

Elahe's KASHK-O BADEMJAN – Kashk Aubergine (Iran)



Picture Credit: Federico Rivas

This mouth-watering aubergine dish is all the way from Iran, made by Elahe who came to the UK as a refugee in 2006. Kashk-o Bademjan or Kashk Aubergine is one of her much-loved dishes she loves to share. With its celebratory garnish and served with Middle Eastern flatbread, it works well as a starter or side dish.

'I feel alive when I'm cooking. Food is an important way for me to stay connected to my past and to my country.' says Elahe, whose happiest memories are associated with food. *'I remember as a child waking up to the smell of my grandmother's cooking and the beautiful aromas as she mixed together the ingredients in the early mornings.'*

Adjusting to life as a refugee in the UK was hard for Elahe, a mother of 3, but food became her creative outlet as she worked to overcome language barriers, loneliness and being unable to work as a psychologist. With her daughter Parastoo as a helping hand, she started to work with Migrateful UK – an organisation helping refugees and migrants to run their own cookery classes. Here she started to gain self-confidence and found purpose again.

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FULL RECIPE

Ingredients

6 medium aubergines
2 large onion, sliced
5 garlic cloves, crushed



1 tbsp turmeric
1 tsp salt
½ tsp pepper
Vegetable oil

Garnish

1 bulb garlic – cloves sliced into slithers
2 onions, thinly sliced
½ cup walnuts, chopped
1 tsp turmeric
2 tbsp dried mint
A few sprigs of Fresh mint (optional)
1 cup kashk (liquid whey protein) *available from Turkish or Iranian shops*
Pinch saffron soaked in 2 tbsp boiling water

Method

Cut the top off the aubergines, peel them, and then slice in lengthwise into 4 slices. Heat vegetable oil in a frying pan and fry the aubergine slices with a little salt until soft and golden. You may need to do this in batches. Remove with a slotted spoon and set aside.

If there is no oil left in the pan, heat 3 tbsp oil and fry the sliced onions and garlic until golden. Then add turmeric, salt, pepper.

Add fried aubergines back in the pan. Add 150 ml boiling water and allow the mixture to cook for 15 – 20 minutes on medium/low heat. Mash the aubergine to create a puree.

Put the aubergine and onion mix onto a flat serving plate.

Mix the kashk with a little with water to make a thick cream

Spoon the kashk onto the aubergine in thin lines to make a large checked board with squares in which to place the different garnishes.

For the garnish, gently fry the garlic slithers until light golden colour. Be careful not to burn.

Separately, fry the onion slices until golden

In a small pan, heat 4 tbsp veg oil and then flash fry the turmeric, pepper & dried mint for just 30 secs to extract flavour. Throw in the fresh mint leaves for the last 5 seconds. Remove from heat.

Fill each square with either walnuts, onion, garlic or the turmeric oil.

Finally, drizzle decoratively with saffron water.