

# Turkish

## Heritage Kitchen



Recipes with love from

**The Robot Book Club**

# **Turkish Heritage Kitchen**

*Authentic Recipes and Timeless Traditions from Anatolia to  
Istanbul*

The Robot Book Club

Copyright © 2026 Edward Benson

*All rights reserved.*

*No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means, including information storage and retrieval systems, without written permission from the author, except for the use of brief quotations in a book review.*

*Published by The Robot Book Club*

# Table of Contents

Kahvaltı (The Weekend Before Coffee Spread)

---

Tencere Yemekleri & Sulu Yemek (The Weeknight Pot)

---

Zeytinyağlılar (The Olive Oil Cooling Rack)

---

Esnaf Lokantası at Home (The Tradesmen's Lunch)

---

Meze & Muhabbet (The Evening Table)

---

Kahve ve Çay Saati (The Afternoon Ritual)

---

# 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: Turkish.

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

— Ted Benson

# Prologue

Forget the shimmering *döner*, the endless parade of grilled meats served under fluorescent lights. That's one story of Turkish food, certainly. It's the one sold to tourists, often simplified, sometimes even whitewashed. But step past the market stalls and into a Turkish kitchen, an actual home, and you'll find a different, more profound truth. This is where the real work happens, where culture anchors itself, quietly, in the simmering pot.

For the first-generation Turkish-American in a suburban kitchen—the one who remembers the exact aroma of their grandmother's *menemen* but finds themselves wrestling with grocery store aisles and the relentless pace of weeknight demands—this book is for you. This isn't about chasing obscure ingredients or mastering techniques that require a dedicated Anatolian hearth. This is about reclaiming an inheritance, demystifying a cuisine often misunderstood, sometimes even by its own diaspora. It's about bringing the true heart of the Turkish table, unapologetically, to your American home.

Here, the backbone of a meal isn't a complex kebab; it's the *sulu yemek*, the hearty stew, the humble vegetables braised patiently in olive oil until they sing. It's the wisdom gleaned from generations of cooks, adapted not to dilute, but to empower. The kind of food that reminds you where you came from, even if you're miles away,

navigating a life that's not quite your own. It's the taste that sparks a memory of morning *kahvaltı* or the slow, lingering *muhabbet* of an evening meze spread.

This is the unfussy, deeply soulful Turkish cooking that fuels families, anchors conversations, and creates new memories, here and now. The kind that relies on honest ingredients—many found at your local supermarket, a few high-impact essentials from the neighborhood Middle Eastern market—and a reverence for time-honored technique. It's about understanding why that *zeytinyağlı* dish needs to cool in its pot, why an onion should melt, not crunch. It's about finding home in a dish, bite by honest bite, passing on more than just a recipe, but a way of life. Welcome to the Turkish Heritage Kitchen.





## Kahvaltı (The Weekend Before Coffee Spread)

*The sprawling, leisurely weekend morning ritual of the Turkish breakfast, adapted for a busy American household.*

**T**he Turkish weekend doesn't begin until the table is completely obscured by small plates. Kahvaltı is less a morning meal and more a state of grace—a sprawling, hours-long standoff against the demands of the day, fueled by bottomless glasses of tea. In the American suburbs, where Sundays are too easily hijacked by errands, taking the time to simmer tomatoes and peppers down to a sweet, jammy wreck for menemen is an act of quiet rebellion.

You don't need a specialty importer to pull this off. It is about coaxing the magnificent out of the mundane using the same unyielding techniques the grandmothers always insisted upon. A standard supermarket egg, poached properly and swimming in garlicky yogurt and furious red pepper butter, becomes a masterpiece. Fry the sucuk, tear the bread, and let the morning stretch out a little longer. The coffee can wait.





# Menemen (The Ultimate Scramble)

*meh-neh-men*

IN TURKEY, MENEMEN ISN'T JUST BREAKFAST; IT'S A WAY OF life, a reliable comfort food, and the subject of fierce national debate over whether or not to include onions. The unwritten grandmother rule is simple: skip the onions for a slow weekend breakfast, but toss one in if you're throwing it together for a frantic weeknight dinner. This is the canonical, stripped-down breakfast version. Forget watery bell peppers—grab Anaheim and banana peppers to mimic the delicate

Turkish

SIVRI BIBER. AND WHATEVER YOU DO, PULL THE PAN OFF THE heat before the eggs look done. The residual heat carries them to silky, jammy perfection on the short walk to the table.

#### INGREDIENTS

<b>2 tbsp</b>	extra-virgin olive oil	<b>4 large</b>	eggs <i>at room temperature</i>
<b>1 tbsp</b>	unsalted butter	<b>1 tsp</b>	Aleppo pepper or gochugaru
<b>1 med</b>	Anaheim pepper <i>stemmed, seeded, and finely chopped</i>	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	kosher salt
<b>1 med</b>	banana pepper or Cubanelle pepper <i>stemmed, seeded, and finely chopped</i>	<b>1/4 tsp</b>	black pepper
<b>3 med</b>	vine-ripened or Roma tomatoes <i>halved horizontally</i>	<b>1 loaf</b>	crusty bread <i>torn into thick pieces for serving</i>

#### PREPARATION

- **Use the box grater hack for perfect tomatoes.**

Skip the tedious boiling and peeling process. Rub the cut side of your halved tomatoes against the large holes of a box grater set over a bowl until only the flat skin remains in your hand. Discard the skins. You now have a perfect, skinless purée that will melt beautifully into a jam.

#### INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Sauté the peppers gently.**  
Place a 10-inch skillet over medium heat, add the olive oil and butter, and once melted, toss in the chopped peppers with a pinch of salt. Sauté for about 5 minutes until they soften and turn vibrant green, taking care not to let them brown or burn.

**1 Build the jam.**

Pour the grated tomatoes and their juices into the skillet, stirring in the Aleppo pepper, salt, and black pepper. Lower the heat to medium-low and let the mixture bubble gently for 7 to 10 minutes until the raw, watery edge cooks off and it thickens into a rich, cohesive sauce.

**2 Introduce the eggs.**

Crack the eggs into a small bowl, pierce the yolks with a fork to give them a very lazy stir, and pour them over the simmering tomato base. Turn the heat down to low, wait about 15 seconds for the bottom layer to set, then use a wooden spoon to gently scrape the bottom of the pan from the outside edges toward the center.

**3 Coast on the residual heat.**

Continue to gently fold and scrape for just a minute or two until the eggs look marbled with streaks of white, yellow, and red. While they are still soft, wet, and slightly runny, immediately remove the skillet from the heat.

**4 Serve immediately from the skillet.**

Let the heat of the pan finish cooking the eggs on the walk to the table. Garnish with a little more Aleppo pepper, place the skillet in the center of the table, and eat it directly from the pan using torn pieces of bread instead of forks.

#### CHEF'S NOTES

- **Make it dinner.**

To turn this breakfast staple into a hearty weeknight main course (the famous "soğanlı" version), finely dice a small yellow onion and sauté it right alongside your peppers.

- **The butter finish.**

For an incredibly luxurious texture, drop one extra tablespoon of cold, cubed butter into the center of the pan right as you pull it off the heat so it slowly melts into the warm eggs.



# Çılbır (Turkish Poached Eggs with Garlic Yogurt)

*chil-bir*

LONG BEFORE AVOCADO TOAST SANITIZED THE AMERICAN brunch, Ottoman sultans were waking up to Çılbır. This is the ultimate expression of Anatolian domestic cooking: cool, garlicky yogurt providing a lush bed for warm, runny poached eggs, all finished with the smoky sizzle of chili butter. It looks like a high-end restaurant dish, but its soul belongs to the farmhouse. The absolute, non-negotiable secret every Turkish grandmother insists upon is temperature. The magic relies entirely on the contrast between the

HOT EGG AND THE ROOM-TEMPERATURE YOGURT. HIT COLD dairy with hot butter and it seizes into a waxy mess. Treat the ingredients right, and you get an uncompromisingly beautiful bite of the homeland.

#### INGREDIENTS

<b>1 cup</b>	plain full-fat Greek yogurt	<b>2 tbsp</b>	unsalted butter
<b>1 large clove</b>	garlic <i>finely grated or crushed into a paste</i>	<b>1 tsp</b>	Aleppo pepper
<b>1/4 tsp</b>	sea salt	<b>1 pinch</b>	dried mint
<b>1 tbsp</b>	white vinegar	<b>1 med loaf</b>	crusty bread <i>sliced</i>
<b>2 large</b>	eggs		

#### PREPARATION

- **You can mix the yogurt base a day in advance.**

Combining the yogurt, garlic, and salt the night before allows the raw garlic flavor to mellow and integrate into the dairy. Just be absolutely certain to pull it from the refrigerator at least 30 minutes before you plan to eat to avoid thermally shocking the warm eggs and butter.

#### INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Prepare and temper the garlic yogurt base.**  
Whisk the yogurt, grated garlic, and salt in a bowl until perfectly smooth. Divide the mixture between two shallow serving bowls, using the back of a spoon to create a shallow well in the center of each. Leave the bowls on the counter for at least 30 minutes to come to room temperature.

**1 Simmer the poaching water.**

Fill a medium saucepan with about three inches of water and bring it to a boil. Reduce the heat until the water maintains a gentle, rolling simmer, then stir in the vinegar. Crack your first egg into a fine-mesh sieve to drain off the watery edges of the egg white, ensuring a perfect shape, then transfer it to a small ramekin.

**2 Poach the eggs in a vortex.**

Using a wooden spoon, stir the simmering water rapidly in one direction to create a whirlpool. Gently tip the egg from the ramekin directly into the center of the vortex. The spinning water will wrap the egg white neatly around the yolk. Cook for exactly 3 to 4 minutes.

**3 Drain and plate the eggs.**

Use a slotted spoon to carefully lift the poached egg out of the water. Gently tap the spoon against a folded paper towel to drain off all excess water—residual liquid will dilute and ruin the yogurt. Nestle the egg into the well of your room-temperature yogurt and repeat the process with the second egg.

**4 Sizzle the chili butter.**

Melt the butter in a small skillet over medium-low heat. Let it bubble gently until it smells nutty, but do not let the milk solids brown. Pull the pan off the heat and immediately stir in the Aleppo pepper and dried mint. The residual heat will toast the spices, turning the butter a vibrant, fiery red.

**1 Finish and serve immediately.**

Generously pour the warm chili butter directly over the eggs and the yogurt. Serve right away with thick slices of crusty bread to mop up every last drop of yolk, tangy dairy, and spiced fat.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

● **The busy parent weeknight hack (Mıkla).**

If you don't have the patience to poach eggs in a whirlpool on a chaotic morning, look to the city of Gaziantep. In a regional variation known as Mıkla, you simply bypass the water bath. Melt your butter and spices in a skillet, gently crack the eggs directly into the red chili butter, cover, and fry until the whites are set. Slide the eggs and all that glorious spiced butter straight over your garlic yogurt. It dirties one pan and tastes exactly like the homeland.

● **Sourcing the spice.**

Aleppo pepper (Pul Biber) provides the mild, fruity heat that defines this dish. If you absolutely cannot find it at a local Middle Eastern market, substitute half a teaspoon of sweet paprika mixed with a quarter teaspoon of standard red pepper flakes.





## Tencere Yemekleri & Sulu Yemek (The Weeknight Pot)

*The true heart of daily Turkish home cooking. These fast, economical, and nourishing one-pot meals and stews are built for busy weeknights, requiring minimal active prep while delivering the deep, comforting flavors of home.*

**F**orget the flaming skewers of kebab and the theatrical meyhane spreads. The real engine of the Turkish culinary soul hums quietly on a weeknight stove in a battered steel pot. This is the domain of sulu yemek—the humble, life-sustaining, spoon-hugging

stews that hold a domestic kitchen together. It's the daily alchemy of a little meat, a handful of legumes, and a heavy scoop of salça coaxed into something deeply comforting on a tired Tuesday night.

These are the unsung heroes of the home, unapologetically economical and fiercely beloved. From the unspoken national devotion to a steaming bowl of kuru fasulye to a quick, savory pan of ground meat and spinach, these meals demand little of the cook and deliver everything to the eater. They require only a hunk of crusty bread to swipe the spiced oil from the bottom of the bowl. No pretense. No performance. Just a hot pot on the stove, waiting for you to come home and eat.





# White Bean Stew with Pastrami

*pahs-tuhr-mah-luh koo-roo fah-sool-yeh*

GROWING UP, THIS WAS THE UNDISPUTED KING OF THE Turkish home kitchen—the smell of a snowy Tuesday night in Erzurum, transported straight to an Ohio suburb. Kuru Fasulye is a humble, majestic stew of white beans enriched with the pungent, cured depth of pastrırma. While purists might romanticize a clay pot in a wood-fired oven, modern Turkish matriarchs are nothing if not pragmatic, relying heavily on the pressure cooker to get this on the table for their families. The real secret to that luxurious, velvety sauce

—A TEXTURE LOCALS CALL HELMELENMIŞ—IS A TINY spoonful of flour toasted with the aromatics, and the sacred, non-negotiable thirty minutes of resting time before serving.

#### INGREDIENTS

<b>2 cup</b>	Navy beans or Small White beans	<b>1 tbsp</b>	mild Turkish red pepper paste
<b>3 tbsp</b>	unsalted butter	<b>4 1/2 cup</b>	hot water or low-sodium beef broth
<b>1 tbsp</b>	olive oil	<b>1 tsp</b>	salt
<b>1 large</b>	yellow onion <i>finely diced</i>	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	black pepper <i>freshly cracked</i>
<b>1 med</b>	Anaheim or Cubanelle pepper <i>finely diced</i>	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	ground cumin
<b>1 1/2 tbsp</b>	all-purpose flour	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	Aleppo pepper or crushed red pepper flakes
<b>1 1/2 tbsp</b>	tomato paste	<b>4 oz</b>	pastırma or bastırma <i>cut into bite-sized strips</i>

#### PREPARATION

- **Soak the beans overnight.**

Place the dried beans in a large bowl and cover them with at least 3 inches of cold water. Let them sit at room temperature for 8 to 12 hours without salt or baking soda, then drain and rinse well before cooking.

## INSTRUCTIONS

### 1 **Build the savory base.**

Heat the butter and olive oil in a pressure cooker or Instant Pot on the sauté setting. Add the diced onions and cook until soft and translucent, about 5 to 7 minutes, then stir in the green pepper and cook for 2 minutes more.

### 2 **Toast the flour and pastes.**

Sprinkle the flour over the aromatics and stir continuously for 1 minute to cook off the raw smell; this creates the subtle roux that gives the stew its glossy body. Push the vegetables to the side, drop the tomato and pepper pastes into the center, and fry for 2 minutes until they darken slightly and smell intensely savory.

### 3 **Pressure cook the beans.**

Add the drained, soaked beans to the pot and stir to coat them in the red base. Pour in the hot water or broth, then stir in the black pepper, cumin, and Aleppo pepper, leaving the salt out for now. Secure the lid, set to seal, and cook on high pressure for 25 minutes. Allow a natural pressure release for 10 minutes before manually releasing any remaining pressure.

### 4 **Simmer with the pastırma.**

Once the beans are tender, finally stir in the salt. Add the sliced pastırma directly into the bubbling stew and let it simmer gently, uncovered, on the residual heat for exactly 10 minutes so the spices infuse the broth without turning the delicate meat rubbery.

**1 Respect the resting period.**

Remove the pot from the heat, put the lid back on, and walk away.

Let the stew rest for at least 30 minutes before serving, allowing the starches to retrograde and bind the liquid into a perfect, thick gravy.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

● **Sourcing the meat.**

Authentic pastırma, or Armenian basturma, is an air-cured beef heavily coated in a pungent fenugreek paste called çemen. Find it at a local Middle Eastern market. Do not substitute American deli pastrami, which is smoked and steamed.

● **The chemistry of salt.**

Never salt the soaking water or the raw beans in the pot. Early sodium hardens the pectin in the bean skins, ensuring they remain tough no matter how long you cook them. Always wait until the beans are completely tender before seasoning.



# Spinach Stew with Ground Beef and Rice

*kee-mah-luh is-pah-nahk yeh-meh-ee*

IN A TURKISH HOME, THE SMELL OF SIZZLING ONIONS, ground beef, and tomato paste means a comforting pot meal is on the stove. This dish is the ultimate testament to the Ottoman culinary philosophy of using a little meat to fiercely flavor a mountain of vegetables. Forget the soggy, boiled spinach of bad American diners. Here, the greens are gently wilted in their own moisture alongside savory beef juices, with just enough rice to soak up the glorious, orange-tinted sauce. Crowned with cold garlic yogurt, it's weeknight perfection—an unapologetic, authentic taste of the homeland.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>1 1/2 lb</b>	mature fresh spinach <i>thick stems trimmed</i>	<b>1/4 cup</b>	short or medium-grain white rice <i>rinsed until the water runs clear</i>
<b>3 tbsp</b>	extra-virgin olive oil	<b>1 tsp</b>	kosher salt
<b>1 med</b>	yellow onion <i>finely diced</i>	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	black pepper <i>freshly ground</i>
<b>1/2 lb</b>	ground beef <i>80% or 85% lean</i>	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	Aleppo pepper
<b>2 med cloves</b>	garlic <i>minced</i>	<b>1 cup</b>	water <i>hot</i>
<b>1 1/2 tbsp</b>	tomato paste	<b>1 cup</b>	plain whole-milk yogurt
		<b>1 med clove</b>	garlic <i>grated or smashed into a paste</i>

## PREPARATION

- **Wash the spinach like a Turkish grandmother.**

Submerge the spinach in a basin of cold water with a splash of white vinegar. Let it sit for 10 minutes so the grit falls to the bottom, then lift the leaves out of the water. Never pour the dirty water back over the clean leaves.

- **Tear the greens by hand.**

Avoid using a knife. Tearing the large leaves into rough halves prevents the edges from bruising, darkening, and taking on a metallic taste.

## INSTRUCTIONS

**1 Sauté the onion and brown the beef completely.**

Heat the olive oil in a large, heavy-bottomed pot over medium-high heat. Add the diced onion and sauté until softened, about 5 minutes. Stir in the ground beef and cook, breaking it into fine pieces, until it releases its water and browns completely.

**2 Fry the tomato paste to awaken its flavor.**

Add the minced garlic and tomato paste. Stir constantly for 1 to 2 minutes to cook off the raw, metallic edge and build a deeply caramelized aroma.

**3 Wilt the spinach in its own moisture.**

Stir in the rinsed rice, salt, black pepper, and Aleppo pepper. Add the torn spinach in handfuls, covering the pot for 60 seconds at a time to let the steam wilt each batch before adding the next.

**4 Simmer until the rice is tender.**

Pour the hot water over the wilted spinach. Bring to a gentle boil, reduce the heat to low, cover tightly, and simmer undisturbed for 15 to 20 minutes.

**5 Let the stew rest off the heat.**

Turn off the stove but leave the lid on. Let the pot rest for 10 minutes to allow the starches from the rice to settle and the sauce to thicken slightly.

**1 Prepare the garlic yogurt crown.**

While the stew rests, whisk the plain yogurt with the grated garlic and a pinch of salt until smooth. Serve the warm stew in shallow bowls, topped with a generous dollop of cold yogurt.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

- **Respect the paste.**

Frying the tomato paste in the fat isn't an optional step; it's a fundamental Turkish technique that builds the umami backbone of the stew.

- **Don't drown the spinach.**

Spinach is mostly water. Adding too much liquid up front results in a watery boil rather than a rich stew. Let the greens release their own juices first.





## Zeytinyağlılar (The Olive Oil Cooling Rack)

*The vegetable-forward backbone of Turkish cuisine, slow-braised in extra virgin olive oil and meant to be eaten the next day.*

**I**n the quiet, essential corners of Turkish home kitchens, zeytinyağlılar are the undisputed, unassuming royalty. No theatrical butchery, no sizzling charcoal. Just vegetables, coaxed into total submission through a slow, deliberate braise in copious amounts of good olive oil. They sit on the stove, cooling in their own juices, waiting for tomorrow. Every Turk knows the immutable law of the olive oil cooling rack: eat this today, and you squander its potential.

This is the food of patience, the original make-ahead meal long before the internet gave it a name. Whether it is Romano beans surrendering their snap or eggplants melting into the dangerously rich İmam Bayıldı, these dishes demand to be left alone. You cook them, you walk away, and you let time and temperature work their slow alchemy overnight.





# Romano Beans in Olive Oil

*zay-tin-yah-luh tah-zeh fah-sool-yeh*

IF THERE IS ONE DISH THAT DEFINES THE SMELL OF A Turkish summer, it is Zeytinyağlı Taze Fasulye. Generic recipes will tell you to sauté the onions and boil the beans until crisp. Ignore them. To make this taste exactly like an Aegean grandmother’s kitchen, we use the *çiğden* method—layering everything raw into the pot—and braise it low and slow under a parchment paper lid. There is no tomato paste here; just the pure, bright marriage of sweet summer tomatoes, copious amounts of extra virgin olive oil, and a crucial

PINCH OF SUGAR TO MAKE THE SAUCE SHINE. THE BEST PART for a busy weeknight? It takes fifteen minutes to prep, and tastes even better the next day straight from the fridge.

#### INGREDIENTS

<b>1 lb</b>	fresh Romano beans <i>washed, ends trimmed, split lengthwise and cut into 2-inch pieces</i>	<b>4 med cloves</b>	garlic <i>thinly sliced</i>
<b>1 large</b>	yellow onion <i>finely diced</i>	<b>1/3 cup</b>	extra virgin olive oil <i>plus 1 tbsp reserved for finishing</i>
<b>3 large</b>	ripe summer tomatoes <i>peeled and grated (or substitute 1 1/2 cups canned diced tomatoes)</i>	<b>1 1/2 tsp</b>	granulated sugar
		<b>1 tsp</b>	kosher salt
		<b>1/4 cup</b>	hot water <i>optional, only if tomatoes are dry</i>

#### PREPARATION

- **Prep the beans the traditional way.**

Lay the flat Romano bean on your cutting board and carefully run your knife lengthwise down the center to split it in half before cutting crosswise. This exposes the inner cellular structure, allowing the olive oil to penetrate deeply.

- **Grate the tomatoes.**

Grate fresh tomatoes on the large holes of a box grater until you are left with just the skin in your hand, then discard the skin.

## INSTRUCTIONS

### 1 Assemble the raw layers.

Do not turn on the heat yet. Scatter the finely diced onions evenly across the bottom of a wide, heavy-bottomed pot or Dutch oven, then pile the prepared beans evenly over the onions and top with the grated tomatoes and sliced garlic.

### 2 Season and dress the vegetables.

Sprinkle the salt and sugar evenly over the top, then drizzle the one-third cup of olive oil over the whole mountain.

### 3 Create a parchment paper seal.

Tear off a piece of parchment paper slightly larger than your pot, crumple it, run it briefly under cold tap water, and flatten it out. Tuck this wet paper directly onto the surface of the beans and tomatoes like a blanket, then place the heavy pot lid on top.

### 4 Braise low and slow.

Place the pot over medium heat until you hear the tomatoes begin to simmer, about five to ten minutes. Immediately drop the heat to the absolute lowest setting and let the beans braise undisturbed for 45 to 55 minutes, adding the hot water only if the pot sounds like it's frying rather than gently simmering.

### 5 Cool the beans in the pot.

Once the beans have lost their raw green color and are meltingly tender, turn off the heat. Remove the parchment paper, drizzle the final tablespoon of raw olive oil over the top for shine, and immediately put the lid back on.

**1 Rest until room temperature.**

Do not serve the beans hot. Leave the pot exactly where it is for about two hours so the cooling beans can act like sponges, absorbing the olive oil and tomato juices into a velvety glaze.

CHEF'S NOTES

- **Never use tomato paste.**

Authentic Aegean recipes strictly forbid the use of salça in this dish; the sauce relies entirely on the bright acidity of fresh summer tomatoes to keep the oil translucent and unclouded.

- **Sugar is structural, not sweet.**

The addition of sugar neutralizes the raw acidity of the tomatoes and interacts with the olive oil to create the dish's famous glossy shine.



# Patlıcanlı Mercimekli Mualla

*paht-luh-jahn-luh mer-jee-mek-lee moo-ahl-lah*

IN THE KITCHENS OF ANTAKYA, GRANDMOTHERS DON'T MESS around with heavy frying when they don't have to. Known locally as Şeyh Mualla, this dish is a masterclass in elemental, ancestral logic: raw eggplants and parboiled lentils layered tight in a cold pot, then drenched in a holy trinity of fruity olive oil, dried mint, and the dark, sweet-sour punch of pure pomegranate molasses. It belongs to the revered category of zeytinyağlılar, meaning it braises low and slow until meltingly tender, and is categorically mandated to cool in its own

JUICES. MAKE IT ON A SUNDAY, WALK AWAY, AND PULL IT from the fridge on Tuesday. It demands no fuss, just the patience to let the deep, uncorrupted flavors of the homeland introduce themselves.

#### INGREDIENTS

<b>1 1/2 lb</b>	Italian or small Globe eggplants <i>peeled in alternating stripes and sliced into 3/4-inch half-moons</i>	<b>1 tbsp</b>	Turkish red pepper paste
<b>1 tbsp</b>	kosher salt <i>reserved for soaking the eggplant</i>	<b>1 tbsp</b>	tomato paste
<b>1 cup</b>	dry green or brown lentils	<b>1/2 cup</b>	extra-virgin olive oil <i>divided</i>
<b>1/2 cup</b>	canned chickpeas <i>rinsed and drained</i>	<b>3 tbsp</b>	pure pomegranate molasses <i>divided</i>
<b>2 large</b>	ripe tomatoes <i>diced</i>	<b>1 tbsp</b>	dried mint
<b>1 large</b>	yellow onion <i>finely diced</i>	<b>1 tsp</b>	Aleppo pepper or Turkish chili flakes
<b>1 large</b>	red bell pepper <i>cored and finely diced</i>	<b>1 tsp</b>	kosher salt
<b>6 med</b>	cloves garlic <i>minced</i>	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	black pepper
		<b>1 tsp</b>	sugar
		<b>1/2 cup</b>	hot water

#### PREPARATION

- **Zebra-peel the eggplants.**

Using a vegetable peeler, peel the eggplants in alternating lengthwise stripes. This traditional 'alacalı' method leaves enough skin for structural integrity during the braise while exposing the flesh to soak up the sauce.

## INSTRUCTIONS

**1 Parboil the lentils to remove their murky liquid.**

Boil the dry lentils in a few inches of cold water over medium-high heat for 10 to 12 minutes, then drain and rinse. They should remain al dente, as they will finish cooking in the stew.

**2 Purge the sliced eggplants of their bitter juices.**

Place the striped, sliced eggplants in a large bowl, cover with cold water, and stir in the tablespoon of soaking salt. Let sit for 15 to 20 minutes, then drain, rinse, and gently squeeze dry in a clean kitchen towel.

**3 Build the flavor base.**

In a large bowl, combine the parboiled lentils, chickpeas, tomatoes, onion, bell pepper, and garlic. Stir in the red pepper paste, tomato paste, dried mint, Aleppo pepper, the 1 teaspoon of salt, black pepper, sugar, 2 tablespoons of the pomegranate molasses, and 1/4 cup of the olive oil until evenly coated.

**4 Layer the stew tightly in a cold pot.**

In a wide, heavy-bottomed pot or Dutch oven, spread one-third of the lentil mixture. Arrange half of the eggplant slices in a snug, overlapping layer on top. Repeat with another third of the lentils, the remaining eggplant, and finish with the last of the lentils.

**1 Braise low and slow without stirring.**

Drizzle the remaining 1/4 cup of olive oil and 1 tablespoon of pomegranate molasses over the top, then pour the hot water down the inside edge of the pot so you don't wash away the spices. Bring to a gentle simmer over medium heat, then immediately reduce the heat to the lowest setting, cover tightly, and cook undisturbed for 45 to 55 minutes.

**2 Let the pot cool completely before opening.**

Remove from the heat and leave the lid sealed. Allow the stew to rest and cool to room temperature in the pot so the eggplants re-absorb the olive oil and aromatic juices. Serve chilled or at room temperature with crusty bread.

CHEF'S NOTES

• **Seek out pure pomegranate molasses.**

The sweet-sour tang of Hatay relies on 100% pure nar ekşisi. Avoid anything labeled pomegranate sauce with added glucose. If absolutely necessary, substitute 2 tablespoons of lemon juice mixed with 1 teaspoon of dark brown sugar.

• **Leave the stew in the fridge overnight.**

Like all authentic zeytinyağlı dishes, this is scientifically engineered to taste better on day two. The pectin stabilizes and the garlic and mint infuse entirely into the oil overnight.

• **Do not stir the pot.**

Stirring will turn the beautiful, distinct layers of eggplant and lentils into a mushy porridge. Trust the process and let it simmer untouched.





# Esnaf Lokantası at Home (The Tradesmen's Lunch)

*Recreating the fast, fresh, and affordable comfort food of Turkey's  
traditional working-class eateries for the modern home.*

**A**t the esnaf lokantası, the Turkish lunch hour is a democratic affair. It's a sanctuary of fogged glass and steam tables where mechanics, cabbies, and bankers sit elbow-to-elbow for food that tastes uncompromisingly of home. Unpretentious and rapid-fire, this is the blue-collar backbone of the republic—meals designed to fuel a heavy afternoon without draining the wallet.

Bringing that rhythm into your own kitchen means mastering the workhorse lunch. Whether it's a bubbling tray of İzmir köfte or a perfectly structured mound of buttery rice pilav, these are steadfast, batch-cooked staples that demand zero pretense. Just an appetite, a piece of fresh bread, and absolute respect for the routine.





# The Velvety Tradesmen's Lentil Soup

*lo-kahn-tah oo-soo-loo sooz-meh mer-jee-mek chor-bah-suh*

WALK INTO ANY ESNAF LOKANTASI—THE TRADITIONAL Turkish tradesmen's eatery—and the anchor of the steam table is always this soup. It's glossier, richer, and perfectly golden. Home cooks often try to replicate it by pureeing potatoes and carrots, but true lokanta chefs banish root vegetables entirely. They want pure, unadulterated lentil flavor. The secret to that legendary, glass-like velvet texture is a simple butter-flour roux and a sudden shock of cold water. It's unpretentious, deeply restorative, and happens to be far faster to make on a weeknight than the home-style version.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>1 cup</b>	red lentils <i>rinsed thoroughly until water runs clear</i>	<b>5 cup</b>	high-quality beef bone broth <i>heated</i>
<b>1 tbsp</b>	unsalted butter	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	ground turmeric
<b>2 tbsp</b>	neutral oil	<b>1 tsp</b>	kosher salt
<b>1 tbsp</b>	all-purpose flour	<b>2 tbsp</b>	unsalted butter
<b>1 cup</b>	cold water	<b>1 tsp</b>	Aleppo pepper
<b>1 med</b>	medium yellow onion <i>peeled and left whole</i>	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	dried mint
		<b>1 med</b>	lemon <i>cut into wedges</i>

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Toast the flour in the butter and oil.**  
In a heavy-bottomed pot over medium-low heat, melt 1 tablespoon of the butter with the neutral oil. Sprinkle in the flour and whisk constantly for 2 to 3 minutes until it smells slightly nutty, taking care not to let it brown.
- 2 Stir in the rinsed lentils and shock the pot with cold water.**  
Add the lentils to the pot and stir them into the hot roux for about 1 minute. Rapidly pour in the 1 cup of cold water while stirring; this sudden temperature drop shocks the starches, preventing clumps and ensuring a glossy texture.

**1 Add the broth, onion, turmeric, and salt, then simmer until the lentils collapse.**

Drop the whole onion into the pot, pour in the hot bone broth, and add the turmeric and salt. Bring to a gentle boil, then reduce the heat to low, cover with the lid slightly ajar, and simmer for 20 to 25 minutes.

**2 Discard the onion and blend the soup continuously until flawlessly smooth.**

Remove the pot from the heat and fish out the onion with a slotted spoon. Using an immersion blender, blend the soup on high speed for at least 2 full minutes to completely obliterate the lentil skins.

**3 Sizzle the Aleppo pepper and mint in the remaining butter.**

Just before serving, melt the remaining 2 tablespoons of butter in a small skillet over medium heat. As soon as it foams, remove it from the heat and immediately stir in the Aleppo pepper and dried mint.

**4 Ladle the hot soup into bowls and garnish.**

Divide the silky soup among bowls, swirl the spiced butter over the surface, and serve immediately with a generous squeeze of fresh lemon.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

• **The turmeric is strictly for color, a modern lokanta hack.**

Traditional purists might hunt down specific strains of yellow lentils, but red lentils are infinitely easier to find in American grocery stores. A tiny pinch of turmeric restores the iconic golden color without altering the earthy flavor.

- **An immersion blender perfectly mimics the traditional straining process.**

Historically, lokanta apprentices pushed the cooked lentils through a fine wire mesh to remove the skins. A thorough 2-minute blitz with an immersion blender gets you exactly the same flawlessly smooth texture on a busy Tuesday night.



# 15-Minute Freezer-Stash Shaved Chicken Döner

*ev yah-puh-muh tah-vook doo-nair*

IN THE WORKING-CLASS ESNAF LOKANTASI OF TURKEY, THE rhythmic shhhck-shhhck of the döner knife against the vertical spit is the soundtrack of the lunch rush. Recreating that impossibly thin, deeply caramelized chicken at home usually ends in sad, chunky stir-fries. The workaround—a closely guarded grandmother's secret—is the freezer log. By layering chicken thighs and breasts, binding them in an onion-juice marinade, and freezing the whole thing solid, you

CREATE A DENSE CYLINDER OF MEAT. COME A CHAOTIC weeknight, you just shave it paper-thin, flash-fry it in butter, and let the aroma transport you right back to your favorite corner joint in the homeland.

#### INGREDIENTS

<b>1 lb</b>	boneless skinless chicken thighs	<b>2 large</b>	garlic <i>smashed into a fine paste</i>
<b>1 lb</b>	boneless skinless chicken breasts <i>butterflied in half if extremely thick</i>	<b>2 tbsp</b>	olive oil
<b>1 large</b>	yellow onion <i>pureed in a food processor or grated on the fine holes of a box grater</i>	<b>1 tbsp</b>	dried oregano
<b>3 tbsp</b>	plain whole-milk yogurt	<b>1 tsp</b>	ground cumin
<b>1 tbsp</b>	Biber Salçası (Turkish red pepper paste)	<b>1 tsp</b>	Aleppo pepper
<b>1 tbsp</b>	tomato paste	<b>1 tsp</b>	black pepper <i>freshly ground</i>
		<b>1 1/2 tsp</b>	kosher salt
		<b>1 tbsp</b>	unsalted butter
		<b>1 tbsp</b>	neutral oil
		<b>4 large</b>	lavaş or thin flour tortillas

#### INSTRUCTIONS

- 1** Extract the juice from the pureed onion and discard the fibrous pulp.

Do not skip this step. Grated onion pulp will burn in a hot pan and taste bitter. Press the puree through a fine-mesh sieve or cheesecloth into a large bowl to yield about 3 to 4 tablespoons of cloudy liquid.

- 1 Whisk together the onion juice, yogurt, pepper paste, tomato paste, garlic, olive oil, and spices to build the terbiye.**

It should look like a rich, brick-red sauce. Do not use Greek yogurt here; the moisture of standard whole-milk yogurt is necessary.

- 2 Toss the chicken pieces vigorously in the marinade until every crevice is coated.**

- 3 Stack the chicken on parchment paper and roll it into an airtight, compressed cylinder.**

Lay an 18-inch sheet of parchment on the counter. Place the flat chicken breasts down as a base, stack the fattier thighs in the middle, and top with any remaining breast pieces to build an interlocking brick. Fold the parchment over, roll it tight, and twist the ends like a candy wrapper to force out the air.

- 4 Rest the log on the counter for one hour to tenderize, then freeze for at least eight hours.**

The enzymes in the yogurt and onion juice need time at room temperature to break down the meat. After that, it goes into the deep freeze, where it can live for up to three months.

- 5 Let the frozen log sit at room temperature for five to ten minutes, then shave it into paper-thin ribbons.**

Do not let it thaw. Using your heaviest, sharpest chef's knife, slice down the side of the solid log. The knife will glide through the layered breast and thigh, perfectly replicating the shave of a master dönerci. Slice only what you plan to eat and return the rest to the freezer.

**1 Sear the shaved chicken in a screaming hot skillet with butter and neutral oil until caramelized.**

When the butter foams over medium-high heat, drop in the chicken in a single layer. Do not stir it for the first 60 seconds. Let it develop the crispy, browned edges typical of an open flame, then toss and cook for another two to three minutes. Remove the chicken to a plate.

**2 Splash a tablespoon of water into the hot, empty pan and immediately press the flatbread into the seasoned steam.**

The water will instantly hiss and emulsify the browned bits and spiced chicken fat. Wiping the bread through the pan makes it warm, pliable, and impossibly flavorful. Serve immediately, wrapping the chicken with sumac-dusted onions and sliced tomatoes.

CHEF'S NOTES

- **If Biber Salçası isn't available, substitute tomato paste and paprika.**

A 1:1 mix of standard tomato paste and sweet paprika with a drop of olive oil replicates the texture nicely. Do not use sriracha or Asian chili paste, as the vinegar profile is completely wrong.

- **For maximum authenticity, smoke the chicken in the pan with a piece of live charcoal.**

After pan-frying the meat, place a red-hot piece of natural charcoal into a small foil boat in the center of the pan, drop a spoonful of butter over it to generate thick smoke, and cover with a lid for two minutes. It imparts a profound, cooked-over-wood-fire aroma.





## Meze & Muhabbet (The Evening Table)

*The philosophy of Turkish hospitality, focusing on small, highly flavorful plates meant for sharing and lingering over conversation.*

**T** rue muhabbet—that deep, winding, unhurried conversation that only happens after the sun goes down—requires fuel. Not a heavy, sleep-inducing feast, but a slow drip of sharp, smoky, unapologetic flavors meant to be picked at over hours. This is the architecture of the Turkish evening table. It’s a ritual built on the

understanding that the best moments happen when nobody is looking at the clock, and the host is actually sitting at the table, not held hostage by the stove.

The dishes here are the genuine article: charred eggplant beaten into submission, crisp zucchini fritters, and bracingly cold garlic yogurt. They are the unpretentious, hard-working staples of a real Turkish home. Made mostly ahead of time and perfectly content to sit at room temperature, they demand nothing from you once the guests arrive. Just tear the bread, pass the plates, and let the night take care of itself.





# Spicy Tomato and Pepper Relish

*ah-juh-luh ez-meh*

TRUE EZME IS A MASTERPIECE OF TEXTURE AND TENSION, the undisputed king of the Turkish meze table. The internet will tell you to throw the vegetables into a food processor and hit pulse, but grandmothers and neighborhood kebab masters know this is culinary treason. An electric blade obliterates cell walls, turning a vibrant relish into a watery, oxidized soup. All you need to recreate the exact transportive flavors of the homeland is ten minutes of mindful hand-

CHOPPING, A RAZOR-SHARP KNIFE, AND THE MOST CRUCIAL secret of all: a fine-mesh strainer to drain the tomatoes before they ever touch the heavily spiced dressing.

#### INGREDIENTS

<b>4 med</b>	Roma tomatoes <i>cored, seeded, and very finely minced</i>	<b>2 tbsp</b>	pomegranate molasses
<b>2 med</b>	Anaheim or Padron peppers <i>cored, seeded, and very finely minced</i>	<b>1 tbsp</b>	fresh lemon juice
<b>1 med</b>	red bell pepper <i>cored, seeded, and very finely minced</i>	<b>1 tbsp</b>	Turkish red pepper paste
<b>1 small</b>	yellow onion <i>very finely minced</i>	<b>1 tsp</b>	tomato paste
<b>2 cloves</b>	garlic <i>smashed to a paste</i>	<b>1 tsp</b>	Aleppo pepper
<b>1/2 cup</b>	fresh flat-leaf parsley leaves <i>finely chopped</i>	<b>1 tsp</b>	Urfa pepper or smoked paprika
<b>2 tbsp</b>	fresh mint leaves <i>finely chopped</i>	<b>1 tsp</b>	sumac
<b>2 tbsp</b>	extra virgin olive oil	<b>1 tsp</b>	dried mint
		<b>1/2 tsp</b>	kosher salt

#### INSTRUCTIONS

**1** Gut the tomatoes.

Quarter the Roma tomatoes and use a spoon or paring knife to carve out the wet, gelatinous seeds and core. This immediately eliminates half the unwanted moisture that would otherwise ruin the texture.

**1 Mince and drain the vegetables.**

Using a freshly honed chef's knife, finely dice the tomato flesh until the pieces are no larger than a lentil. Transfer them to a fine-mesh sieve set over a bowl. As you finely mince the green peppers and red pepper, add them to the same sieve and let gravity pull away the excess liquid.

**2 Tame the raw onion.**

Toss the minced onion in a small bowl with a pinch of kosher salt and rub it gently with your fingers to deflate its harsh sulfurous bite before adding it to the sieve along with the smashed garlic.

**3 Build the dressing.**

In a large mixing bowl, vigorously whisk the olive oil, pomegranate molasses, lemon juice, pepper paste, tomato paste, Aleppo pepper, Urfa pepper, sumac, dried mint, and salt until it forms a thick, homogenous, deep-red paste.

**4 Marry the relish just before serving.**

Discard the vegetable liquid from the bowl beneath the sieve. Ten minutes before you sit down to eat, transfer the drained vegetables and fresh herbs into the dressing and gently fold them from the bottom up so every tiny morsel is coated without bruising.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

● **Leave the food processor in the cabinet.**

Mechanical blades crush cell walls and release enzymes that turn your vibrant vegetables into an oxidized, bitter soup; hand-chopping is completely non-negotiable here.

- **Source real pomegranate molasses.**

Check the label at your local Middle Eastern market to ensure you are buying 100 percent pure pomegranate molasses, not a glucose-heavy pomegranate sauce.



# Haydari (Minty Brown Butter, Feta, and Strained Yogurt Dip)

*high-DAH-ree*

IF YOU GREW UP AROUND A TURKISH TABLE, THE SMELL OF dried mint hitting warm butter is a homing beacon. It means the evening is slowing down, the rakı is pouring, and the meze spread is about to begin. Too many rushed recipes tell you to just stir raw garlic and dusty dried mint straight into cold yogurt. Don't do that. The grandmother-approved secret to a proper haydari—a dish whose name literally translates to 'lion'—is blooming that mint and tempering the

GARLIC IN HOT BUTTER FIRST. IT TAKES EXACTLY TWO EXTRA minutes, but it's the absolute difference between a bland, watery dip and the unapologetic, razor-sharp taste of home.

#### INGREDIENTS

<b>1 1/2 cup</b>	full-fat Greek yogurt	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	kosher salt
<b>2 oz</b>	sheep's milk feta cheese in brine <i>removed from brine</i>	<b>1 tbsp</b>	unsalted butter
<b>1 large clove</b>	garlic <i>peeled</i>	<b>1 tbsp</b>	dried mint
		<b>2 tbsp</b>	fresh dill <i>finely chopped</i>
		<b>1 tbsp</b>	extra virgin olive oil

#### PREPARATION

- **Let the feta sit out.**

Pull your feta from the fridge ten minutes before starting; cold cheese is stubborn, and letting it warm slightly makes mashing it into a smooth paste significantly easier.

#### INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Whip the cheese and yogurt into a heavy paste.**

In a medium mixing bowl, aggressively mash the feta with the back of a fork until it turns into a smooth, creamy paste with no large lumps. Add the Greek yogurt and stir vigorously until completely incorporated into a dense, velvety mixture.

**1 Obliterate the garlic.**

Place the garlic clove on a cutting board, sprinkle it with the kosher salt, and mince it. Using the flat side of your knife, repeatedly drag and scrape the garlic against the board until it forms a smooth paste. Nobody wants to bite into a raw chunk of garlic.

**2 Bloom the flavors in warm butter.**

In a small skillet or Turkish cezve, melt the butter over medium-low heat. Once it foams, add the garlic paste and swirl it for exactly 15 seconds to kill the harsh, raw edge without browning it. Immediately remove from the heat and stir in the dried mint. Let the residual heat toast the mint until the butter turns a deep, fragrant greenish-brown, then let it cool for a few minutes so it doesn't split the cold yogurt.

**3 Fold the infused butter into the yogurt base.**

Scrape every last drop of the minty brown butter into the yogurt and cheese mixture. Add the chopped fresh dill and stir everything together until smooth. Taste for seasoning, adding a pinch more salt only if the feta didn't already do the heavy lifting.

**4 Plate and serve.**

Transfer the haydari to a wide, shallow plate. Use the back of a spoon to carve deep swoops and wells into the surface of the dip. Flood those wells with the extra virgin olive oil, hit it with a final pinch of dill, and serve cold alongside warm pita or crusty bread.

#### CHEF'S NOTES

- **Skip the pre-crumbled feta at all costs.**

Pre-crumbled feta is coated in anti-caking cellulose and will refuse to mash into the creamy paste required for this meze. You need a solid block preserved in brine.

- **Mind your yogurt consistency.**

Authentic Turkish süzme yoğurt is incredibly thick. If your supermarket Greek yogurt feels a bit watery, line a mesh strainer with cheesecloth or a paper towel and let it drain in the fridge for an hour before starting.

- **Add walnuts for regional crunch.**

Some Eastern Turkish variations fold in a handful of finely chopped walnuts. If you go this route, toast them gently in the butter before adding the garlic and mint.





# Kahve ve Çay Saati (The Afternoon Ritual)

*The deeply ingrained cultural rhythms of Turkish tea and coffee, accompanied by traditional sweet and savory heritage bakes.*

**I**n Turkey, the afternoon doesn't just happen to you; you construct it, deliberately, around a small tulip glass of steep, dark tea or the muddy intensity of a proper coffee. It is an essential, unapologetic pause in the daily grind. The hiss of the dual-stacked çaydanlık and the rising, dark foam in a copper cezve aren't just background noise—they are the drumbeat of a working nation taking a collective, necessary breath.

But you don't drink without ballast. You need something substantial to anchor the caffeine. A warm, crumbling peynirli poğaç, a cold, dense slice of mozaik pasta pulled straight from the fridge, or the blistered, caramelized skin of a baked sütlaç. These aren't fussy, pastry-chef flexes. This is the everyday stuff of real life—the dependable, unpretentious comforts that make the ritual worth stopping for.





# Demleme Çay (Proper Brewed Black Tea)

*dem-leh-meh chai*

IN A TURKISH HOME—WHETHER IN ISTANBUL OR AN OHIO suburb—tea isn't a teabag dunked in a mug before running out the door. It is the definitive sign of hospitality and the glue that holds afternoon conversations together. The grandmothers know that true Turkish tea is brewed as a concentrate over a double-boiler, aiming for a brilliant, translucent crimson called *tavşan kanı* (rabbit's blood). While every household in the homeland has a stacked *çaydanlık*, you can reverse-engineer the exact physics of the steep with a standard



**1 Steep the tea over continuous, gentle steam.**

Turn the stove to the lowest possible simmer. Place the saucepan back on the heat and nestle the teapot securely on top. Let it steep undisturbed for 15 to 20 minutes, using the steam from below to keep the tea perfectly warm without ever boiling the leaves.

**2 Serve the tea.**

When the leaves have fully sunk to the bottom of the teapot, your dark concentrate (dem) is ready. Pour the concentrate into small clear glasses, filling them one-third of the way up, then top off with the hot water from the saucepan to achieve a glowing crimson color. Serve with sugar cubes on the side.

CHEF'S NOTES

- **Source the right tea.**

Do not attempt this method with standard English Breakfast or Ceylon teas; the long steeping time will render them overwhelmingly bitter. Seek out authentic Turkish tea from the Rize province, such as Çaykur, available at any Middle Eastern market.

- **Watch the clock.**

Drink the tea within 30 to 40 minutes of it finishing its steep. Left on the heat too long, the leaves over-extract and the tea turns stale.



# Turkish Coffee

*toork kah-veh-see*

IN AMERICA, COFFEE IS OFTEN A GIANT PAPER CUP OF ROCKET fuel sucked down in traffic. Turkish coffee is the exact opposite—an intentional, unrushed pause. For kids growing up in immigrant households, the scent of Kurukahveci Mehmet Efendi wafting from a copper cezve wasn't just a daily routine; it was the official announcement that guests had arrived and the afternoon was about to slow down. This grandmother-approved method relies on unbending physical rules: cold water, low heat, and absolutely no stirring once the pot hits the stove. Master these, and you'll achieve that legendary bol köpük—the thick, velvet foam that proves you did it right.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>1 small cup</b>	cold filtered water	<b>1 tsp</b>	granulated white sugar
<b>2 tsp</b>	finely ground Turkish coffee	<b>1/4 tsp</b>	ground cardamom

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Measure the water using your serving cup.**

Pour one espresso-sized cup of cold, filtered water per person directly into your copper cezve or the smallest saucepan you own. Do not use tap water if it tastes like chlorine; it will flatly destroy the delicate flavors.
- 2 Add the coffee and sugar off the heat.**

Add two heaping teaspoons of Turkish coffee and your preferred amount of sugar. If using cardamom, add it now. Gently stir for about 30 seconds until the sugar dissolves and the coffee clumps are broken up.
- 3 Move the pot to the stove and step away from the spoon.**

Place the pot over low heat and absolutely do not stir it again. Stirring at this stage destroys the delicate emulsion required to build the foam.
- 4 Watch closely for the dark ring of foam.**

As the coffee warms slowly over 3 to 4 minutes, a thick, dark ring of foam will form around the edges and steadily move toward the center.

**1 Harvest the foam just before boiling.**

When the foam begins to rapidly rise up the narrow neck of the pot, immediately pull it off the heat before it reaches a rolling boil. Use a teaspoon to gently skim the thick foam off the top and divide it equally into your serving cups.

**2 Simmer the remaining liquid and pour gently.**

Return the pot to the heat for 10 to 15 seconds to bring the remaining liquid to a gentle simmer. Very slowly, pour the hot coffee down the inside edge of the serving cups to lift the reserved foam perfectly to the top without washing it away.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

• **The Sweetness Dictionary.**

In Turkish hospitality, sugar goes in the pot, not the cup. Ask guests their preference before brewing: Sade (plain, no sugar), Az Şekerli (little sugar, 1/2 teaspoon), Orta (medium, 1 teaspoon), or Şekerli (sweet, 2 teaspoons).

• **Sourcing the right grind.**

Standard electric burr grinders can't achieve the powdered-sugar consistency required for this brew. Head to a Middle Eastern market and buy a tin of pre-ground Kurukahveci Mehmet Efendi coffee—it's the undisputed, nostalgic standard.

• **Serving like a pro.**

Serve immediately with a small glass of cold water to cleanse the palate before sipping, and a bite-sized sweet like Turkish Delight to offset the bitter finish. Remind first-timers to stop sipping before they hit the sludge at the bottom.