

Taste of Hope

طعم الأمل

Recipes, Photos & Stories by
Newcomer Women





"Once you choose hope, anything is possible"

- Christopher Reeve



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Table of Contents

<i>1</i>	Introduction
<i>2</i>	Acknowledgment
<i>5</i>	Amal Project Team, Partners & Funders
<i>6</i>	Recipes & Stories of Hope
<i>33</i>	Amal Activities
<i>45</i>	Success Stories
<i>51</i>	A Journey of Hope

Introduction

The Amal 'Hope' Project was designed to enable and empower Newcomer Women to integrate effectively into Canadian Society and form friendships across cultures.

With food and images being a universal language, the women learned food photography and styling techniques during the project. They shared recipes from heritage, their immigration stories, hopes, goals and dreams and pictures of the meals they prepared showcasing their new skills.

In this booklet we display images from the many activities held throughout the project to date, we highlight their humbling feedback and how the Amal Project has influenced their lives and settlement journey and we feature success stories.

While this project aims to instill hope into newcomer women, those who participated have in turn instilled hope in us with every smile, every kind word shared and every thankful glance when a question of theirs has been answered and has affected the course of their lives. Being able to support these strong willed, courageous and unwavering women, has been a gift upon us and has solidified the true strength of women who can survive and excel no matter the circumstances.

A big shout out and a million thanks goes to the women who participated in the Amal Project. We hope that we have made their journey easier and wish them and their families a brighter future in the land of great opportunities, Canada!



Acknowledgment Guest Speakers

Special thanks to all the guest speakers who supported and/or continue to support the Amal Project and provide valuable information & motivation to participating newcomer women

Shorouq Al Kayyali

Assistant Branch Manager - RBC Meetingplace

Topics Covered:
Navigating the Canadian Banking System

Eman Mikael

Mortgage Consultant - RBC

Topics Covered:
Buying your First Home in Canada
(Mortgages & Real-estate)

Munir Tadros

Real Estate Agent - Royal Le Page

Topics Covered:
Buying your First Home in Canada
(Mortgages & Real-estate)

Dr. Saoussen Youssef

Life Coach

Topics Covered:
Positive Parenting & Adjusting to a New
Environment

Hiba Kassab

International Business & Education Leader

Topics Covered:
English Proficiency & Intercultural Awareness

Dalia Elenin

Employment Counselor - Acces Employment

Topics Covered:
Finding Employment in Canada

Susan Ng

Chef, Culinary Consultant, Educator

Topics Covered:
Community Cooking Project

Candace Esquimaux

First Nations Chef & Business Owner - Candaces' Catering

Topics Covered:
Indigenous Culture & Cuisine

Dr. Marc Shenouda

Phd Candidate - University of Toronto

Topics Covered:
Navigating the Health System in Ontario

Joan Yaacoub

Arabic Speaking Counselor - Dixie Bloor Neighborhood Centre

Topics Covered:
Managing Mental Health & Wellbeing for Newcomers

Jith Dravin

Small Business Consultant - Enterprise Toronto, City of Toronto

Topics Covered:
Opening a Small Business in Ontario

Maha Munaf

Professional Photographer & Educator - Cameras'n Cupcakes

Topics Covered:
Food Photography & Styling Workshop

Cheyenne Chedid

Youth Facilitator - Polycultural Immigrant & Community Services

Topics Covered:
Eating well on a Budget

Hala Lakkis

Family Counselor & Life Coach

Topics Covered:
Positive Parenting & Adjusting to a New
Environment

Saif Majeed

Insurance Broker - The Big

Topics Covered:
Home and Auto Insurance for Newcomers

Raghda Zrir

Mortgage Consultant - CIBC

Topics Covered:
Banking & Credit Scores

Dr. Mirey Karavetian

Nutrition Specialist & Clinical Research Associate

Topics Covered:
Healthy Eating & Living Tips for you and your Family

Jumanah Sbeih

Holistic Nutritionist

Topics Covered:
Healthy Eating & Living Tips for you and your Family

Special thanks to Organizations who provided their premises and/or services and/or products to the Amal Project:

St. Phillips Lutheran Church, Etobicoke

Rev. Tuula Van Gaasbeek & Team

Montgomery's Inn Museum, Etobicoke

Kate Hill & Team

Renewed Computer Technology, Mississauga

Raffatul Islam & Team



Acknowledgment *ACCT Team*

Project Support

Dima Amad

Executive Director

Rasha Mehyar

Settlement Manager

Samar Hayder

Assistant Settlement Manager

Ferdie Alvarez

Finance Manager

Sari Al Housseini

Operations and HR Manager

Daniel O. Jabbour

Youth Settlement Counselor & Social
Media Specialist

Sahar Ghayassudin

Community Connections Officer &
Volunteer Supervisor

Sessions' Support

Elham Nabag

Settlement Counselor

Sameh Aziz

Settlement Counselor

Lodi Awad

Family Counselor

Sally Ishag

Settlement Counselor

Katherine Kuzanjian

Settlement Counselor

Christine Youssef

Employment Counselor

Sevan Zokian

Wellbeing Counselor

Collaboration Tajdeed Project: Hebah Emran & Maysoon Al Rawi, Settlement Counselors

Amal Project Team

Rita Nabhan

Women Engagement Specialist

Kholoud Khafaja

Women Outreach Specialist

Lilly Hayder

Outreach Specialist

Partners



Funders



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et Citoyenneté Canada



*Recipes &
Stories of Hope*



Meatballs with Cherries

by Nidal Jammal

I immigrated to Canada 5 years ago with my husband, son, and daughter and her family. After the war invaded my hometown in Syria, we were forced to move to Lebanon from where we then moved to Canada on our last journey of settlement. It was a very tough journey due to adjustment to the cold weather, the language barrier and the process of readjusting to a new life and a new reality. We managed to cope with our positive will and proactive attitude. My husband passed away 2 years ago and now I am trying to find a volunteer opportunity to practice my english conversation skills and be able to give back to the community, and provide support to newcomers as I was supported on my arrival in Canada. It is now my role to show my thanks and appreciation to my new home Canada. With my background in psychology, I also hope to be able to provide motivational and mental health support to those in need, as I get great pleasure in knowing that I am able to make a difference in their lives.



"My hope is to find safety and stability for myself and my family, after suffering through the war in my home country, Syria"



Recipe

Cooking Time



45 Minutes

Recipe serves



4

Ingredient

2 cup	Canned cherries
1 cup	Cherry Jam
500 gm	Minced Meat <small>(lamb or beef)</small>
1 tsp	Cinnamon powder
1 tsp	Lemon powder
1/4 cup	Minced flat-leaf parsley
2 cup	Pita bread cut into triangles <small>(1/8 loaf each)</small>
50 gm	Pine seeds
1/4 cup	Sugar
2 tbsp	Butter or lard
1 tsp	Salt
1 tsp	Pepper

Instructions

1. Blend the canned cherries and cherry jam in a blender until homogenized
2. Add the lemon powder, salt, cinnamon, and sugar
3. Place on medium heat until boiling, stirring continuously. Let simmer for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally.
4. Knead the minced meat with salt and pepper and form into meatballs
5. Fry the meatballs in 1 Tbsp of lard until browned
6. Add the fried meatballs to the cherry mixture and let simmer for 5-10 minutes
7. Place the cut pita bread pieces on a plate, then add the cherry and beef mix on top
8. Garnish the plate with parsley and pine seeds. Add the extra lard on top.
9. Serve warm & Enjoy!

Çaat

by Amina Abderrahim



Gaat

by Amina Abderrahim

Gaat is a dish served in Eritrea for different occasions, usually to celebrate the birth of a baby, on the first day of Eid or for breakfast on the weekends. It is usually served with coffee or tea. Coffee in our tradition represents family gatherings where we enjoy spending time together and basking in the warmth and laughter with our loved ones. It is also served with Himbasha (bread) and some popcorn. I remember, after school or work, my children would be exhausted; but when they come home, the smell and aroma of coffee from a distance would make them happy, knowing that I am waiting for them to hear about their day and enjoy a nice home-cooked meal together.



"I immigrated to Canada, looking for a better future for my family. As an immigrant, it's been almost 40 years that I haven't seen my mother. So I wish and hope to reunite with her, so she can meet my 2 kids in person and enjoy our time together as a family"



Recipe

Cooking Time



15-20 Minutes

Recipe serves



8

Ingredient

3 cup	Sifted Flour
2 to 3 tbsp	Ghee (butter)
2 cup	Water
1 tsp	Salt
2 tsp	Chilli Powder (berbari)
375 gm	Yoghurt

Instructions

1. Boil water with Ghee and a pinch of salt.
2. Then add the flour, mix continuously to avoid lumps
3. Lower the heat and mix till it forms a sticky dough, cover for 3 to 4 min and mix again till the dough doesn't stick to your finger
4. when the dough is ready, place it on a greased bowl and shape it to circle
5. Lastly, place some yoghurt around the dough
6. Optional: Enjoy with plain yoghurt mixed with crushed garlic, or with honey instead
7. Best served hot with tea or coffee. ENJOY!





Photo Credits: Jemila Mahmoud

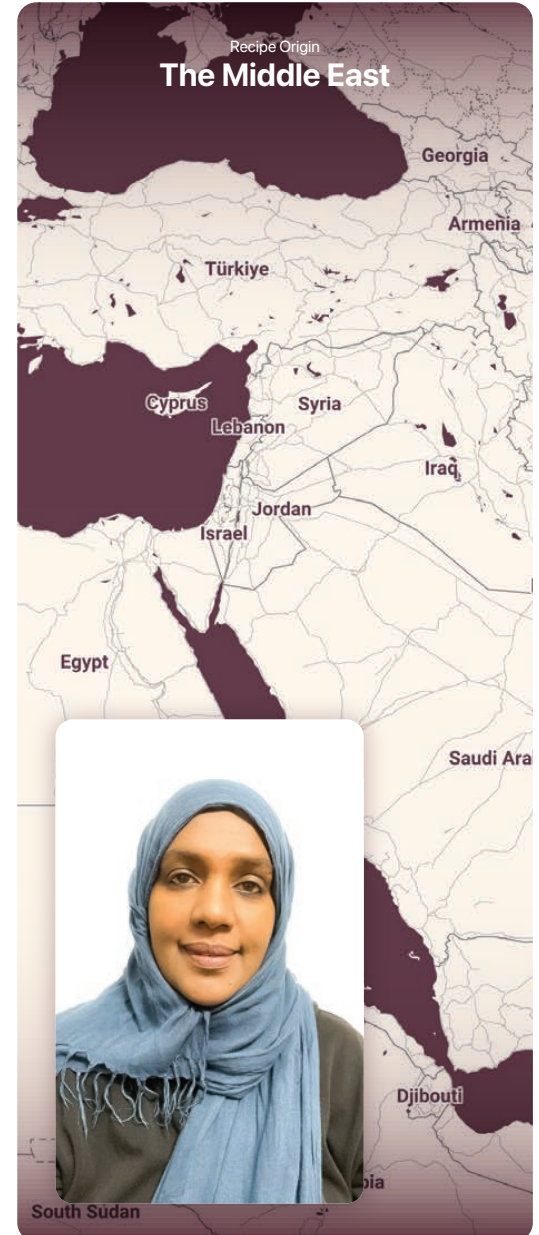
Falafel

by Jemila Mahmoud

I was born and raised in the city of Asmara, Eritrea. At the age of 19, with the hope of a better future, I relocated to Saudi Arabia to live and work. I lived in Saudi for around 22 years, during which I got married and started my family of 5 children. As the cost of living increased drastically in Saudi, I moved along with my children to Egypt and my husband immigrated to Canada. For four years, he struggled to settle into his new life in Canada, find a job and arrange all the paperwork to sponsor us all. Finally, seven months ago he managed to complete our sponsorship papers and our family reunited in Canada, our new home. Falafel is a recipe common to many countries in the Middle East like Egypt, Lebanon, Syria etc. This recipe has been with me throughout my life, and I always prepare it for my family as it brings back memories of home, our struggles, the warmth of family and the hopes for a brighter future.



**"Searching for a better future
for my family"**



Recipe

Cooking Time



20 Minutes

Recipe serves



5 (15 pieces)

Ingredient

<i>1 cup</i>	Chickpeas	<i>1/2 tsp</i>	Baking Powder
<i>30 gm</i>	Onions	<i>1 tsp</i>	Salt
<i>10 gm</i>	Garlic	<i>2 tbsp</i>	water
<i>1/2 cup</i>	Parsley	<i>4-5 tsp</i>	Oil (Canola or vegetable)
<i>1/2 cup</i>	Cilantro	<i>1 pc</i>	Garlic clove
<i>1/2 tsp</i>	Cumin	<i>1 pc</i>	Lemon
<i>1/4 tsp</i>	Black pepper	<i>1/2 tsp</i>	Salt
<i>1/2 tsp</i>	Baking Soda	<i>5 tbsp</i>	Tahini (Sesame Paste)

Tahini Sauce

Water As needed

Instructions

- Soak the dry Chickpeas in water and baking soda overnight
- Wash the Chickpeas well and boil until tender
- In a food processor mix the cooked Chickpeas, onions, garlic, parsley, cilantro, cumin, black pepper, salt, and baking powder
- Blend well and add water if needed to mix well. Leave mixture a little grainy and firm.
- Form the mixture into balls and flatten slightly
- Heat the oil on high
- Add the falafel pcs in the hot oil and fry for 5-10 minutes or until browned all over
- Remove the falafel pcs and place on a plate with a paper towel to drain the excess oil
- For the tahini sauce, mince the garlic add the Tahini, salt, and lemon. Mix well. Add cold water in small amounts to make a thick liquid mixture
- Serve falafel in pita bread with tahini, parsley, tomatoes, and pickles & ENJOY!



Bint el Sahn

by Amal Abdullah

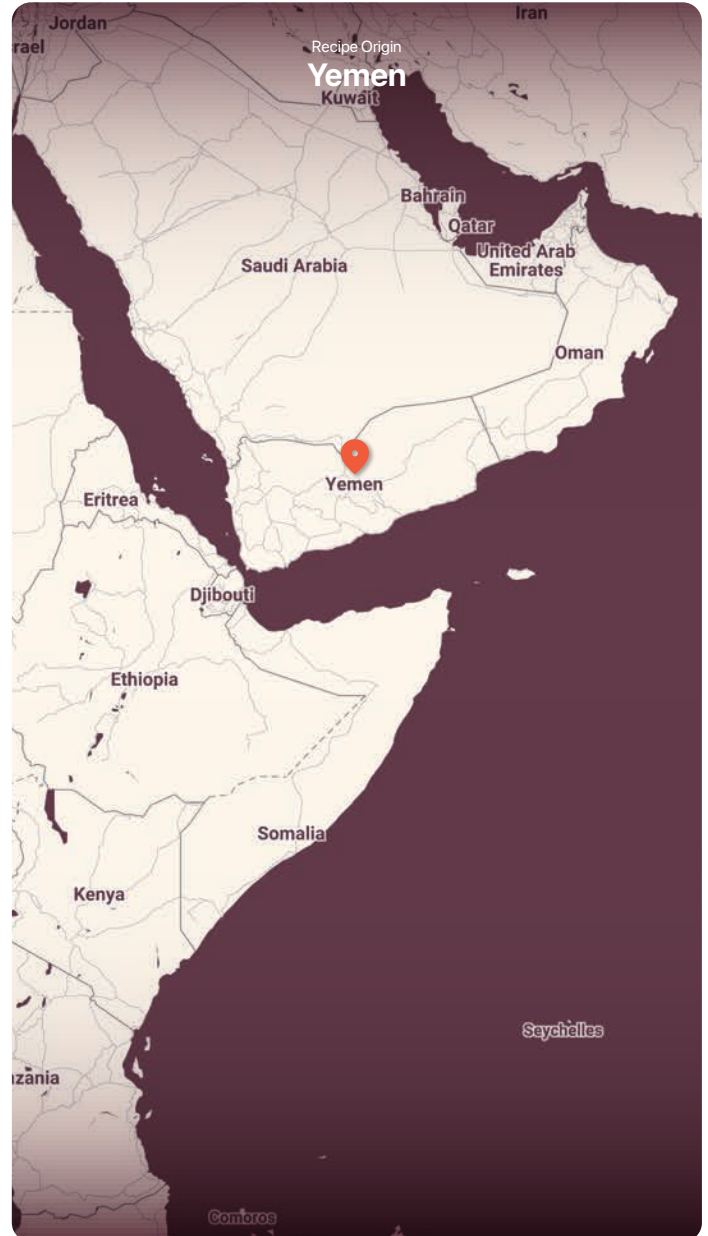
Bint el Sahn

by Amal Abdullah

This meal with its many layers that are brushed with butter, represents the memories of stability and the warmth of being with my family. Its smell reminds me of my mom's hands when preparing this meal before the war invaded my country. The flax and sesame seeds sprayed on top of the dough represent the many Yemenis who wish to immigrate and find a better home, a safer life for them and their families away from the terror of war. The falling flax seeds signify the many people who were fortunate to immigrate and find a better future in various locations across the world, where they feel safe, secure and hopeful for a brighter future, just like me and my family who have made Canada our new Home.



"To belong to a country that believes in justice and equality. To improve the educational level for my kids and to give back to the community so we can have a stable and fulfilling life"



Recipe

Cooking Time



60 Minutes

Recipe serves



5

Ingredient

4	Eggs
1 <i>tblsp</i>	Vegetable Oil
1 <i>tblsp</i>	Sugar
1 <i>tblsp</i>	Powdered Milk
1 <i>tsp</i>	Salt
1 1/2 <i>tsp</i>	Yeast
1 <i>cup</i>	Water
4 1/2 <i>cup</i>	All Purpose Flour
1 <i>tsp</i>	Flax Seeds
1 <i>tsp</i>	Sesame
1/4 <i>tsp</i>	Vinegar
1	Egg Yolk
150 <i>gm</i>	Butter, lard or Margarine



Instructions

1. In a deep bowl, mix the eggs with salt, yeast, and flax seeds well
2. Add the flour all at once
3. Add warm water and kneed well until the dough is soft and uniform (dough should be softer than pizza dough)
4. Let the dough rest for 10 minutes
5. Add the oil and kneed the dough for another 5 minutes
6. Cut the dough and form them into small balls (around 25g each)
7. Cover the dough balls with Cling film/plastic wrap and keep in a warm place. Let the dough rest and rise for 30 minutes.
8. Prepare a plate, spread the butter, lard or margarine on it. Sprinkle the flour on top.
9. Place the dough balls in single layer on the plate
10. Brush each dough ball with warm melted butter/lard/margarine and flatten it, then place it on a well-greased oven tray
11. Repeat the same process with each dough ball, placing each of the layers on top of each other
12. Brush the last layer with egg yolk mixed with a little vinegar, then sprinkle the sesame & flax seeds on top
13. Let the dough rest for 10 minutes
14. Pre-heat the oven to 200 degrees Celsius
15. Place the tray in the oven until it is well done and golden on top (around 20 minutes)
16. Serve with honey & ENJOY!



Meat Kabseh

by Maha Adam



Meat Kabseh

by Maha Adam



"To be reunited with my husband and kids, so we can start a promising life together in our new home, Canada"

Cooking Time



1 Hour 45 Minutes

Recipe serves



4-6



Ingredient

2	Onion (Large)	2	Cardamom
1 kg	Meat (Beef or Lamb)	1	Beef broth (cube)
2	Garlic cloves	1 tsp	Salt
2 cup	Rice (Basmati or long grain parboiled)	1 tsp	Kabse Spices
5 cup	Water (boiling)	1 tbsp	Tomato paste
2	Bay leaves	2 tbsp	Oil (Canola or vegetable)
2	Cinnamon Sticks		

Yogurt Salad

2 cup	Yogurt
1/4 cup	Carrots (raw & shredded)
1/4 cup	Cucumbers (fresh & diced)
1 tsp	Mayonnaise

Salt, pepper & cumin to taste



Instructions

1. Peel and dice onions into small pieces
2. In a pot, heat the oil, add the onion and sauté until tender
3. Cut the beef or lamb into medium size squares
4. Add the meat to the onions and fry until meat is browned.
5. Add the bay leaves, cinnamon stick, cardamom, beef broth cube, tomato paste, kabseh spices, salt and boiling water
6. Let the beef simmer on low heat for 1 hour
7. Wash the rice well, drain and add the rice to the beef and broth in the pot
8. Cover and let the rice cook for 20-30 minutes until rice is well-done
9. Turn off the stove top and let the meal rest for 10 minutes
10. In a large service plate/tray, pour the rice at the bottom and place the meat cubes on top.
11. Garnish with nuts (Optional)
12. To prepare the yogurt salad, mix all ingredients together well.
13. Serve with yogurt salad (Optional) & ENJOY!



Himbasha

by Manal Mahmoud

Himbasha

by Manal Mahmoud

Travelling for adventure is risky let alone leaving your home forever. Due to the unstable situation in my home country, we left hoping for a better and brighter future in Canada. Canada is exceptional not only because of better job opportunities, a great education and health system, but also because we are able to be a part of a community that values and respects its people. When you feel safe and appreciated, you will be able to give back to your community. I like volunteering because it makes me feel connected with my community and allows me to give back to the community and the country which has become my new home, Canada.



“To secure a better future for ourself and contribute to the community”



Recipe

Cooking Time



25-35 Minutes

Recipe serves



8

Ingredient

2 cup	All Purpose flour
3 tbsp	Sugar
1 tsp	Instant Yeast
1/2 tsp	Salt
2 tbsp	Olive oil
2 tbsp	Butter
1/2 to 3/4 cup	Warm water
1/4 cup	Raisin
1 tsp	Black Sesame Seeds
1/2 tsp	Cardamom powder
3 tbsp	Milk

Instructions

1. Use a food processor to make the dough for the Himbasha (you can make it by hand or a stand mixer as well)
2. Add the flour, instant yeast, sugar, salt, cardamom powder and black sesame seeds then mix well
3. Add the raisins and the oil and mix
4. Add warm water slowly to make a soft dough
5. Cover the dough and let it rest for about 1 hour
6. Place the dough and spread it evenly across the pan
7. Put milk on the top by a brush and bake for 25 to 35 minutes
8. Serve warm or at room temperature and enjoy with coffee or tea!



Vegan Stuffed Swisschard Leaves

by Eliane Tawil

Photo Credits: Eliane Tawil

Vegan Stuffed Swisschard Leaves

by Eliane Tawil

Lebanon is the country that I had refused to leave. My dream was to achieve all my goals in this lovely country and teach my kids how to love it. I discovered that even the strongest love cannot endure when all the circumstances and problems made it impossible to thrive. My husband and I took the most difficult decision ever; to leave in search of a better future. We left everything and everybody behind. I can still remember the feeling I had when I landed in Canada realizing that this is real and there is no going back. With miserable and broken hearts, it was the time to move on especially with 2 kids and a baby on the way. We've had many ups and downs but worked hard to endure and settle because we have a family that depends on us. We needed to ensure a smooth transition for our children so they can start their new life. Canada offered us so many opportunities to learn and prosper. We settled down relatively quickly and continue to learn and adapt to our new environment and culture.

This dish is my Mother's in law 's favorite and my children used to ask her to prepare it each time we visit. It was also the first dish I prepared here once we settled in our new apartment. My daughter helped me while her TETA (i.e. grandma) supervised via video call. A taste of home in our new home!



“To build a secure life for our family and enjoy life without worrying about our basic rights. To build a new career with new skills and make new lifelong friends”

Recipe

Cooking Time



1 Hour 30 Minutes

Recipe serves



4

Instructions

1. Wash the swiss chard well
2. Separate the leaves from the stalks
3. Cut the leaves into 2 pieces lengthwise
4. Place swiss chard leaves in boiling water for 5 minutes
5. Cut one tomato and one onion into rings and place at the bottom of a large pot
6. Filling: Cut the remaining tomato and onion into small cubes. Add the parsley, rice, chickpeas along with half the spices, salt & pomegranate molasses and mix well
7. Spoon a tsp of the filling in each swiss chard leaf and roll. Do not close the ends.
8. Stack the rolled leaves close together on top of the before layered onions and tomatoes in the pot
9. Add boiling water mixed with the remaining spices, salt and pomegranate molasses to cover the leaves by 1 cm
10. Cover with a plate and then cover the pot using the pot cover
11. Cook on low heat for 30 minutes. Add the lemon Juice and continue to boil for an extra 5 mins
12. Serve and Enjoy!

Ingredient

2 bunches	Swiss chard
2	Beef tomato
2	Onions <small>(medium)</small>
1 cup	Chopped fresh parsley leaves
1/2 cup	Chickpeas <small>(cooked/canned)</small>
1 cup	Italian Rice <small>(uncooked/ washed)</small>
1/2 cup	Lemon Juice <small>(freshly squeezed)</small>
2 tsp	Sumac
2 tsp	Salt
1/2 tsp	Pepper
1 tbsp	Pomegranate Molasses



Kibbe bel Sayniyye

(Beef & Bulghor pie)

by Iman Kamar

I left Syria and my city Aleppo, where all my loved ones and life was to Turkey because of the war in Syria. From Turkey I managed to immigrate to Canada. I had worked as a French language teacher for about 20 years in my home country.

I got to know the Arab Community Centre of Toronto and its various services and programs, and chose to participate in the Walima program where I obtained a certificate of safe food handling. I also had the opportunity to participate in the Amal program, where I benefited from all its activities, including a special food preparation session from each country. I have great hopes for my new life in Canada and I aspire to start a small family business to serve the most delicious meals from Aleppo, Syria.



"My hope is to build a new life in Canada where my family and I are safe and where we can build our business and life together."



South Sudan

Recipe

Cooking Time



30-40 Minutes

Recipe serves



6-8

Ingredient

1 kg	Cracked wheat <small>(Bulghor)</small>
1 kg	Lean extra finely minced beef
1/2 kg	Lean minced beef
2	Fresh onion <small>(medium size)</small>
1/2 tsp	Cumin
1/2 tsp	Pepper
2 tsp	Fine Salt
2 tbsp	Margarine or Lard
50 gm	Almonds slivered
50 gm	Pine nuts
50 gm	Walnuts quartered





Instructions

1. Soak the Bulghor in water for half an hour
2. Drain the water from the bulghor well
3. Add the bulghor, one onion and half the amount of spices and salt in a food processor and blend well till homogeneous
4. Add the one 1kg extra finely minced beef to the mix in small batches till they form a well mixed kibbe dough
5. In a separate pan, sautee the nuts with a quarter tsp of lard or margarine, until lightly browned. Move to the side.
6. In same pan, sautee the remaining onion (chopped) and add on top the 1/2 kg minced beef along with the remaining spices and salt
7. When meat browns add the nuts to the mix. Set aside.
8. To layer the kibbe: Using a deep round or rectangular glass or aluminum non stick tray, spread half a tsp margarine or lard at the bottom of the tray and sides
9. Take half of the kibbe dough and spread evenly at the bottom into a flat layer
10. Add the pre-cooked mixture of minced meat, onion and nuts and spread evenly on top of the kibbe dough
11. Then take the remaining half of the kibbe dough and spread again in an even flat layer on top of the other two layers
12. Design the top of the kibbe by making vertical, horizontal and/or diagonal lines as preferred
13. Add the remaining Margarine/Lard in small dollops on top of the layered kibbe
14. Place in a pre-heated oven at 375 degrees Fahrenheit for 30-40 mins till top is browned and well done
15. Enjoy with yogurt and/or salad!



Amal Activities

Community Cooking Project

The Amal Project Participants met at the St. Phillip's Lutheran Church, Etobicoke, Community kitchen and hall to cook together meals from their heritage, network, and form friendships with fellow newcomer women and established Canadian women. They shared a meal together and learned the true essence of Canadian Hospitality and Inclusion.



"It was a wholesome and wonderful project that provided us with valuable information and excellent services as newcomers to Canada. Our participation and the things we learned through the Amal Project helped us overcome several obstacles at the beginning of our new life. Many thanks to those in charge of the project. Wishing you much success in the future!"

- Amal Al Sayed





“Project Amal was a nice and rich experience for us as newcomer women in Canada. The information provided by the guest speakers was very useful through which we gained a lot of knowledge about life in Canada, public transportation, banking, and much more. Where we each lacked knowledge in one aspect or another regarding settlement in Canada, this project filled in the blanks and gave us the needed information in a fun and simplified way. Thank you to everyone who contributed to the success of this project! ”

- Reem Nouh





"We are accustomed to all innovative and useful services from the Arab community Centre of Toronto (ACCT). I registered with the Amal project and attended all its insightful sessions. Through the sessions, I gained a lot of knowledge on various important aspects of our new life in Canada. Indeed, I believe it is a very valuable and useful project for every newcomer. We thank all those responsible for the Amal Project and ACCT as a whole."

- Fatma Al Asfar



Trip to Montgomery's Inn Museum

The Amal Project Participants did a guided tour of the Montgomery's Inn Museum in Etobicoke and learned about Canadian History and Culture.



"The Amal project was a unique and beautiful experience and I consider myself fortunate to have had such an opportunity to learn a lot about how to navigate an easier life in Canada. The information provided was comprehensive and clear, as if it was carefully designed to enlighten us about our relocation to Canada. I particularly benefited from the public transportation session which contributed effectively to solving most of my problems and allowed me to venture onto public transport without fear and with a new knowledge of the system. The session on how to buy our first home in Canada was very interesting too and gave us the needed information and contacts in case we made this decision to become home owners. Finally, the 'Opening your small business in Canada' session was very, very special, because it gave us hope again and provided us with all the information and contacts too to get started on our business venture. The Amal project is really a project that gave us hope to be creative and shine in the light of this new life that we are living. The project also was managed by wonderful staff providing us with rich and useful information that we desperately needed. Our presence in this project enriched our lives and opened our horizons to broader opportunities. Even though some of the information may not be implemented now, but we still retain the knowledge and have been educated on all settlement aspects by the coordinators and guest speakers in the Amal Project. Thank you!!"

- Eman Al Helali





“

“I found the Amal project wonderful in every aspect. The topics that were highlighted and discussed in the sessions were very useful and I learned a lot from them. I wish that the project duration could be longer so it can cover more topics. I believe the Amal project is exceptionally successful.”

- Lamis Sarraj



"I extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to everyone who contributed to the preparation and presentation of interactive workshops throughout the Amal Project. In particular, I would like to mention dear Rita and Kholoud, as they had the ability to manage the sessions and deliver rich, varied and useful information in a manner that really exceeded expectations, as all of this was done with wisdom, competence and capability. The coming together of beautiful minds and humility made us feel the closeness and warmth of human communication and to create a real community with lasting connections. So thanks again for giving us this unique opportunity with my sincere love and appreciation. I hope to also join and participate with ACCT in other programs soon. Wishing you much success and continuity!"

- Atika Al Obaidi



Laptops Drive

Forty five of the most involved and active Amal Project Participants received free laptops donated by Renewed Computer Technology, Mississauga. The laptops helped them improve their digital skills and enabled them to attend more actively the Amal Project Sessions



"In the beginning, I would like to thank the Arab community Centre of Toronto (ACCT) for all the services and support it provided to me, as well as valuable information and lessons on Canadian laws and about many things that immigrants may be ignorant of, especially about their rights as immigrants. Thank you very much. In particular, I would like to praise the Amal project, as it was, according to me, an excellent project. I learned a lot from it and met good people with whom we shared sweet and enjoyable moments. We learned about different cultures and services available. Project Amal was the beginning of a path from easing our settlement process, allowing us to meet new people and referring us to counselors who helped us prepare for and motivated us to pass the citizenship test. We will always remember the moments full of fun and love and unforgettable experiences. Thank you very much! "

- Hanaa Saleh





“My participation in the Amal Project is considered one of the most beloved participations that I have made as a social program that promotes social integration among the various newcomers to Canada of different origins and different customs and traditions as well. The Amal Project sought to integrate us into the diversity of Canadian society. Perhaps what caught my eye most were the discussion sessions and direct contact with the first indigenous people of Canada, as we had the pleasure of meeting them closely in a session that included their original food, in which we found its goodness, health and unique taste. We are excited about their customs and traditions, and empathize with their historical suffering. I felt like I was witnessing history in front of me. I will also not forget to mention the interactive sessions that covered the various fields of transportation, simplifying it, OHIP and benefiting from it and secure a family doctor, the mechanism of buying our first home in Canada, and banking and credit scores. I hope this program continues for the general benefit of all newcomers. Many thanks to the Arab Community Center of Toronto and to Rita, Lily and Kholoud for following up on us and managing this amazing program. ”

- Amina Abderrahim

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“The Arab Community Centre of Toronto is one of the best organizations that I have dealt with, given that I am new in the country and I do not know much. The staff are very helpful, provide important information, and correct and accurate guidance. Every question I pose on them has an answer, and my problem has a solution. Thank you all for all your efforts and please do not stop.”

- Wafa Aرسالane

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“Amal project is a meaningful project that deserves support and continuation. After my personal experience with them, I discovered a lot of services that I was not aware of. Also all the staff on this project are very efficient and cooperative.”

- Ghadeer Hussein

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“My experience with the Amal project was very successful. I benefited from the information and expertise that they provided us. We thank you very much because it is a complete and wholesome project in all aspects and it benefited us greatly. We wish you continuity and success in this project so we can continue to benefit from the services rendered. ”

- Hanadi Kharrat



Indigenous Culture & Cuisine

The Amal Project Participants attended a session on Indigenous Culture and Cuisine where a First Nations Chef catered Indigenous meals for food tasting and told them the history behind the meals and then enlightened them on Indigenous Culture and Traditions.



“My participation in the Amal project was an exceptional experience. As I was able to get to know new colleagues, especially after COVID, which was a major obstacle. Lectures and discussion sessions added a lot to our knowledge of the services that we desperately need and how to access them, including getting access to proper healthcare, building a good bank balance and credit score, starting the process of buying a house and the best ways to start a small business in Canada and how to register it and get it started. That is in addition to other miscellaneous topics that are of importance to newcomers. The Amal project provides learning aspects and social entertainment at the same time. The cooking and social networking sessions, in addition to visiting Canada's historical sites, enriched the project and increased its value. I hope this project reaches a lot of newcomers and provides them with the same benefit it provided to me.!”





"I would like to thank you for this kind effort made by the Arab community of Toronto to develop our skills. It was an excellent experience. I met and networked with many ladies and fellow expatriates from different countries, where we later became friends. It is a really fun and informative project and I hope newcomers will participate and benefit from it."

- Noor Imam



Rafikah's Success Story

Rafikah, an Arabic Language teacher for over 24 years, arrived in Toronto in the middle of lockdown in January 2021. A Syrian national by birth and having lived in Saudi Arabia for most of her adult life, Rafikah was an educated, highly motivated and driven lady who was used to working and being productive. As she advanced in her career, she found her children had moved away and settled and she was left all alone in Saudi Arabia. As such, she decided to join her son in Canada with the hope of being close to her family and continuing her career on arrival.

She received a lot of support from her son but without a job and a social network, in addition to the harsh reality of a COVID Lockdown, she found herself lonely and demotivated. She missed having an active social lifestyle and being productive and working. She missed having a purpose in life. Yet, she did not give up. By nature, she is a go-getter. So, a couple of months after arriving in Canada, she signed up for an ESL school and started working on perfecting her English language. She also did volunteer classes teaching children the Arabic Language and Quran. She found her purpose again but was still missing her social network. Through some of her Arab acquaintances, she heard about the Arab Community Centre of Toronto and the Amal Project and decided to participate in it. Through the sessions, she learned a lot of very important information about the country and the services provided and how to access them. But most of all she benefited from meeting like-minded newcomer women from various backgrounds and cultures and saw how each of the ladies had overcome her challenges and succeeded. This gave her immense hope. In addition to that, she formed friendships and managed to expand once again her social circle and overcome the loneliness and feel as if she was part of a bigger family. She felt that the Amal team were her mentors and support system and she could always refer to them for any inquiry, support needed or just a friendly chat.



Now that Rafikah has found her purpose and passion again in teaching and created a new social circle and support system, she aims to build her own small business, doing what she loves most, teaching. She continues to actively strive towards her goal and receive the support needed via the Amal Project team and the information sessions. She knows that there is nothing that she cannot do if she sets her mind to it and is happy to have the opportunity to do so in the land where every dream is possible, Canada.



“My experience with the Amal Project has been a successful and wonderful experience by all accounts. I have benefited from the information and services that were provided via the Amal Project. Moreover, it has restored hope for us through Rita and Kholoud, their giving, attention and care for each of us and for the great efforts made by them. Through the program, we got to know wonderful friends, new cultures and valuable information that added joy and happiness to our lives which was much needed. Thank you from the heart for what you provided us and to those who preceded us and those who will come after us, we wish you lasting success and excellence in all your programs. Thank you for your support for us and for your warm and encouraging interactions. Thank you from the heart.”

- Rafikah Al Homsi

Amal Morsy's Success Story

I arrived in Toronto, Canada with my family (husband and daughters) a couple of years ago. I was born and raised in Cairo, Egypt, where my husband used to work as a pharmacist, and I was a chief dentist in a governmental hospital.

On arrival, my husband and I both needed to undergo additional studies and exams to be able to practice our profession and work in our field of expertise. I registered at the university for a dental equivalency, but I was placed on the waiting list. So I thought that I would take advantage of the time and study as a dental assistant until my husband finished his studies and until I got admission to the university. I graduated and got a diploma as a dental assistant. In addition to that, I studied for and passed the Canadian board of dentistry. I did all this while taking care of my home, my husband, and my daughters.



“It was truly a unique and exceptional experience with the Amal program. It gave me a lot of knowledge of my needs and access to services in my new country, Canada. Providing interactive and rich sessions, in addition to assisting in referring us to specialized advisors to answer our inquiries helped us throughout our settlement process. The Amal Project team has high efficiency and experience to meet all the needs of the participants. I wish them success and perseverance with us and those who come after us. We also got to know women from different nationalities and backgrounds, which made the experience more beautiful and beneficial. I particularly enjoyed the sessions on how to overcome stress as a newcomer, how to deal positively with our children in a new environment, the conditions for buying a house in Ontario and building our credit score and banking.”

- Rahma Adem

Then, my husband got diagnosed with cancer. It was a terrible and dark time for our family. We stopped working towards our hopes and dreams, and our life became a series of doctors' appointments, examinations, chemotherapy, pain and suffering. Unfortunately, my husband passed away and left me and my daughters to build our new life in Canada, all alone.

I started working in a dental clinic and taking care of my daughters, who thankfully were older in age with one in high school and the other attending university.

Had I not had the foresight to study and take advantage of my time until admission to the university, I would have been too preoccupied with my husband's illness and would not have obtained any certificate that would enable me to work and get a salary with which my daughters and I could live a decent life.

I am thankful to ACCT that provided me with support through their various programs and helped me create a network of friends that I can lean on.

I know the struggle continues but I am thankful to have had the opportunity to support my daughters, despite all the problems we faced, and help them build a life in the land of opportunities, Canada, where they can receive a high level of education, have safety and stability and achieve all their dreams.



"In the beginning, I would like to thank all the contributors to this successful project, headed by Kholoud and Rita, and everyone who gave us the opportunity to participate in these effective activities. My experience in this project was successful, as we had the opportunity to get to know different nationalities and network. I particularly enjoyed the community cooking event and the food photography and styling sessions. The Amal project in general, as a start for newcomers, I believe is successful due to the variety of activities in it, the information shared and the motivation and support it provides. I wish the Amal project further success in the future, and I encourage such projects to help newcomer women integrate into their new society. Thank you."

- Iman Qamar

Rasha's Success Story

Born to parents of Lebanese and Iraqi heritage, I grew up in Vancouver, B.C. I decided to move to the Middle East when I was in my early twenties, where I worked as a teacher at an American school and started my family.

As my kids grew older and my son was diagnosed with Autism, I could not find the support and educational system catering to his needs. I realized how truly nurturing and empowering the educational system in Canada is and thus decided that the best thing for me and my kids was to move back to Canada to give them the proper educational foundation and help them prepare for their future. In addition, I wanted to ensure my autistic son received the best support possible to help him develop his skills and grow into his best potential.

I returned to Canada amidst the COVID-19 pandemic and decided to settle with my family in Toronto, Ontario. Despite the hardships faced due to COVID, the lockdowns and being separated from my family, I never gave up and stayed positive for the sake of my children.

I enrolled in Sheridan college for the Social worker program and did a student placement at the Arab Community Centre of Toronto (ACCT). During my student placement, I gained insight into all the programs/projects ACCT offers for newcomers including refugees and particularly women. I also volunteered with ACCT's Amal project to help enable and empower newcomer women and ease their worries when they first arrive in Canada, by supporting their settlement journey and helping create events to expand their social networks. I noticed that this project provided the women with hope, information, support and connections needed for a great outlook on the future ahead.



"The Amal Project experience helped me enhance my skills, increase my knowledge and build a wider circle of social relationships. I benefited greatly from every topic raised during the sessions that I attended. The keys to success for any project are correct planning and preparing a suitable plan and your team did that exceptionally. It is truly a project of hope for which I have all the respect."

- Maysoon Al Zubaidi

With my credentials and experience in Education and Social Work, I decided to continue with Disability Studies, where I was fortunate to get accepted to the Disability Studies Program at Toronto Metropolitan University (Ryerson). I believe the best way to help my son would be to gain the needed education to understand his social location and who he is as an individual before thinking of who he is as a boy with Autism Spectrum Disorder. As such, I am currently on the path of earning a better understanding of what it means to have a disability.

With all the challenges faced, I am very fortunate to be where I am today, a mom to 4 children, a social worker, a disability studies student and an advocate for my autistic son. Above all, I am grateful every day to call Canada my home where there is no limit to what I can achieve in this great country.



“Project Amal is a wholesome and wonderful project that provided us with a lot of information and services, as newcomers, which we benefited from in our daily lives and in our dealings with Canadian society. All thanks to those in charge of the project and to much success in the future!”

- Noha Al Jarrah



A Journey of Hope

As we look back on the journey of hope the Amal Project has been through and continues to venture in, we can't but be thankful to our Funders, our professional guest speakers, our partners, our valuable volunteers, ACCT Team, the Amal Project Team and most importantly the resilient and amazing women who put their trust in us and gave back to us in spades, hope, love and gratitude. We hope that we can all learn from their journey and strength and make our communities stronger, happier and better in every way!





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