

Armenian dishes show Middle Eastern influence

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Armenian cuisine is a cosmopolitan mix of many countries. It was influenced by the Arabs, Persians, Turks, Syrians, Greeks and Jews. Some of the items needed to make Armenian dishes might not be available at your neighborhood grocery store. Here are a few markets recommended by Judy Mardigian and Gary Reizian.

Majestic Market, 25877 Lahser, Southfield, 352-8556; Victor Bakery, 36 Victor, Highland Park, 869-5322; and International Market, 15383 Inkster Road, Livonia, 522-2220.

For cookbooks, call St. John's Armenian Apostolic Church, 22001 Northwestern Highway, Southfield, 569-3405.

RICE PILAF (PRINZOV YEGHINTZ)

2 Tablespoons shortening or clarified butter

1/2 cup finely broken vermicelli

1 cup long grain rice

2 cups hot chicken broth

4 tablespoons butter

1/2 teaspoon salt

freshly ground black pepper to taste

Melt shortening in a two-quart saucepan and add noodles. Saute gently, stirring with a fork to brown evenly. Add rice and cook five minutes longer, stirring occasionally. Add remaining ingredients, except pepper, bring to a boil, cover and simmer 15 minutes or until liquid has been absorbed. Shut flame and set pilaf aside for 10 minutes, covered. Sprinkle with pepper and mix gently. Serve immediately. Makes four servings.

From "Armenian Cooking Today" by Alice Antreassian, (St. Vartan Press, New York).

ARMENIAN CHRISTMAS PUDDING (ANOOŠABOOR)

1 cup skinless whole grain wheat

3 1/2 quarts water

1 cup dried apricots, cut up

1 cup seedless yellow raisins

1/2 cup pistachio nuts, blanched, coarsely chopped. (To blanch nuts, cover with boiling water a few minutes then slip skins off.)

1/4 cup filberts, blanched, coarsely chopped

1/2 cup walnuts coarsely chopped

1/4 cup sugar

2 tablespoons rose water or 1 tablespoon almond extract

GARNISH

1/2 cup almonds, blanched, cut into strips

pomegranate seeds

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

Rinse wheats with cold water, drain, add water, bring to the boil and shut flame. Set aside to soak overnight. The next day cook over a low flame for 1 1/2 hours without stirring. Stir in apricots, raisins, pistachio nuts, filberts, half the walnuts and sugar and cook 30 minutes longer. Shut flame, add rose water or almond extract and stir once.

Heat remaining walnuts in a moderate oven 10 minutes to toast them.

Pour the pudding into individual dishes or a deep serving dish and garnish. Place almonds in a star design in center, decorate with toasted walnuts and pomegranate seeds and sprinkle lightly with cinnamon. Makes 15 servings.

From "Armenian Cooking Today," by Alice Antreassian, (St. Vartan Press, New York).

SPICY MEAT PIES (LAHMAJOON)

MEAT PIE FILLING

1 pound finely ground lean beef. (Can use half lamb, half beef)

1 1/4 can whole tomatoes, drained and crushed

1/2 medium yellow onion, peeled and finely chopped

1/2 teaspoon green bell pepper, cored and finely chopped

1 teaspoon peeled and minced or crushed garlic

1/4 cup finely chopped parsley

1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh mint leaves

1 tablespoon tomato paste

1/2 teaspoon paprika

1/2 teaspoon ground allspice

Salt and pepper to taste

Pinch of cayenne pepper

Mix all together and set aside.

THE DOUGH

1 package quick-rising yeast

1 cup warm water (about 105 degrees)

1 tablespoon olive oil

1/4 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon sugar

2 3/4 cup all-purpose flour

Dissolve the yeast in the water in the bowl of an electric mixer. Stir in the olive oil, sugar, salt, and 1 1/2

cups of the flour. Mix the dough for about 5 minutes until smooth. Knead in the remaining 1 1/4 cups of the flour using the dough hook, and knead until smooth. If you do not have a power/machine, you should knead in this last bit of flour by hand. Knead until dough is very smooth and elastic, about 10 minutes by machine, 20 minutes by hand.

Place the dough on a plastic counter and cover with a large stainless steel bowl. Allow to double in bulk, about 1 1/2 hours.

Punch dough down and shape into 12 balls. Use four balls at a time, placing the remaining balls in the refrigerator. On a lightly floured surface roll each ball into a 6- or 7-inch circle. Do not roll too thin. Arrange circles on two large, lightly greased baking sheets. Allow the dough to rise slightly. Cover the entire surface with a thin layer of the meat mixture, spreading it to about 1/4 inch from the edge. Bake at 375 degrees about 25 to 35 minutes. Do the same with the remaining balls.

From "The Frugal Gourmet On Our Immigrant Ancestors" by Jeff Smith, (William Morrow and Company, Inc.).

cooking calendar

COOKBOOK SIGNING

Rita Udo will be signing copies of her cookbook "Mom and Pop Udo's Favorite Old Country Recipes from Eastern Europe," 12:30-2 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 21 at Walden Books, 30200 Plymouth, Livonia, and Borders Books 31150 Southfield, Birmingham, 3-4 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 21.

COOKING CLASSES

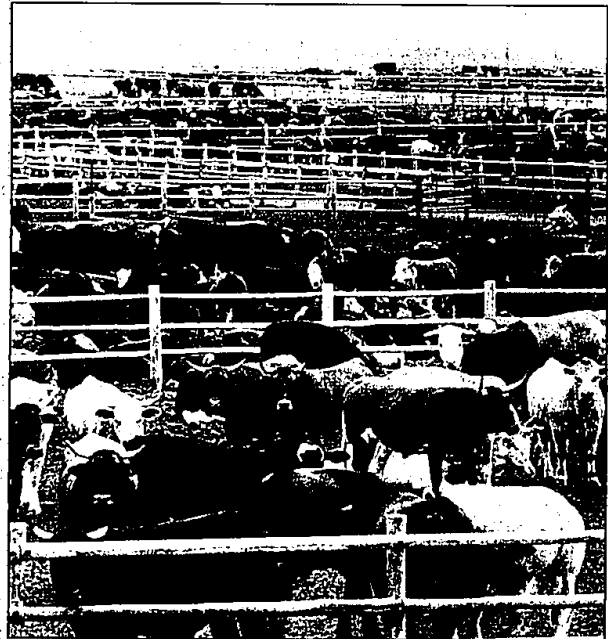
There's something on the burner every day at Williams-Sonoma in Laurel Park Place Mall, 37842 West Six Mile. Monday, Dec. 16, demonstration, LaForme cranberry orange cake, Tuesday, Dec. 17, tasting King Leo Peppermint, 4:30 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 18, cooking school, children's Christmas cookies, fee \$25.



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 West Bloomfield 6433 Orchard Lake Rd., Corner of Maple
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 Northville 425 North Center St., (Sheldon Rd) (Beverly Main St. & B Main
 Livonia 37399 W. Six Mile, Corner Newburgh (Newburgh Plaza)



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