

Hayat's Halawit Aljoben (Syria)



Picture Credit: Paul Mercer / Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre

This sweet treat called Halwait Aljoben is a recipe from Hayat, a refugee from Syria. When Hayat first arrived in the UK, making and sharing her own Syrian dishes helped her to settle into her new hometown of Coventry.

Each part of the Syria has its own unique version of Halawait Aljoben. Hayat first learnt this recipe from her grandmother and it reminds her of everything which she loves about Syria, including the long trip to visit her grandmother, who would always prepare this for their arrival. The ritual in Hayat's family for welcoming visitors includes offering Arabic coffee and tea, followed by lunch - and dinner!

At the end of a meal desserts like Halwait Aljoben are always offered around. It's a famous dish in Hama and Homs and a must-try for anyone visiting Syria.

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(Recipe taken from @crmccoventry [A Taste of Syria](#) cookbook)

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FULL RECIPE

Ingredients

1 cup water
1 cup sugar
1 cup semolina (medium sized)
500g double cream
500g soft mozzarella cheese
2 tablespoons of rose water



1 tablespoon of blossom water
100g pistachio nuts (grated)

Method

Wash the mozzarella (to get rid of the salt). Then grate and leave to dry. Boil the water in a cooking pot. Then add the sugar and leave to simmer for about 10 minutes until it becomes a syrup a bit like honey. Set aside some of this syrup. When dry, add the mozzarella to the rest of the syrup you just made.

Keep stirring the cheese into the syrup on a medium heat until it dissolves. Add the semolina gradually and stir constantly on a low heat for 10 minutes. Just before turning off the heat, add the rose and blossom water and stir for one minute.

Spread a layer of cling film (50 cm long) on a flat working surface. First spread some of the syrup that you set aside onto the cling film. Then spread the hot doughy mixture on top (the dough needs to be hot so you can spread it). Pour some syrup over the dough.

Cover the dough with another layer of cling film. Press down with your hands on the cling film until the dough is about half cm high. Remove the cling film from the top of the dough.

Add the double cream to the top of the dough and roll the dough twice. Cut the roll into small or medium pieces; then, put it in the fridge for one hour till it becomes solid.

Before serving it cold, sprinkle grated pistachio nuts and add some syrup (optional) on top.