meat. Turn the heat to medium-low and simmer for 2 to 3 minutes; the tomatoes will form a rich sauce while the heat gently steams the aromatic oils from the rosemary down into the turkey.

**4. Discard the rosemary and serve immediately.**

Turn off the heat, discard the spent rosemary sprig, and adjust the salt if necessary before bringing it to the table with fresh injera or steamed rice.

#### CHEF'S NOTES

● **Sourcing the berbere is non-negotiable.**

Do not attempt to fake this with generic chili powder. Real berbere contains fenugreek, cardamom, and a dozen other crucial spices that give this dish its unmistakable soul.

● **Temperature control dictates the texture of the meat.**

The most common amateur mistake is overcrowding the pan and boiling the turkey in its own juices. If using a pan smaller than 12 inches, cook the meat in two batches to maintain a screaming hot sear.



# Ye'Injera Mulmul

*yuh-in-je-ra mul-mul*

When the heavy August rains finally break in Ethiopia, you know Buhe is coming. It's a holiday that belongs to the neighborhood kids who roam door-to-door singing, rewarded by grandmothers with warm, oval breads packed with the intoxicating aroma of roasted indigenous seeds. Traditionally steam-baked on the exact same broad clay griddles used for injera, this stovetop bread demands trapped heat. We mimic that ancestral environment here with a cast-iron skillet and utilize a slow cold ferment so a busy parent can pull off a miracle on a Tuesday night. The real secret isn't the flour, it's the Dabo Kimem—an unapologetically bold, slightly bitter bread spice that makes a house smell entirely like home.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>1 tsp</b>	nigella seeds	<b>1 1/2 tsp</b>	active dry yeast
<b>1/2 tsp</b>	ajwain seeds	<b>3 tbsp</b>	neutral oil
<b>1/2 tsp</b>	coriander seeds	<b>3 1/2 cup</b>	all-purpose flour
<b>1/4 tsp</b>	fenugreek seeds	<b>1 1/2 tsp</b>	kosher salt
<b>1 1/4 cup</b>	warm water	<b>1 large</b>	frozen banana leaf <i>thawed and cut into 6 square pieces</i>
<b>1 tbsp</b>	granulated sugar		

## PREPARATION

- **Awaken the spices.**

Toast the nigella, ajwain, coriander, and fenugreek seeds in a dry skillet over medium heat for about 2 minutes until fragrant and lightly popping, then coarsely crush them in a mortar and pestle.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Activate the yeast.**

In a large bowl, whisk the warm water, sugar, and yeast, letting it sit for 5 minutes until it foams.

- 2. Mix the dough.**

Stir in the oil and your cracked spice blend, then add the flour and salt, mixing with a wooden spoon until a shaggy dough forms.

- 3. Knead until elastic.**

Turn the dough onto a lightly floured surface and knead for 5 to 7 minutes until soft and slightly tacky, then place in an oiled bowl and cover tightly.

**1. Cold ferment the dough.**

Stash the covered bowl in the fridge for up to 24 hours to deeply develop the spices and buy yourself time on a weeknight, pulling it out 30 minutes before you want to shape it.

**2. Shape and wrap the loaves.**

Divide the dough into 6 equal pieces, roll each into an oval shape, and gently wrap them in a banana leaf square seam-side down.

**3. Proof in the skillet.**

Place the wrapped doughs in a large, lightly oiled cast-iron skillet with a tight-fitting lid, letting them puff up for 20 minutes off the heat.

**4. Steam-bake on the stovetop.**

Set the covered skillet over medium-low heat for 12 to 15 minutes to develop a deep golden-brown crust on the bottom, then carefully flip each bread, replace the lid, and cook for 10 more minutes.

**5. Serve warm.**

Unwrap the hot breads, discarding the leaves, and tear into them while the steam is still rising.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

● **Sourcing the Dabo Kimem.**

If you don't have an Ethiopian grocer nearby, you can easily find nigella, ajwain, coriander, and fenugreek at local Middle Eastern or Indian markets.

● **Banana leaf alternatives.**

If banana leaves prove impossible to find, wrap the dough in parchment paper; you lose the herbal aroma, but the steam-baking mechanics that make the bread so soft remain the same.



# Ye'Niter Kibbeh Macaroni

*mekoreni besels*

Growing up in the American suburbs, macaroni was the ultimate childhood comfort food. But when Habesha mothers and grandmothers made it, it didn't come from a sad blue box with fluorescent cheese powder. It was bathed in a fiery, deeply savory, rust-red sils, smelling of roasted cardamom, ginger, and the intoxicating, uncompromising aroma of Niter Kibbeh. This dish is the star of the holiday potluck and the graduation party—the absolute real taste of home. To make it work on a Tuesday night without spending an hour hand-mincing onions, we're utilizing the ultimate first-generation kitchen hack: the food processor. It honors the grandmotherly intent to break down the alliums entirely, but spares you the grueling labor.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>2 large</b>	red onions <i>peeled and quartered</i>	<b>2 tbsp</b>	tomato paste
<b>3 tbsp</b>	neutral oil	<b>1 large</b>	fresh tomato <i>finely diced</i>
<b>1 1/2 tbsp</b>	Berberé spice blend	<b>1/2 cup</b>	water or vegetable broth
<b>4 clove</b>	garlic <i>minced</i>	<b>1 tsp</b>	salt
<b>1 tbsp</b>	fresh ginger <i>peeled and finely grated</i>	<b>1 lb</b>	elbow macaroni
		<b>4 tbsp</b>	Niter Kibbeh

## PREPARATION

- **Make a batch of Niter Kibbeh on a Sunday to keep in the fridge.**

Melt 1 lb unsalted butter in a heavy saucepan over medium-low heat, skimming off the rising white foam. Once clear, add 1/4 cup chopped red onion, 3 smashed garlic cloves, 1 inch sliced ginger, 1 cinnamon stick, 1 tsp fenugreek seeds, 1/2 tsp cumin seeds, 1 tsp dried oregano, 3 pods Indian black cardamom, and 1/4 tsp ground turmeric. Simmer on the lowest possible heat for 45 minutes. Strain through cheesecloth into a jar and store in the fridge.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Purée the onions in a food processor.**

Toss the quartered red onions into the bowl and pulse until they are reduced to a fine, wet purée. This entirely replaces the traditional thirty minutes of precise hand-mincing and instantly accelerates the breakdown of the alliums.

- 2. Dry-sweat the onion purée.**

Transfer the onions to a large, dry heavy-bottomed pot over medium-high heat. Do not add oil yet. Cover and let them cook in their own juices for 5 to 8 minutes, stirring frequently, until the raw, sharp smell dissipates and the excess water steams away into a thick paste.

**1. Fry the paste and bloom the spices.**

Reduce the heat to medium and add the neutral oil. Sauté the onion paste for 5 to 10 minutes until it takes on a deep golden-brown color. Stir in the minced garlic, grated ginger, and Berbere, cooking for 2 minutes to toast the spices and release their oils.

**2. Build and simmer the sils.**

Add the tomato paste and fresh diced tomato, stirring vigorously for 3 minutes to caramelize the paste. Pour in the water or broth to deglaze the pan, scraping up any browned bits. Lower the heat, cover, and gently simmer for 15 minutes until the sauce darkens to a rich crimson.

**3. Boil the macaroni slightly past al dente.**

While the sauce simmers, drop the macaroni into a large pot of aggressively salted boiling water. You want the pasta slightly soft and plump so it can properly absorb the sauce. Drain it, reserving a splash of the starchy pasta water.

**4. Marry the pasta and the Niter Kibbeh.**

Add the drained macaroni directly into the simmering sils, stirring to coat every noodle. Turn off the heat, drop in the Niter Kibbeh, and stir gently until the spiced butter melts completely, glazing the macaroni in a glossy, unbelievably fragrant sheen.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

● **Adjust the Berbere to your family's heat tolerance.**

Berberere blends vary wildly in spice level depending on the purveyor, so taste yours before committing the full tablespoon and a half to the pot.

● **Forget the Italian rules for pasta texture.**

Unlike traditional Italian cooking where sauce clings to the exterior of an al dente noodle, the Ethiopian technique prefers a softer noodle that absorbs the spiced oil and kibbeh directly into its starch matrix.



# Gomen be'Smoked Turkey

*gō-men be-sī-ga*

In the collision of the Ethiopian diaspora and the American South, you find this quiet masterpiece. Traditional beef ribs give way to the deep, woody thrum of smoked turkey—a reverent nod to the African-American holiday table that perfectly preserves the soul of a proper Gomen Besiga. It all hinges on a grandmother's patience: coaxing minced onions in a bare pot until they surrender, then rewarding them with a heavy spoonful of spiced niter kibbeh. It's the real taste of home, smartly reverse-engineered for a weeknight.

## INGREDIENTS

**1 1/2 lb** smoked turkey leg or wings      **4 cup** low-sodium chicken broth

<b>1 med</b>	yellow onion <i>roughly chopped</i>	<b>1 tbsp</b>	fresh ginger <i>finely grated</i>
<b>2</b>	bay leaves	<b>3 tbsp</b>	niter kibbeh <i>divided</i>
<b>2 lb</b>	collard greens <i>stems removed, washed, and cut into 1-inch ribbons</i>	<b>1 tsp</b>	ground korerima
<b>1 large</b>	red onion <i>very finely minced</i>	<b>1/4 tsp</b>	mitmita
<b>4 cloves</b>	fresh garlic <i>finely grated</i>	<b>1 tbsp</b>	apple cider vinegar

## PREPARATION

- **Process the collard greens like a professional.**

Tear the leafy greens away from the thick, fibrous center stems and throw the stems away. Stack the washed leaves, roll them tightly like a cigar, and slice them across into ribbons so they cook down quickly and evenly.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Simmer the smoked turkey and aromatics to build a deeply savory broth.**

In a heavy pot or Dutch oven, combine the turkey leg, yellow onion, bay leaves, and chicken broth. Bring to a boil, then cover and simmer on low for 45 to 60 minutes until the meat is tender and pulling from the bone.

- 2. Strain the broth and shred the cooled turkey meat.**

Remove the turkey leg to a board. Strain the broth into a bowl—you should have roughly 2 to 3 cups of smoky liquid—and discard the boiled onion and bay leaves. Once cool enough to handle, shred the turkey meat, discarding any bones, cartilage, and skin.

- 3. Dry-sweat the red onions in a bare pot to build the foundational paste.**

Wipe out the Dutch oven and set it over medium heat. Add the minced red onion directly to the dry pot—no oil. Stir continuously for 5 to 7 minutes until the onions release their water, collapse, and turn sweet and jammy. If they threaten to scorch, add a splash of water.

**1. Melt in the niter kibbeh to bloom the fresh aromatics and spices.**

Add 2 tablespoons of the spiced butter to the soft onions. As it melts and sizzles, stir in the garlic, ginger, korerima, and mitmita. Cook for 1 to 2 minutes until the kitchen smells incredible.

**2. Coat the greens in the spiced butter before braising with the reserved broth and turkey.**

Fold the collard ribbons into the pot a handful at a time, stirring until they wilt and turn a glossy green. Pour in 2 cups of the smoked turkey broth and add the shredded meat. Cover, reduce the heat to low, and braise for 30 to 40 minutes until tender.

**3. Finish with raw spiced butter and a hit of acid.**

Remove the lid. If the pot is too watery, simmer uncovered for 5 minutes to reduce. Off the heat, stir in the final tablespoon of niter kibbeh to preserve its delicate, volatile spices, followed by the apple cider vinegar. Taste for salt and pepper.

#### CHEF'S NOTES

● **The weeknight cheat code.**

Make the smoked turkey broth on a Sunday. Keep the shredded meat and strained smoky broth in the fridge so the actual Ethiopian braise takes barely thirty minutes on a Tuesday night.

● **Substituting niter kibbeh.**

If you don't have homemade spiced butter from a matriarch, check your local specialty market. In a pinch, melt high-quality Indian ghee and infuse it with a microscopic pinch of ground cardamom and fenugreek.



# Sikuar Dinich Alich

*see-kwar dee-nee-ch ah-lee-cha*

Forget the marshmallow-topped abominations. When Ethiopian mothers and grandmothers integrated the sweet potato into the traditional alich, they created something infinitely better: a mild, deeply comforting stew stained brilliant gold with turmeric. The trick here isn't coconut milk or maple syrup—those are trendy internet fabrications. The secret is patience. You sweat white onions in a dry pan until they surrender completely, building a rich, thick foundation without an ounce of flour. Toss in some garlic, ginger, and a late-stage hit of fresh jalapeño for pure aromatic glory, and you've got a weeknight masterpiece that demands a spot at your blended holiday table.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>2 large</b>	yellow or white onion <i>finely diced</i>	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	black pepper <i>freshly ground</i>
<b>1/3 cup</b>	neutral cooking oil	<b>1 1/2 lb</b>	orange-fleshed sweet potato <i>peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes</i>
<b>4 clove</b>	garlic <i>finely minced</i>	<b>2 med</b>	carrot <i>peeled and sliced into 1/2-inch thick rounds</i>
<b>1 tbsp</b>	fresh ginger <i>peeled and finely grated</i>	<b>1 1/2 cup</b>	water
<b>1 1/2 tsp</b>	ground turmeric	<b>2 med</b>	fresh jalapeno pepper <i>halved lengthwise, seeds and ribs removed</i>
<b>1 tsp</b>	salt	<b>1 tbsp</b>	Niter Kibbeh

## PREPARATION

- **Prep your aromatics and vegetables before you begin.**

The pacing of the kulet moves fast once the oil is added, so have your garlic, ginger, and cubed potatoes ready to go.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Sweat the onions in a dry pan.**

Place a large, heavy-bottomed pot over medium heat and add the diced onions directly to the dry pan. Cook, stirring frequently, until they release their moisture and collapse completely, about 8 to 10 minutes. If they start to stick, add a tiny splash of water.

- 2. Build the golden kulet base.**

Once the water has evaporated and the onions are soft, pour in the oil. Fry gently for 3 to 5 minutes until deeply translucent, then stir in the garlic, ginger, and turmeric. Cook for 1 to 2 minutes until the turmeric blooms and turns the base a vibrant gold. Season with the salt and pepper.

**1. Simmer the root vegetables.**

Add the sweet potatoes and carrots, stirring to coat them in the golden onion mixture. Pour in the water, scrape up any browned bits, and bring to a gentle boil before reducing the heat to medium-low.

**2. Cook until tender but completely intact.**

Cover the pot and simmer for 12 to 15 minutes. Sweet potatoes cook fast, so watch them closely. You want them easily pierced with a fork, but they should never cook down into mush.

**3. Finish with fresh aromatics and spiced butter.**

About 3 minutes before the potatoes are done, remove the lid and lay the halved jalapeños over the top of the stew. Drop in the Niter Kibbeh, replace the cover, and let the steam release the floral aroma of the chilies without adding heat. Remove from heat, adjust salt, and serve hot.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

● **Sourcing the right sweet potatoes.**

American supermarkets often mislabel sweet potatoes as yams. Look for Garnet or Jewel varieties with reddish-brown skin and bright orange flesh. Pale, white-fleshed sweet potatoes are too dry for this stew.

● **Avoid red onions.**

Stick to yellow or white onions for this dish. Red onions will turn your beautiful golden turmeric broth a muddy, unappetizing brown.

● **The Niter Kibbeh hack.**

If you cannot find authentic Niter Kibbeh, stir a tablespoon of unsalted butter into the stew at the very end with a tiny pinch of ground cardamom and a micro-dash of cinnamon.



# Ye' Cranberry Awaze

*ye-cranberry ah-wah-zay*

Thanksgiving in a first-generation household is an exercise in culinary diplomacy. You want the turkey, but you need the heat. For the Ethiopian diaspora, the smell of Berbere is the smell of home. The grandmotherly secret to bridging these worlds without ruining either is understanding that authentic Awaze is never cooked. You respect the American tradition by simmering the cranberries into a jam, but you honor the homeland by letting them cool completely before folding in a potent, raw spice paste. The result is a tart, unapologetically fiery condiment that makes a canonical holiday spread taste unequivocally like home.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>3 cup</b>	fresh or frozen cranberries	<b>1 tbsp</b>	neutral oil
<b>3/4 cup</b>	granulated sugar	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	honey
<b>1/2 cup</b>	fresh orange juice	<b>2 clove</b>	garlic <i>minced into a fine paste</i>
<b>1 med</b>	cinnamon stick	<b>1 tsp</b>	fresh ginger <i>finely grated</i>
<b>3 tbsp</b>	Berberé	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	fresh lemon juice
<b>2 tbsp</b>	dry red wine	<b>1 pinch</b>	salt

## PREPARATION

- **Give the flavors time to get to know each other.**

Cover the bowl tightly and transfer it to the refrigerator for at least an hour before serving. Making this a full day in advance is even better—it gives the sharp edges of the raw garlic time to mellow and weave into the fruit.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Simmer the cranberry foundation.**

In a medium saucepan over medium-high heat, combine the cranberries, sugar, orange juice, and cinnamon stick. Bring the mixture to a gentle boil.

- 2. Reduce the fruit into a thick, jammy gel.**

Drop the heat to medium-low and let it simmer for 10 to 12 minutes. Stir occasionally until the berries burst open and the liquid thickens into a familiar sauce.

- 3. Cool the mixture completely to protect the spices.**

Remove the pan from the heat, discard the cinnamon stick, and transfer the fruit to a glass or ceramic bowl. Stop right here and let it reach room temperature. Heat will cook the raw garlic and turn the delicate, volatile oils of the Berberé bitter. Patience is mandatory.

**1. Whisk together the raw Awaze paste.**

While the cranberries cool, grab a small bowl and vigorously blend the Berbere, red wine, oil, honey, garlic, ginger, lemon juice, and salt. You're looking for a smooth, deeply fragrant, brick-red paste that resembles the consistency of thick mustard.

**2. Fold the homeland into the fruit.**

Once the cranberry sauce is fully cooled, scrape the raw Awaze paste into the bowl. Gently fold everything together until the dark spice paste is completely and seamlessly integrated into the bright red fruit.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

● **Dialing in the heat.**

Depending on your market source, Berbere can run dangerously hot. If you're feeding a milder crowd, reduce the Berbere to 1 1/2 tablespoons and make up the difference with a high-quality sweet smoked paprika to keep the color and depth without the pain.

● **The alcohol component.**

Authentic Awaze utilizes Tej, an Ethiopian honey wine. Dry red wine mixed with a drop of honey is the perfect weeknight stand-in. If you prefer to skip the booze entirely, swap the wine for warm water mixed with a splash of apple cider vinegar for that necessary fermented tang.

● **Elevate with Niter Kibbeh.**

If you happen to keep a stash of Niter Kibbeh (Ethiopian spiced clarified butter) in your fridge, use it in place of the neutral oil. Melt it gently before whisking it into the raw spice paste for an immense upgrade in authentic flavor.