

FOREWORD

Bulema, Fritada, Boyos, Travados are words that bring to life the spirit of the Spanish Jewish heritage that is disappearing.

The Sephardi cuisine reflects the cuisine and tradition of the Spanish Jews until their expulsion from Spain in 1492. The Castilian refugees established themselves initially in North Africa, Greece, Turkey, and Palestine.

Whilst intrinsically keeping their inherent Spanish heritage the fabric of the Sephardi culinary tradition was enriched by the influences of the new countries they settled in. Though these dishes have evolved they are basically unchanged for centuries. To the present day they maintained their colloquial language Ladino that contains a medieval base, and numerous Hebrew words.

Indeed, the Spanish of Castille, Ladino and the Sephardi cuisine are the sole living relics of the lost fatherland. It is for this reason that I have included a Ladino-English glossary, and brief introduction not only to the cuisine but also to the customs, landmarks of Sephardic life, and preparations of dishes pertaining to the religious festivals. The preparation of traditional dishes handed over from mother to daughter, have been weaving the same pattern of colour and flavour of fifteenth century Spain.

Basically a peasant cuisine, it relies on the simple excellence of the natural produce and basic ingredients and on the ingenuity and patient skill required in creating interesting dishes. The obligations of hospitality are second nature to the Sephardim. No effort is spared. Hours will be spent stuffing vegetables, folding pastry around fillings, and preparing sweetmeats perfumed with orange flower essence.

It is deemed a great honour when the guest compliments the hostess with words "Manus Bendichas", May your hands be blessed.

In a changing world, this great heritage, time consuming and laborious, but delightfully exciting and an integral part of the Sephardi past, is to be cherished and perpetuated.

Komi kon gana—beracha I salut! Amen.

STELLA COHEN

Chairlady

SEPHARDI LADIES ZIMBABWE

LADINO — ENGLISH GLOSSARY

The short glossary of Ladino words is given mainly for interest which could heighten your understanding of Sephardi cookery, and your pleasure in sampling this historic cuisine. These words originally written in Hebrew script, are spelt phonetically.

SPECIFIC FOODS

almonds	— almendras	lemons	— limon
apple	— mansana	lentils	— lentejas
apricots	— kayisi	leeks	— prassa
aubergines	— berendjenas	lettuce	— letchuwa
beetroot	— pandjar	macaroni	— makarones
brains	— meoyo	marrows	— kalavasa
broad beans	— avas freskas	milk	— letche
butter	— manteka	mint	— menta
cabbage	— kol	oil	— azeite
carrots	— safanorya	olives	— azetunas
cauliflower	— karnabit	onions	— sevoyas
celery	— apyo	oranges	— portogal
cheese	— kezo	orange blossom water	— agua di flor
chick peas	— garvansos	pine kernels	— pignon
cold chicken	— gayina yelada	potatoes	— patatas
crushed wheat	— bulgur	pumpkin pips	— pepitas
cucumber	— pipino	quince preserve	— bimbriyo
dates	— datles	rice	— arroz
dough	— massa	radishes	— ravanikos
doughnuts	— burmwelos	rose water	— agua di konja
eggs	— uevos	spinach	— pazi
figs	— igo	spring onions	— sevoyas freskas
flour	— arina	sugar beans	— barbunyas
food	— komida	tomatoes	— tomates
fresh fruit	— fruta fresca	tongue	— aluenga
garlic	— ajo	vine leaves	— ojas di parra
ginger	— gingivre	walnuts	— almuez
green beans	— fasulyas	water	— agua
honey	— miel	yeast	— levadura
haricot beans	— avas	yoghurt	— yogurt
ladies fingers	— bamyas		

COOKING METHODS AND GENERAL FOODSTUFFS

baked	— al orno	meat	— karne
boiled	— bouillido	pickles	— salamuras
bread	— pan	salad	— salata
chicken	— gayina	savoury pastries	— desayuno
drinks	— bevidas	soup	— supas
fried	— frito	steamed	— abafado
greens	— vedruras	stews	— komidas
grilled	— asado	stuffed	— reynados
legumes	— legumbres	sweets	— dulces
marzipan	— masapan		

AJADA — GARLIC DIP

½ loaf stale white bread — crusts removed, soaked in water and squeezed dry.
1 egg

2 cloves garlic-crushed
1 cup oil
salt and pepper
juice of 1 lemon

Place bread, egg, garlic and seasoning in a liquidiser and blend well, adding oil gradually as for mayonnaise. Lastly add lemon juice to taste.

— 0 —

ALBONDIGAS DE KEZO — CHEESE FRICADELLES

6 slices stale bread-crusts removed soaked and squeezed dry.
2 eggs

1 cup grated cheese
salt and pepper
flour for coating

Sauce:

1 tablespoon butter
1 teaspoon flour dissolved in 1 cup water

salt and pepper

Mix bread, eggs, cheese and seasoning well. Shape into balls and coat in flour. In a saucepan bring sauce ingredients to the boil. Add cheese balls and cook for 10 minutes shaking the saucepan to prevent the fricadelles from sticking to the bottom.

Serve immediately.

— 0 —

ANTIPASTO

2 tins tuna (optional)
1 tin flat anchovies (optional)
1 kg can tomato puree
1 cup peas (10 minutes)
1 cup celery (5 minutes)
1 cup cauliflower (10 minutes)
1 cup green beans (5 minutes)

1 cup carrots (5 minutes)
1 cup courgettes (5 minutes)
1 cup pickled gherkins - sliced
1 cup green olives (optional)
3 teaspoons capers (optional)
3 cups cider vinegar
3 cups water

Slice and boil each vegetable separately in the vinegar and water until tender but still quite crisp (time indicated above). Drain. Mix altogether. Add tomato puree and cook for a few minutes. When cold, add tuna, anchovies, pickled cucumbers, olives and capers. Store in a glass jar and refrigerate.

— 0 —

BURMUELOS DE PATATA — FRIED POTATO PATTIES

4 large potatoes-boiled and mashed
4 eggs-beaten
1 cup grated cheese

salt and pepper
oil for deep frying

Mix all ingredients together thoroughly. Drop tablespoonfuls of mixture into hot oil and fry until golden. Drain on absorbent paper.

Sponsored by Myrna Benatar

DJAJIK — GARLIC MAYONNAISE DIP

1½ cups plain yoghurt
4 cloves garlic-crushed

1 small cucumber-finely chopped salt

Sprinkle a little salt over the chopped cucumber and allow to drain for 30 minutes. Meanwhile blend all other ingredients in a bowl and chill for 1 hour. Combine with drained cucumber. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

— 0 —

MEYOY CON SALSA DE TOMAT — FRIED BRAINS IN TOMATO SAUCE

2 sets calves' brains
salt and pepper

water to cover

For Frying:

flour and beaten egg for coating

oil for shallow frying

Sauce:

1 cup tomatoes-skinned, seeded and chopped
1 tablespoon oil

½ cup water
juice of ½ lemon
salt and pepper

Soak brains in cold water for 15 minutes. Remove membrane and cook in boiling, salted water for 5 minutes. Drain and cut into slices. Coat with flour and egg and fry until golden brown.

Bring all sauce ingredients to the boil, add fried brains and simmer for a few minutes.

— 0 —

MEYOY FRITO — FRIED BRAINS

2 sets calves' brains
water to cover

salt and pepper

For frying:

flour and beaten egg
for coating

oil for shallow frying

Soak brains in cold water for 15 minutes. Remove membrane and cook in boiling salted water for 5 minutes. Drain and cut into slices. Coat with flour and egg and fry until golden brown.

— 0 —

MWEZ TOSTADA — ROASTED NUTS

500g nuts-shelled (any nuts of your choice)

1 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons water

Dissolve salt in water. Place nuts on a baking tray. Sprinkle salt water over the nuts. Roast at 120°C for 30 minutes until slightly browned, stirring frequently. Cool and store in an airtight jar.

Pumpkin pips may be prepared in the same way. Roasting time — 15 minutes.

Sponsored by Sarah Benatar

PALAMIDA – SALTED FISH

1 kg. bonito or yellowtail on bone	lemon juice
coarse salt to cover	oil

Wash fish and slice into 5 cm pieces. Sprinkle all sides with coarse salt. Pack tightly into a glass bowl and cover with a plate weighted with a stone. Place in refrigerator. Drain water daily for 4-5 days adding a little more salt each time. Pack each portion individually in foil and freeze. Slice frozen fish thinly, pour lemon juice and oil over and allow to thaw before serving.

— 0 —

TARAMA – FISH ROE

1 heaped tablespoon smoked fish roe	1 cup oil
2 slices white bread—crusts	juice of 1 lemon
removed, soaked in water and squeezed dry	1 egg (optional)

Place bread, roe and egg in an electric mixer and beat vigorously, adding oil gradually. When creamy add lemon juice and if the consistency is too thick add a little water. Store in a sealed glass container in the refrigerator.

— 0 —

YALANGI DE PARRA – VINE LEAVES STUFFED WITH RICE

1 tin vine leaves
juice of 2 lemons
2 cups water

Filling:

1 cup rice—well washed
1 cup water
2 onions—chopped
1 tomato—skinned, seeded
and chopped
1 teaspoon dill—chopped
1 tablespoon parsley—chopped

STEP 1: Glaze onion in oil. Add rice, tomato, salt, pepper, juice of ½ lemon, 1 cup water and cook slowly, stirring occasionally until well blended. Rice is now only partially cooked and there should be no liquid left at this stage. Add chopped dill and parsley. Allow to cool.

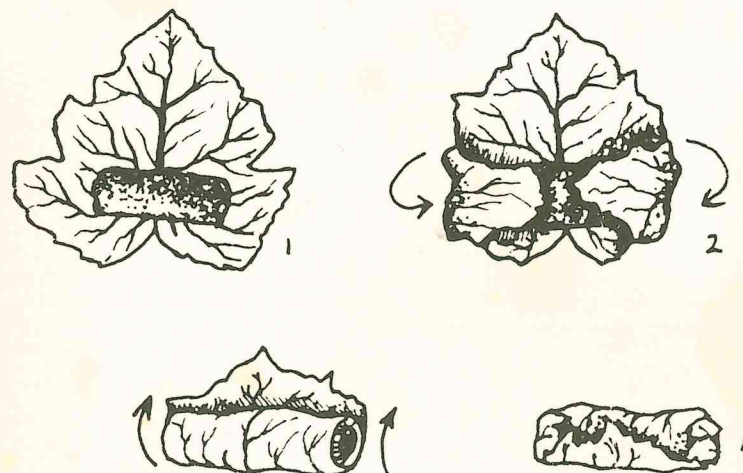
STEP 2: Separate vine leaves and lay on a plate. Take one leaf, shiny side down and place 1 teaspoonful of rice filling along the leaf breadthwise. Fold in outer sides towards the centre and roll the leaf over the filling tucking in the sides as you go. The yalangi should be about the size of your forefinger. Place a layer of tin foil at the bottom of the saucepan to prevent burning and lay the yalangis side by side in layers until the saucepan is half full. Place a plate on top and add lemon juice, a little extra seasoning if required, and cook over medium heat adding 2

Sponsored by Alan Cacace

cups water gradually until the rice is tender and liquid is absorbed. Serve cold. This makes a delicious cocktail snack and can be prepared the day before.

Variation:

Spinach leaves may substitute the vine leaves. Remove stalks, dip into boiling water and drain.



Sponsored by Ray Capouya

ROSH HASHANAH — NEW YEAR

Traditionally on Rosh Hashanah sugar and sweetmeats are placed on the table symbolising sweetness in the New Year. No bitter or sour foods are included in any meal.

It is customary to eat a new fruit of the season and to recite the Blessing over it—Shehechiyanu.

TRADITIONAL FOODS

Apple, Pomegranate — symbolic of abundance

Pumpkin, Leeks, Spinach — vegetables symbolising hope, served in pastries or as fritters

Fish — served with the head

Savoury pastries — rujaldies, boyos, boulemas

Meat or chicken dishes

Desserts.

YOM KIPPUR — DAY OF ATONEMENT

Yom Kippur is the culmination of the ten days of Penitence. Before taking the Fast the traditional custom of Kaparot was performed, where one chicken per member of the family was slaughtered and given to the needy. Today money is donated to charity instead.

Suggested menu to take the Fast

Gayina kon tomat	— Chicken stewed in tomato
Fideo	— vermicelli
Vedruras freskas	— platter of fresh lettuce, celery, carrots, cucumber
Fruta freska	— fresh fruit
Kave Turku	— Turkish coffee

To Break the Fast

Bividas-pepitada, limonada	— beverages-pepitada, orange juice, lemon juice
Roska/pan kon azeyte	— traditional rolls/bread with oil
Pan d'Espagna	— sponge cake
Biskochadas	— yeast rusks
Reshikas	— oil biscuits
Kezo	— cheese
Travados	— almond and honey turnovers

Followed by:

Gayina yelada	— cold chicken
Peshkado frito	— fried fish
Supa de gayina	— chicken soup
Dulses: travados, shamali, masapan, baklava, sharope	— sweets

FIESTAS D'ALLEGRIA — JOYOUS OCCASIONS

The following landmarks of Sephardi life are occasions for great preparations and festivity, where desayuno and dulces are served to the guests.

BRIT MILAH	— the circumcision and naming of male babies.
FADAS	— naming of baby girls.
PIDION HA BEN	— the buying from a Cohen of the firstborn male for 5 silver pieces, 31 days after the birth.
BARMITZVAH	— ceremony to mark the transition from childhood to manhood when tefillin are worn for the first time.
BAGNO DI NOVIA	— rejoicing and the purification by bathing of the bride prior to the marriage where a circular roska is broken above her head. It is customary also to make a large masapan pastel, inside which is placed a precious gift to the bride from the mother/mother-in-law. Traditional songs and dances are performed.
BODA	— wedding. At Sephardi weddings a tallet is placed over the heads of the bride and groom. This custom is becoming widespread.
HANUKAT HABAYIT	— dedicating a home with a mezuzah. It is customary to have a Hanukat Habayit upon moving into a new home and to invite relatives and friends. The mezuzah is affixed and the appropriate blessing recited.

DICHOS SEFARDIES — SEPHARDI EXPRESSIONS

El mazal es redondo, por esto no keda en un lugar.

Haver—solo marido i mujer.

No ay mejor espejo ke un amigo viejo.

Pensando al envierno no se gozo el enverano.

Paga lo ke debes, i saves lo ke tienes.

Dime kon ken vas, ti dire ken sos.

Ande ay bien kerer no ay malmeter.

Echar una yelada para apanyar una kayente.

El corcovado no vey su corcova.

En boca serada no entra moshka.

A ti lo digo mi ija, entiendolo mi muera.

El mazal di la feya la ermosa lo deseya.

Cada uno por si, el Dio por todos.

Ni Pesach sin masa, ni ija sin mazal.

La hora la mas scura es para esclariser.

Amistat di yerno, komo sol d'envierno—sali tadre i se va presto.

Mas vali un pasharo en la mano ke cien bulando.

Mas vali un amigo en la plassa ke mille dollaris en la casha.

La vida es una ves—el ki si la goza savi lo ke es.

Achakis de lo rogado si va i lo ganado.

No ay fuego sin flama.

Una puerta si sera, cien si avrin.

Amigos i ermanos seremos, las bolsas no tokaremos.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many individuals have given me invaluable help and advice in the preparation of the "Sephardi Cuisine". The revised edition of this book would not have been possible without the support of my family.

My husband Victor's strong convictions and enthusiasm were a constant inspiration to me, as were my children Claude and Monique's loving encouragement.

I also wish to extend my gratitude in particular to:

The editing committee for their unflagging enthusiasm and meticulous attention to detail in compiling this book:

Ray Cohen, Katie Dozetos, Ettie Mizrahi and Sarah Piha.

Marc Dozetos, Al Naim, Mary Levinson, Lorraine Hasson and the late Jack Amato for their support and encouragement.

To Marie Hanan, Nelly Israel, Esther Israel, and Rachel Surmany for their advice with certain specialties.

The generosity of the sponsors and their belief in this book.

Our predecessors for their contributions.

The publishers, Religious and Commercial Printers, who assisted in making this possible.

STELLA COHEN

December 1986