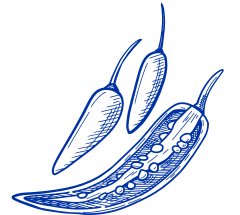
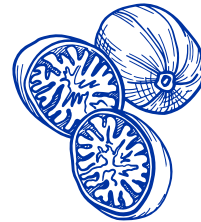
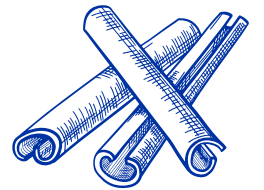




بالعافية

Bil Afia

Traditional Recipes from Iraq



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Bil Afia

Traditional Recipes from Iraq

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Foreword

As we enter the new year, we take this opportunity to celebrate our collective accomplishments from 2022 and make way for an exciting future.

In this spirit, we present a cookbook of traditional recipes from northern Iraq. The recipes are crafted and woven together by internally displaced persons (IDPs) at Hassan Sham U3 Camp in Ninewa Governorate. It is a labor of love and testament to the spirit of the people of Iraq.

Baking, cooking and meal preparation activities with integrated psychosocial support are part of IOM's MHPSS and Livelihood Integration (MLI) projects, implemented by the MHPSS programme. In conflict and displacement-affected contexts like Iraq, mental health needs tend to be greater and more complex. The exposure to traumatic events, financial insecurity and social isolation that often comes with the experience of displacement puts both the physical and mental health of IDPs at risk. This can have a negative effect

on their day-to-day lives, including their ability to secure gainful employment and livelihoods. By integrating psychosocial support and livelihoods activities, MLI projects provide participants with sustainable positive coping and stress management mechanisms.

Peppered with testimonies from several MLI participants, the forthcoming pages showcase recipes for everything from dolma to basbousa to kunafa, each with their unique Iraqi flavor. We hope that you will enjoy experimenting and cooking the recipes of this collection with your family, friends and loved ones.

From our kitchens to yours, *Bil Hanaai wal Shifaa and afyat bet.*

Giorgi Gigauri
Chief of Mission
IOM Iraq

LAHM B'AJIN

Lunch, dinner or a quick snack for the whole family.

Servings: 5



Ingredients

Dough

- 3 cups of flour
- 1 cup of powdered milk
- ½ cup of oil
- 1 tablespoon of salt
- 1 cup of water
- 1 tablespoon of instant yeast
- 1 tablespoon of sugar



Dough Instructions

1. Add yeast and sugar to water, stir until it dissolves
2. Mix in the flour, salt, oil, and powdered milk
3. Knead until the ingredients combine to form a dough
4. Leave to sit for half an hour

Filling Instructions

1. Chop the vegetables into small pieces
2. Mix the vegetables with the pomegranate molasses and tomato paste then add the salt
3. Sautee the minced meat for 3-5 minutes on low heat
4. Once done, add the meat to the vegetables and mix



Filling

- ½ kilo of spicy minced meat, ground beef or lamb
- 2 medium onions
- 3 small tomatoes
- ½ cups of chopped celery (each cup is equivalent to 200 ml)
- 3 tablespoons of pomegranate molasses
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 1 heaping tablespoon of salt
- Teaspoon of seven spices (a spice blend called Baharat)



Instructions to Combine

1. Divide the dough into golf ball-sized spheres
2. Roll each dough ball into a thin round, using a little flour to stop the dough from sticking
3. Spread the filling across the surface (tip: leave some space around the edges)
4. Bake for 12 minutes at 200° Celsius or until the edges look golden brown
5. Serve



IRAQI DOLMA

Iraqi dolma is said to be especially unique from other dolma recipes across the region.

Servings: 5



Ingredients

- 1 kilogram of onions
- 2 zucchinis
- 2 tomatoes
- 2 green, yellow or red peppers
- 2 eggplants
- 3 tablespoons of olive oil
- ½ kilogram of chard or grape leaves
- Lemon juice to taste



Sauce

- 200 milliliters of water
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 1 tablespoon of pomegranate molasses
- Salt to taste
- Black pepper to taste

Filling Instructions

1. Wash the rice well with running water, drain
2. Mix the rice and the other filling ingredients of the filling, preferably by hand and ensure that the ingredients are combined



Filling

- 2.5 cups of basmati rice
- ½ cup of dill, finely chopped
- 1 kilogram of finely minced meat, lamb or beef
- A pinch of epsom salt
- 2 tomatoes, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon of black pepper
- 2 onions, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon of sumac
- 4 cloves of mashed garlic or 2 teaspoons of minced garlic
- 1 teaspoon of cumin
- ½ cup of coriander, finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon of turmeric



Vegetables and Grape Leaves Instructions

1. Peel the onions and slice in half most of the way through, without cutting all the way through.
2. Put the onions in a saucepan and cover with water
3. Boil the onions for ten minutes, then remove from water
4. Once the onions have cooled, separate and dislodge each layer
5. Core the zucchini, eggplants, peppers and tomatoes to make room for the filling
6. Stuff the zucchini, eggplants, peppers and tomatoes ¾ of the way through with filling (the filling will expand while cooking)



7. Poke a few small holes into the vegetables so that they can better absorb the sauce during during cooking
8. Stuff each of the boiled onion layers and carefully roll them up
9. Gently press on the stuffed onions so that they are tight and oblong
10. Take the grape leaves one-by-one, place a small amount of filling in the center of each
11. Fold the bottom of each grape leaf up over the filling, then fold in the left and right sides
12. Proceed to roll the grape leaves up

Sauce Instructions

1. Mix pomegranate molasses and tomato paste in a bowl
2. Add the water and stir until dissolved
3. Sprinkle with salt and black pepper to taste



Cooking Instructions

1. Add the olive oil to a large pot
2. Place the stuffed onions in the pot, forming a first layer
3. Layer the grape leaves, zucchini, eggplants, peppers and tomatoes over top
4. Pour the sauce over the dolma
5. Squeeze a little lemon juice over the dolma to taste
6. Cover the pot and put it on the stove over medium heat
7. Cook for 45 minutes to one hour – until the liquids are dry and the ingredients are fully cooked (do not open the pot while cooking)
8. Serve



BAMIA

This classic okra soup is often served with rice.

Servings: 5



Ingredients

- 1 kilogram of okra
- 3 cloves of garlic, roughly sliced
- 1 kilogram of tomatoes
- 1 teaspoon of ground red chili pepper
- ½ kilogram of beef or lamb cubes
- 3 cups of water
- 2 tablespoons of tomato paste

Instructions

1. Cut off the tops of the okra
2. Juice the tomatoes and add the juice to small pot
3. Heat the tomato juice over low heat for 10 minutes
4. In another pot, add the meat and cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally
5. Add the okra to the boiled meat without stirring, simmer for 6 minutes
6. Add the tomato juice and garlic
7. Add ground red chili pepper and salt to taste
8. Add 3 cups of water and stir
9. Add tomato paste and stir
10. Continue cooking the soup uncovered over low heat for 30 minutes
11. Serve



“I have enjoyed learning how to make okra and the other dishes that require cooking over a fire. The cooking and group sessions helped me become more confident in myself and a better problem-solver.”

– Youssef*, 16



SAMOON

A traditional Iraqi flatbread

Servings: 10



Ingredients

- 1 kilogram of white flour
- 1/2 cup of vegetable oil
- 1 teaspoon of salt
- 1 tablespoon of sugar
- 1 tablespoon instant yeast
- 1 1/2 cups of water
- Sesame seeds to garnish

Instructions

1. Mix the sugar and yeast in the lukewarm water and wait until the yeast swells
2. In a separate bowl, mix the flour and salt
3. Add oil and mix
4. Add the yeast- sugar mixture to the flour and start kneading
5. If the dough is dry, add a little water and continue kneading for at least six minutes
6. Stop when the dough no longer sticks to your hands
7. Let the dough sit for a quarter of an hour – it will double in volume, which means that it is ready to bake
8. Preheat the oven to 180° Celcius
9. Divide the dough equally and roll each piece into a ball
10. Roll the sides of each ball until you have diamond shaped pieces – the center of the diamonds should remain thick
11. Flatten the pieces, leaving the shape intact
12. Place the pieces on a baking tray
13. Sprinkle with sesame seeds
14. Bake in the oven for 20-25 minutes
15. Remove and let cool
16. Serve

“Kneading the dough and baking the bread with my own hands makes me happy and less stressed.”

– Ali*, 17

TANNOUR BREAD

A flatbread popular throughout Iraq and the Levant



Ingredients

- 1 kilogram of flour
- 1 cup of white flour
- 1 tablespoon instant yeast
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 2 cups of water, more as needed for easy kneading

Instructions

1. Heat the water slightly and mix in yeast and sugar
2. Stir well and leave it until the yeast reacts, bubbling on the surface and almost doubling in size
3. Sift all the flour into a deep saucepan
4. Add salt and mix by hand until well combined
5. Add the flour-salt mixture to a bowl or mixer and add the yeast-sugar mixture
6. Mix to combine
7. Gradually add a little lukewarm water and knead until the dough does not stick to your hands
8. Sprinkle a little flour in a second deep bowl and put the dough in it
9. Cover with a clean cloth and put in a warm place for at least 1 hour to ferment
10. After an hour, cut the dough into small pieces and roll into balls
11. Leave the balls to rest for another fifteen minutes
12. Preheat the oven to 280° Celsius
13. On a smooth, clean surface, sprinkle some flour
14. On this surface, use a rolling pin to roll out each dough ball one-by-one – the discs should be thin
15. Place the dough discs on a baking sheet
16. Bake in the oven for 10-15 minutes
17. Let cool and serve





IRAQI CHUREK

An Iraqi take on this Turkish treat, best served with hot tea in the morning or afternoon

Servings: 5



Ingredients

- 5 cups of flour
- 1 cup of warm water
- 1 cup of warm liquid milk
- ½ cup of vegetable oil
- 1 tablespoon of instant yeast
- 1 teaspoon of salt
- 4 tablespoons of sugar
- 50g of butter
- 1 teaspoon of white vinegar
- 100g of sesame seeds
- 100g of black cumin seeds

Instructions

1. Mix the liquid ingredients with the dry ingredients
 2. Knead the mixture until combined and firm
 3. Knead the dough for several minutes
 4. Grease dough with 50g of butter
 5. Add a teaspoon of white vinegar to the dough and knead again
 6. Preheat your oven to 175° Celcius
 7. Place the dough on a lightly floured surface and divide it into 6-10 equal parts
 8. Roll each part out into circles as thinly as possible
 9. Sprinkle with sesame and black cumin seeds
 10. Serve
- Note: Churek will keep several days at room temperature if wrapped securely in foil.



Dalal's passion for baking cakes

“ I participated in the baking activities. In the bakery course, I learned baking and making cakes and sweets. This was beneficial because I now can make sweets for my daughters. I didn't know how to bake before and I learned how to make bread from scratch.

My favorite recipes were the cakes; they turned out to be easy and delicious. Cakes remind me of my family gatherings, the noise, and chats during Eid. They bring back happy memories.

When I baked my first cake, I felt so happy! It tasted delicious! It felt great not to ruin it. Going to the sessions consistently made me proud, and the outcomes were rewarding – my efforts didn't go to waste.

I enjoyed joining the activities, it took me out of the depressive atmosphere that I was trapped in and into a crowd of women and joy. I didn't know the other women before because I was new in the camp. In the workshop, I was able to meet and get to know many of them.

Participating in the bakery workshop supported me psychologically and the treats I bring home and now can also cook at home make my daughters happy. Yesterday, I baked a cake for my neighbor - they loved it.”

KLEIJA

Iraq's national cookie – a traditional Assyrian holiday cookie that is also often served with a cup of tea in the morning across the country

Servings: 5



Ingredients

Dough

- 1 kilogram of flour
- 200g of butter
- 1 cup of milk
- 2 tablespoons of powdered milk
- ¾ cups of sugar
- 2 tablespoons of vanilla powder, or 2 teaspoons of cardamom, or a heaping teaspoon of kleija spices

- 1 egg and 1 tablespoon of instant yeast
- 1 teaspoon of salt

Filling

- 200g of walnuts
- 200g of sesame seeds
- 200g of grated cardamom
- White sugar to taste

Instructions

1. Combine the milk, sugar and yeast, give it a little stir then let it sit for 5 minutes
2. Combine the flour and salt with the yeast mixture in a large bowl
3. Stir until smooth
4. Let the dough rest for 10 minutes, it will rise
5. Separate the dough into small balls and let it sit another 10 minutes
6. While the dough rises, prepare the filling by mixing together the ground walnuts, sugar, sesame seeds and cardamom
7. Flatten each ball of dough using your thumbs
8. Mold the dough into a bowl shape and fill it with a teaspoon or two of the filling
9. Fold the dough in half and press the edges together
10. Make small folds all around the edges to make sure the filling is nicely packaged inside the dough
11. Place the finished pieces on a baking sheet and bake at 200° Celsius for 10 minutes
12. Remove from oven and serve



“Having learned how to bake bread and sweets, I now help my mother at home when she prepares food.”

– Sumayyah*, 17

BASBOUSA

A delicious semolina cake that serves as famous Arabic dessert, this Iraqi version is best paired with hot coffee or tea

Servings: 5



Ingredients

Cake

- 1 cup of shredded coconut
- ½ cup of melted butter
- ¾ cups of vegetable oil
- 1 cup of yogurt
- 1/3 cup of sugar
- 2 cups of course ground semolina
- 1 teaspoon of baking powder
- 1 teaspoon of baking soda
- 1 cup of plain yogurt
- Almond slivers(optional)



Cake Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 150° Celsius
2. Combine the semolina, baking soda, baking powder, coconut, sugar and melted butter
3. Mix until combined
4. Add the yogurt and keep mixing
5. Press the cake batter into a baking dish, make sure the surface is flat before baking
6. Using a knife, carefully score the top of the batter to create diamonds or other desired piece shapes
7. If desired, add an almond sliver on each diamond-shaped piece
8. Bake for 30 minutes or until golden brown
9. Remove the cake from the oven and cut through the scored lines for diamond-shaped cake pieces



Syrup

- 2 cups of sugar
- 1 ½ cups of water
- 1 tsp lemon juice



Syrup Instructions

1. In a small pan over medium heat, stir the sugar into the water until dissolved
2. Add the lemon juice
3. Bring to a boil and then remove from heat
4. Allow to cool for 30 minutes
5. Pour syrup evenly over the cake
6. Allow the cake to absorb all the syrup
7. Serve



GHRIBA OR SHAKALMA

Vanilla macaroons best served in the afternoon or at night with hot coffee or tea

Servings: 5



Ingredients

- 1 kilogram of almond flour
- 4 egg yolks
- ½ kilogram of margarine
- ¼ kilogram of granulated sugar
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- Zest of 1 lemon (optional)

Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 200° Celsius
 2. Combine the flour, sugar and baking powder in a bowl
 3. Add the vanilla extract, egg yolks and optional lemon zest, stir
 4. Break up the butter in your hands and add to the bowl
 5. Mix all ingredients until a dough is formed
 6. Knead the dough until it is fully combined and feels sticky
 7. Cool in the refrigerator for half an hour, or in the freezer for 10 minutes
 8. Remove the chilled dough from refrigerator and
 9. Form small balls out of the dough (do not flatten the cookies)
 10. Place dough balls on a baking sheet
 11. Bake for 10-12 minutes, the cookies should still be a pale color
 12. Remove from the oven and leave the cookies on the tray for 5 minutes to finish setting, then move them to a cooling rack
 13. Once cooled, serve
- Note: Ghriba will keep for 1-2 weeks at room temperature, and up to 3 months in the freezer.





Asma's reflection on learning how to bake, connecting with other women and starting her own bakery

“ We rely on [monthly cash support] to run our daily errands and this has been causing me a lot of stress.

I really liked participating in the baking activities. Adding walnuts to the cake mix was something I never thought about. I wrote down the recipe and now always make it at home. I also learned how to make beehive pastry, which is quite delicious as well. My children are always very happy when I bring them home from the activities, as I can't buy the ingredients in the camp otherwise.

I learned to make other kinds of pastries too, like baklava, stuffed dough with cheese, lahm b'ajin, pizza...my children love it and leave nothing behind. So, I continue to make it at home.

Whenever we used to bake cake, I would be reminded of making cakes in my own house ...any kitchen tool, even a spoon reminds me of my own kitchen.

In the bakery sessions, I met a lot of women who became my friends. We talk about life, recipes; we laugh and share stories; this I always remember. Participating [in this MLI activity] opened my eyes to many things; I not only learned how to bake and cook, but I learned so much from other women, as well – many things I didn't know about before. I loved trying out new things, it changed my mood. I'm thankful for the opportunity – to be able to leave the tent and do something purposeful feels great.

Lately, I also discovered that I'm good at making Tanoor bread, as the neighboring ladies always ask for my bread. This led me to realize that I can make anything work if I practice enough, and hopefully in the future, I can open a business preparing meals or making sweets for others in my community.

If I weren't in a camp, I'd open this business for myself and to meet my family's needs from the income I would make.”

KUNAFI WITH ALEPPO PISTACHIO, MOZZARELLA AND CREAM

A famous Middle Eastern dessert that crunchy, sweet and cheesy

Servings: 5



Ingredients

Kunafa

- 1 cup of milk
- 3 tablespoons of cornstarch
- 2 tablespoons of sugar
- 600 g mozzarella cheese, high moisture (min 50%)
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup of thick cream
- $\frac{1}{2}$ kilogram of kataifi dough (shredded phyllo dough)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ kilogram of melted butter
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1 heaping tablespoon of granulated sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup crushed pistachios to garnish



Syrup

- 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups of sugar
- 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups of water
- 1 squeeze of juice from $\frac{1}{2}$ a lemon



Kunafa Instructions

1. Mix milk, cornstarch, sugar and mozzarella in a bowl until combined, texture should be creamy
2. Add the mixture to a small pan and place over low heat until the texture becomes thick and creamy
3. Add the thick cream into the mixture and stir
4. Remove from heat and set aside
5. Preheat the oven to 200° Celsius
6. Chop the kataifi dough in a blender
7. Mix in butter, sugar and cinnamon
8. Add ½ of the kataifi mixture into a baking dish greased with margarine
9. Spread the Kunafa filling evenly over the kataifi layer
10. Add the remaining ½ of the kataifi mixture over the filling as the final layer
11. Bake for 40-50 minutes or until the outside is deeply golden and crispy

Syrup Instructions

1. While the Kunafa is cooking, combine the water, sugar and lemon juice in a small saucepan
2. Place the pan over high heat and allow the mixture to come to a boil
3. Once boiling, lower heat and simmer for 10 minutes, making sure the sauce doesn't overthicken
4. Turn off the heat and let it cool to room temperature
5. When the Kunafa is done baking, immediately drizzle it with about ¾ of the simple syrup, covering the full surface – reserve the rest of the syrup for those wanting extra on their serving
6. Allow the Kunafa to cool and absorb the syrup for at least 10 minutes
7. Garnish with pistachios
8. Cut into pieces and serve



BAKLAVA

A fan favorite served on holidays or other special occasions with coffee or tea

Servings: 5



Ingredients

Baklava

- 270g of phyllo dough
- 3 tablespoons of honey
- 0.85 cups of butter
- ½ cup of vegetable ghee

- ¼ cup of vegetable oil
- ¾ cups of pistachios
- ¼ cup of honey

Syrup

- 1 cup of water
- 1.5 cups of sugar
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon

Instructions

1. Grind half of the pistachios until they are fine
2. Crush the other half of the pistachios
3. Place all the pistachios in a mixing bowl, add the honey and stir
4. Set aside
5. In another mixing bowl, melt the butter, vegetable oil and ghee together and stir until combined
6. Set aside
7. Preheat the oven to 180° Celsius
8. Add 8 layers of phyllo dough in an oven-safe pan greased with butter; brushing the surface of each layer lightly with butter mixture
9. Spread a thin layer of the honey and pistachio mixture
10. Add two layers of phyllo dough, each brushed with the butter mixture, then add another thin layer of pistachio mixture
11. Repeat until all of the pistachio mixture is used up
12. between the 8 layers of the Baklava.
13. Add another 8 layers of phyllo dough, brushing each lightly with the butter mixture
14. Score into square pieces
15. Put in the oven and bake for 20-30 minutes, until the surface is golden brown
16. While the baklava is baking, combine the water, sugar, honey and cinnamon in a small saucepan
17. Place the pan over high heat and allow the mixture to come to a boil
18. Once boiling, lower the heat and simmer for 10 minutes, making sure the syrup doesn't overthicken
19. Turn off the heat and let it cool to room temperature
20. Remove baklava from the oven when ready
21. Drizzle syrup to taste over the baklava
22. Serve



BEEHIVE DESSERT

Get creative with the fillings of this fluffy treat, often served with afternoon tea

Servings: 5



Ingredients

Dough

- 3 cups of flour
- 4 tablespoons of sugar
- ¼ cup of vegetable oil
- 1 cup of milk
- ¼ cup of water
- 1 tablespoon of instant yeast
- 1 teaspoon of salt



Filling

- 200g of grated cocoa bars, mozzarella cheese or any desired filling



“I love the Beehives. I’ve always loved how they taste, and now I know how to make them myself.”

– Mustafa*, 16

Instructions

1. Mix all the ingredients of the dough together until well combined
2. Cover the dough and let it rest for 30 minutes until it doubles in size
3. Form dough into small balls
4. Use your greased hands to flatten each ball, stuff it with filling mixture and close it back up
5. Place the filled dough balls adjacent to each other in an oven-safe pan
6. Bake at 180° Celcius for 30 minutes
7. Serve



Intithar finds hope through baking, connecting with and helping others

“ It was such a fun time learning new things and building friendships that continued beyond the activities. The women that I met through the baking workshop now often gather and visit each other, which improves everyone’s mood. We no longer feel like we’re in a camp or alone.

In the IOM workshop, I learned to make lahm b’ajin at home, and my family loves it, but for me, I love the cakes. Cakes remind me of my father, how he always used to care for me and bring me cakes and sweets when I was little.

Before participating, I was in a poor psychological state; I often felt bored and tired, I wasn’t moving forward with anything. I just felt despair, but when I participated in the baking activity, I felt that there was still hope – that there are kind people around me who, when I talk to them, make me feel better. The activities encouraged me and made me feel stronger, they showed me that am responsible and capable of doing things.

I am thinking about selling cakes inside the camp, as they taste way better than the ones you find in the stores here. It’s the special touch a cook puts into their recipes that makes homemade food so delicious. But I need financing and more practice, which I hope to obtain in the future.

My neighbor was thinking about making a cake for her son; he loves cake with layers separated by cream. I told her I could make it for them, so I baked and decorated the cake and prepared custard as well, which made the whole family very happy. I was glad to give them this cake and make them happy as a family”

DONUTS

An Iraqi take on this popular pastry

Servings: 5



Ingredients

- 1 cup of warm liquid milk
- ¼ cup of sugar
- 1 tablespoon of instant yeast
- 3 ½ cups of flour
- 1 teaspoon of salt
- 2 eggs
- ¼ cup of butter
- Vegetable oil for frying

Instructions

1. Mix all the ingredients together until they combined
2. Form the dough into rings
3. Heat oil in pan over medium heat
4. Fry the dough in the oil in batches, flipping when the side submerged in oil becomes golden brown
5. Place on paper towel-lined plate to absorb excess oil
6. Leave to cool
7. If desired, sprinkle with sugar or decorate with topping of choice
8. Serve





Sfouk's determination to open a sweets shop

“ A year ago, I came to live in this camp. I had nothing to do but sit inside the tent. In fact, I was sitting in my tent when I heard about the MLI project and decided to register after encouragement from my family.

At first, I applied for the carpentry workshop, but according to the information you provide during registration, you are selected to join the most suitable training for you. I ended up in cooking.

Even before the training, I loved to cook. I help make salads at home, and sometimes I guide my wife on how to cook recipes. This past experience has helped me get more involved in the cooking workshop, so the two enjoyable months passed quickly.

Frankly, at the beginning, when I first came to the centre, I was not convinced to participate in the training. But through my participation, I learned a lot and began making what I learned for my family at home. I learned to make a lot of different kinds of food and became especially proficient in making bread. The basbousa recipe was my favorite! It's very tasty, and I always loved making it, so it has become a special dish at home.

I also learned a lot during the psychosocial sessions about stress management, like how to calm yourself when you feel stressed, how to behave with your children and family and how to control your feelings. These are things I wasn't aware of before. At the psychological level, managing anxiety and self-control were two very important new things to learn. Time passed quickly – the two-month period was short.

Before the MLI project, I was so bored because I had nothing to do. Now I have found something to turn into a business, bring food to my family and spend my time productively. I have become focused on my source of livelihood, and I want to try to cook everything. What urged me to start opening a business is my family. I have two children and I must support them. If I do not have a source of livelihood, how will my family live?

I would like to open a sweets shop – I have the skill and motivation, and I want to try to make all the recipes that I learned from start to finish, as during the training, each of us would make just a part of the recipe, supporting each other and the process.

The most important thing I took away from this experience is self-confidence and the feeling that I can manage my own business, deal with customers and not feel hesitant to communicate. Now, I have enough confidence and control over the decisions I make to open a business.

At the MLI training, we were 15 loving people; we were smiling and cooperative, and there were no disagreements. I had a lot of fun and made friends, and during the weekends I did not know what to do without them, so I would meet with my friends from the workshop to spend time. Until now, we frequently visit each other's tents and are forming long-term relationships.

TEA BISCUITS

Served with – you guessed it – afternoon tea

Servings: 5



Ingredients

- 3 cups of flour
- 1 cup of sugar
- 1 cup of vegetable oil
- 2 eggs
- 2 teaspoons of baking powder
- 1 teaspoon of vanilla powder
- ½ teaspoon of salt
- 2 tablespoons of cocoa powder
- 2 tablespoons of liquid milk
- Sugar for coating (to taste)

Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 150° Celcius
2. Mix all the ingredients except the coating sugar until combined
3. Form the dough into round biscuit shapes by hand, or use molds to create other shapes
4. Place on a baking sheet and put the baking sheet in the oven
5. Bake for 12 minutes
6. Serve



Saif finds joy in bringing home sweets to his family

“ We often feel trapped in our tents. We might be able to walk around the camp, but still, it's a suffocating routine. Coming here [to the centre] and meeting people, getting to know the staff too, was such a good time. Attending the activities helped me make connections, engage more, break my shyness and release some of my stress.

In the baking workshop, I enjoyed making Baklava, which I used to think was difficult to make. But after trying, I realized that it's easy! It made my children so happy, even my brother's family and my neighbors liked what I made, so my brother is participating in the activities now, too.

Even if I won't be able to make a living out of this skill, seeing my children happy is enough for me. Seeing their smiling faces as I bring them something new every day is priceless.”



“In the sessions that combined cooking and mental health, we learned how to deal with pressure and stress, and how to rely on ourselves and others to feel better.”

– Fatima*, 22

ORANGE CAKE

Served with juice when guests visit

Servings: 5



Ingredients

- 1/2 an orange, with peel
- Juice of half an orange
- 1 ½ cups of sugar
- 1 cup of vegetable oil
- 4 eggs
- 3 ½ cup of flour
- 2 tablespoons of baking powder

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 180°C
2. Add the orange, orange juice, sugar, vegetable oil and eggs to an electric blender and blend until creamy
3. Add orange mixture to mixing bowl
4. Fold flour into the orange mixture and stir until combined and creamy
5. Add batter into baking pan and place in oven
6. Bake for 35 minutes
7. Remove and leave to cool for 30 minutes
8. Decorate as desired



Sigar's newfound community and confidence

“ I'm Amira, and this is my son, Sigar.* He is 22.

A mother knows everything about her children. I knew that Sigar could do a lot. There is no one like him in this world. Wherever he goes, I do not worry about him. He is smart and God fearing. So, I spoke to the director at the MHPSS community centre and told him that I wanted my son to join the cooking courses. He agreed. Then, I went and spoke to IOM's team, requesting that my son attends the trainings. I told them that Sigar has disabilities – he cannot hear or speak – but he is smart. I told them that, yes, he might not have a voice, nor can he hear, but he has a brain, and the team agreed for him to join the training. Sigar learned quickly.

He says that his favorite dish that he learned from the cooking courses was the dolma. Our whole family loves Dolma except for me. I only love kibbeh.

Sigar also loves baking cake and baklava – he helps me cook at home now and competes with his sisters in the kitchen.

When he started going to the cooking sessions, he became better psychosocially than how he was when he was just staying home before. Sigar became more confident, telling me that when he gets married, he will teach his wife to cook and make sweets.

Sigar didn't have friends before the cooking activities because of his disability, he used to just stay home. By participating in the MLI activity, he made many friends and began to feel more comfortable as he got to know more people and interact with them.

Sigar says he is happy participating in the training because his heart is at ease during the sessions. He learns new things and feels cheerful. He makes sweets and eats them, and he feels happy when he brings sweets home to his sisters.

He says he wants to learn more in the future about sweets and the different ways of making them. He also wants to open a sweets shop or business in the future, specializing in making chocolate cakes and zalabiya, and also open a sandwich shop, as he is used to making them with his sisters since he was young.

* Amira translated as Sigar signed

BLACK CAKE

Served with juice when guests visit

Servings: 5



Ingredients

Cake

- 1 cup of vegetable oil
- 1 cup of liquid milk
- 1 cup of sugar
- 4 eggs
- 1 ½ cups of flour
- 4 tablespoons of cocoa powder
- Butter or ghee for greasing pan

Icing

- 1 cup of liquid milk
- 1 cup of sugar
- 4 tablespoons of raw cocoa powder
- 1 teaspoon of salt

Cake Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 180°C
2. Mix all the ingredients except butter/ghee together in a blender until creamy
3. Put the mixture in a cake pan greased with butter or vegetable ghee
4. Bake for 30 minutes

Icing Instructions

1. Mix ingredients together in mixing bowl until combined
2. Add to a small pot and place over low heat
3. Stir gently for 5 minutes, then remove from heat
4. Let it cool for about 30 minutes
5. Pour evenly over the cake
6. Serve





Badriyah is the head of a family of six living in Hassan Sham camp for the internally displaced:

After years of living in displacement camps, I got really tired of everything. My husband suffered from kidney failure and needed frequent dialysis. He passed away in the camp; I was left with the responsibility of taking care of my children and three of my orphaned grandchildren as well. I often sat at home and just thought — over and over — about things I no longer had or could control, like my previous life, my difficult situation in the camp, the burden of taking care of the family alone.

Life in a camp has been suffocating. There is an electricity shortage, a water shortage, a lack of services. In summer it is too hot and in winter it is too cold, and the tent needs to be reinforced with new covers. This year we had to buy reinforcements for 120,000 IQD. That's a lot of money for us. I really needed a change.

I heard from a friend that IOM was offering a bakery training and mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS). I immediately signed up. And ever since I joined, I have been loving every bit of it. In this bakery workshop, we come together with other women to learn and bake together. We talk, we laugh, we listen to each other. We spend our time on something useful. This helps us cope with our lives better. It helps me alleviate and release my tension and stress.

I really like coming here because there is a dedicated space with equipment and all the necessary bakery items for us to use. We don't have ovens and pastry items in our tents. I used to do sweets and pastries at home, but it was very basic, and I did not have a good understanding of how the ingredients work — the measurements, the oven degrees, etc. I could not make baklava. I learned these things here during the training. Now I can do baklava, lahmajun, sweets, pastries and more. And at the end of each day's training, we take home what we have baked for the day, and it makes the children really happy.



In addition to the bakery training, Badriyah and other trainees participated in MHPSS sessions to develop soft skills and coping mechanisms to mitigate and manage work-related psychosocial challenges and stressors.

Many people in the camp need MHPSS, especially the youth and women. Our youth are in a state of collapse. There is no employment, no recreational activities, no sports, no parks; in short, there is nothing to keep them busy. They cannot go outside to work, and daily work opportunities inside the camp are very scarce. This is very hard, and it has affected everyone's psychology greatly.

"I am very happy that I took part in this MLI training because I learned not only bakery skills, but also other skills that I can apply in my family life to cope with my frustrating life in displacement— for example, problem solving and dealing with difficult situations. These are skills I can apply in every aspect of my life.

This training has helped me develop a positive routine in my daily life: every day, I wake up early in the morning. After morning prayers, I head to the bakery workshop at 8 am, and I don't come back until 11 am. I learn, I chat with my friends, and I take something home for my kids when I return. At the end of the day, I feel I have accomplished something.

I have had the chance to get out of the tent a bit and socialize with my friends and, for a moment, forget about my frustrating life, while bringing home cookies and pastries I made at the workshop for my kids, which makes them really happy."



COLD DESSERT

Served as a special treat in the afternoon or night

Servings: 5



Ingredients

Jell-o

- 1 packet of Jell-o or another powdered gelatin dessert (any flavor)
- 2 cups of water

Cream and Toppings

- 1 cup of milk
- 1 cup of vegetable oil
- 1 cup of sugar
- 1 cup of powder chocolate or vanilla
- ½ kilogram of any type of sweet biscuits

Jell-o Instructions

1. Mix contents of Jell-o packet with 2 cups of water
2. Pour into serving glasses until each is half full
3. Put glasses in refrigerator to cool, leave until firm – about 60 minutes

Cream Instructions

1. Add milk, vegetable oil, sugar and chocolate/vanilla powder to a large bowl
2. Mix the ingredients together using an electric mixer for 2 minutes

Assembly Instructions

1. Remove Jell-o from the refrigerator
 2. Add a layer of biscuits on top of the firm Jell-o
 3. Use a spoon to add cream to the top of each glass
 4. Crumble remaining biscuits over the cream
- Note: Cream ingredients (milk, vegetable oil, sugar, and powder chocolate/vanilla) can be replaced with 1 packet of Chantilly cream flavoring. Follow instructions of the packet to make.



INTEGRATING MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT WITH LIVELIHOODS

People affected by conflict and displacement often face stressors that make it difficult to work and make a living. Integrating mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) into livelihoods projects helps participants build and strengthen coping mechanisms and essential social, life and other soft skills to mitigate and manage work-related psychosocial challenges.

To this end, IOM's MHPSS programme in Iraq developed the MHPSS and Livelihood Integration (MLI) approach to address mental health and livelihood needs at the same time. Through MLI support, workers can gain increased self-confidence, decreased emotional distress and better mental health.

On their own, livelihood activities improve mental well-being by giving people a sense of productivity and agency, but when complemented by MHPSS elements, they can further enhance self-efficacy and assist participants to take full advantage of work opportunities, engaging in them more meaningfully and sustainably.

In Hassan Sham U3 camp – where families have been living in displacement for over half a decade – an increased need for MHPSS and a lack of livelihood opportunities despite amplified need have made MLI programming particularly timely.

Current MLI projects in the camp, including the bakery workshop from this recipe book emerged, offer MHPSS awareness sessions, peer-support groups and counseling to workshop participants.

Through tailored psychosocial support, participants learn about stress-management, self-care, problem-solving, self-confidence and other topics that enhance their positive coping mechanisms and management of daily life at work and at home. At the same time, they form strong social support networks with others participating in the livelihood and psychosocial support.



The MLI bakery workshop addresses immediate needs in Hassan Sham U3 camp – where food shortages are common – while also supporting the IDPs to improve their mental well-being and develop essential work-related skills that can support them in securing employment once they return to their areas of origin.

BIL AFIA

TRADITIONAL RECIPES FROM IRAQ

Written by Sarah Gold
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