



COOK IT, EAT IT, LOVE IT – FOOD BLOG

Recipes, notes and photography from a Dublin based & taste-buds-taught foodie

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COOK IT RECIPES, SOUPS

Pickles turned soup. A little ru dill pickle soup recipe.

MAY 26, 2014 | MARTA | DILL PICKLE SOUP RECIPE, DUBLIN FOOD BLOG, FERMENTATION, FERMENTED DILL PICKLE SOUP RECIPE, FERMENTED FOODS, FOOD BLOG IRELAND, FOOD BLOGGER, IRISH FOOD BLOG, POLISH CUISINE, POLISH RECIPES, SIMPLE SOUP RECIPE, SOUP RECIPE | LEAVE A COMMENT

Hundreds of scientific studies confirm what folklore has always known: Fermented foods bubble with benefits and help you stay healthy!



Since I moved to Ireland, fermented foods have begun to disappear from my plate. Very often Irish pickles are made with vinegar, instead of the traditional method of fermentation using salt, hence killing off all the good bacteria we so desperately need to maintain health. And there are many advantages to going back to eating more fermented foods. “Fermented foods help people stay healthy,” says Sandor Katz in his book “The Art of Fermentation” who very recently visited Ballymaloe Lit Fest.

Here are just a few benefits of eating fermented foods I can think of;

- Fermented foods improve digestion
- Fermented foods restore the proper balance of bacteria in the gut
- Fermented foods are rich in enzymes

- Fermenting food increases the vitamin content
- Eating fermented food helps us to absorb the nutrients we're consuming
- Fermenting food helps to preserve it for longer periods of time. So if you've got a huge batch of produce in your garden that you don't know how to use up — ferment it!
- Fermenting food is inexpensive
- Fermenting food increases the flavour. There's a reason humans enjoy drinking wine and eating stinky cheese :)

I'll be posting more fermented food recipes in the next few months and I hope adding them to your diet will be an easy process. Today let's start with dill pickle soup.

I love dill pickles, grew up on them. If you're into your pickles too, you'll love this hearty, sour and delicious soup with fermented dill pickles as a base. This recipe has been passed on to me by my beloved granny and it is by far my favourite Polish soup.



One word about the type of pickles to use. You can buy good jarred dill pickles in every Eastern European shop but avoid cucumbers pickled with sugar and vinegar. The ones pickled with salt, some garlic, pepper and dill are most suitable or you can use homemade (recipe coming soon).



Ingredients

- 2L chicken stock (I cook it with 2 chicken thighs. For a vegetarian version, use vegetable stock.)
- 4 potatoes, peeled and diced
- 2 carrots, diced
- 1 small parsnip, diced
- 1/2 celeriac, cut into chunks
- 4 bay leaf
- 8 allspices
- chopped fresh dill
- 500g dill pickles, grated
- 1 cup sour cream, at room temperature
- salt and pepper to taste

With that combo of flavours, what's not to love?



Method

To make the stock base: place chicken thighs, carrot, parsnip and celeriac in a large stockpot. Add bay leaf and allspices. Bring to a boil and simmer until the carrots are almost cooked.

Once the carrots are soft, add diced potatoes and grated dill pickles to the mix and cook for a further

25 minutes. Add pickle juice, to taste. At this time, transfer about 1 cup of soup into a bowl. Add sour cream (at room temperature) to the same and mix to combine. Pour the sour cream mixture back into the pot, stir through a few times and turn off the heat. Serve hot with chopped fresh dill.



PS. This is very much a hangover-friendly soup too :)

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COOK IT RECIPES, DUBLIN, POULTRY

Ariana Bundy's finger-lickin' good walnut & pomegranate stew

MAY 24, 2014 | MARTA | ARIANA BUNDY, COOKBOOK, DUBLIN FOOD BLOG, FOOD BLOG IRELAND, IRISH FOOD BLOG, PERSIAN CUISINE, PERSIAN RECIPE, POMEGRANATES AND ROSES, WALNUT AND POMEGRANATE STEW WITH CHICKEN | 1 COMMENT

When I heard that Ariana Bundy is coming to Ballymaloe for the Literary Festival of Food and Wine, I knew I have to go and meet her. And I did! :)



Yotam Ottolenghi, Sami Tamimi and Ariana Bundy

Inspired by Ariana's talk, I came back to Dublin and finally this weekend cooked her amazingly tasty Khoresht Fesenjan, walnut and pomegranate stew with chicken.

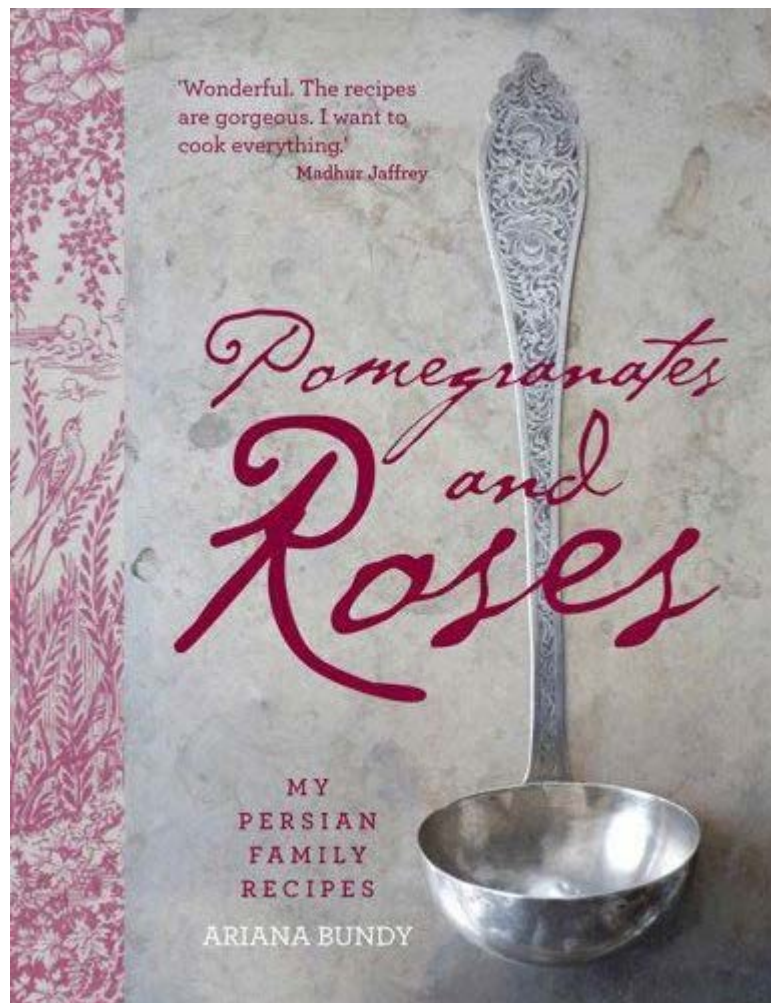
At the Lit Fest I learnt that thousands of years ago Iran (then Persia) was famous for its exotic and rich cuisine and I tell you, it should be now too!



As Ariana said in Ballymaloe, Iranian food differs to other Middle Eastern cuisines because there's no chilli and very little garlic. It's very delicately spiced as Iranians are proud of the freshness of their products. Apparently, there's also a real science behind Iranian cooking: Unani medicine. Persian physician, Hakim Ibn Sina introduced the Persian people to 'hot and cold food' classification through his groundbreaking medical encyclopaedia centuries ago. He believed that people would stay healthy if they balanced the two. This is still integral to Iranian food. "It's similar to the Chinese yin and yang", Ariana explained. "Every dish that's created in Persian cuisine is perfectly balanced. Like Khoresht Fesenjan (walnut and pomegranate stew) for example, the walnuts are hot and the pomegranates are cool."

Here's a recipe which comes from Ariana's latest

book “Pomegranates and Roses. My Persian Family Recipes”.



Ingredients;

- 250g ground walnuts
- 375ml chicken stock
- 4 chicken breasts
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 1 tsp turmeric
- 1 tsp white pepper
- 200ml pomegranate juice
- 3. tbsp pomegranate molasses (Persian brand only, I got mine at Fallon & Byrne but I know you can order it from The Happy Pear too)
- 1. tsp brown sugar
- 4–5 x 10cm (4in) squares of lavashak – I couldn't find it so didn't use it, but I think it's optional anyway
- pinch of saffron threads, pounded then dissolved in 2 tbsp hot water
- 1 tsp sea salt, plus extra to taste
- twist of pepper
- fresh pomegranate seeds to decorate

Method;

Place the ground walnuts in a heavy saucepan and stir constantly over a medium heat until light and golden.

Slightly lower the heat, add the chicken stock, cover and cook for about 20 minutes.

In the meantime, in a frying pan, sear the chicken

breasts with the oil, onion, turmeric and pepper until just golden.

Next add to the walnut mixture, cover and cook for a further 30 minutes on the lowest setting.

Finally, add the pomegranate juice, molasses, sugar, lavashak if using, and cook for another 30 minutes with the lid on.

Add the saffron liquid 10 minutes before the end.

The sauce is ready when it's a lovely dark colour and the chicken is tender.

Sprinkle with pomegranate seeds before serving.

Ariana suggests that if the stew is too sweet, you should add a bit of lemon juice; if it's too sour, add a tad more sugar.

I hope this recipe will encourage you to fall in love with traditional Persian food just as it encouraged me :)



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