

# Where Kitchens Meet

THE MILAGRO JOURNEY



University College Utrecht







 [www.milagroproject.eu](http://www.milagroproject.eu)

# *Honouring Recipes and Culinary Traditions that Bring People Closer Together*

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# Introduction

The present Recipe Book is conceived as a free available resource for those who would like to explore the culinary aspects of different cultures and make it an asset towards the creation of an intercultural dialogue.

The entire MILAGRO project ([www.milagroproject.eu](http://www.milagroproject.eu)) is aimed at giving useful tools for local and migrant communities who can (and should) actively grow together for the construction of inclusive societies, and food is certainly an attractive step in the path towards this goal. In particular, this Recipe Book (Deliverable 5.2) is linked to some activities carried out during the Summer Camp organised in Siena (Work Package 5, Tasks 5.2) by Nuova Associazione Culturale Ulisse in the summer of 2025, which (among others) provided an entire event dedicated to local and foreign delicacies.

Most often, the culinary dimension is the very first aspect we meet of a different culture; sometimes, enjoying ethnic food may simply be an extremely superficial encounter with the Other, and may bring a little intercultural understanding. However, if tasting and eating are accompanied by anecdotes, explanations, stories, memories and inner meanings, food can become a powerful instrument of both reciprocal knowledge and mutual understanding and respect.

This Recipe Book aims to present the connections and similarities between distant cultures through their culinary expressions.



As far as the Italian (mostly Tuscan, in our case) and Pashtun (Pakistani and Afghan) cuisines are concerned, they both record the centrality of meat and a consistent use of some spices. They also underline the central role played by 'bread' in its many different forms, but always including flour and water, the most ancient ingredients that marked the transition of human beings from nature to civilisation, from nature to culture. Food can reveal inner cultural meanings that go beyond the act of eating and eating together, disclosing moral and religious values, social distinction and social connections, the concepts of rarity and abundance, and those of good (edible) or bad (not edible).

In addition to Italian and Pashtun dishes (which, as mentioned above, were central to a section of the Summer Camp in Siena), Ukrainian recipes were included by the Dutch partner University College Utrecht, although they were not collected during the Summer Camp in Utrecht but on several occasions where food sharing and storytelling were central to other project activities. The Ukrainian recipes are iconic foods made and shared in families nowadays: a soup, dumplings that can be filled with different ingredients and come in both savoury and sweet versions, and a traditional sweet porridge prepared for important holidays.

Similarly, the Afghan Pashtun recipe of *bolani* (*bolanee e katchaloo*) was added by Parisa Aqdas Karimi, the MILAGRO trainee working with the Dutch team.

For each dish, together with ingredients and instructions, a historical and cultural note is provided to give something that goes beyond the mere act of cooking and eating. So... grab your apron, open your heart, and let yourself be carried away on this culinary journey through cultures, flavours, and stories!

***May this book not only fill your table, but also enrich your world—with understanding, friendship, and the taste of togetherness!***



# CONVERSION TABLE

Ingredient/Category	Measurement	Milliliters (ml)	Grams (g)
Liquids	1 tsp	5	5
Liquids	1 tbsp	15	15
Liquids	1/4 cup	60	60
Liquids	1/2 cup	120	120
Liquids	1 cup	240	240
Butter	1 tsp		5
Butter	1 tbsp		14
Butter	1/4 cup		57
Butter	1/2 cup		113
Butter	1 cup		227

# CONVERSION TABLE

Ingredient/Category	Measurement	Milliliters (ml)	Grams (g)
Granulated Sugar	1 tsp		4
Granulated Sugar	1 tbsp		12
Granulated Sugar	1/4 cup		50
Granulated Sugar	1/2 cup		100
Granulated Sugar	1 cup		200
Salt (Fine)	1 tsp		6
Salt (Fine)	1 tbsp		18
Baking Powder	1 tsp		4
Baking Powder	1 tbsp		12
Flour (All-purpose)	1 tsp		3
Flour (All-purpose)	1 tbsp		8,5
Flour (All-purpose)	1/4 cup		30
Flour (All-purpose)	1/2 cup		60
Flour (All-purpose)	1 cup		120



## ALL THE SHAPES OF BREAD

**Baked  
With  
Love!**

These recipes describe the ancient habit of human beings to mix water and flour to obtain a 'cultural' food. Evidence of ancient pizza-like bread dates back to the Neolithic Age among the Mediterranean and Middle-Eastern civilisations. According to different areas and climates, people selected different grains, such as rye, spelt, barley, millet, etc. Nevertheless, wheat represented for long the most desired option.

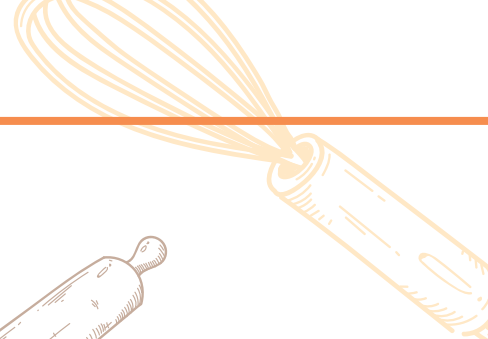
Richer versions of ancient 'white pizza' were obviously available: simple wheat-and-water dough could be enriched with garlic, olive oil, lard, olives, vegetables, etc.

The common tradition of mixing flour (obtained from different grains) and water is as old as the Neolithic Age. The recipes from the Asian area are very close to many Western and Italian preparations, even if some differences may be found in the type of fat used and in the ingredients that may enrich the bread discs.

Among the Pashtun people, the preparation of *chapati*, *parata* and *naan* is a social and cultural activity practised by the women of the community: the mixing and kneading of large quantities of dough is accompanied by chats, gossip, and secrets, cherished inside the kitchen walls.

*Chapati*, being unleavened and thin, is very similar to the *piadina*; *parata*, enriched with *ghee*, can be easily compared to the Tuscan *ciaccino*, while *naan* (soft, leavened and enriched with yoghurt) can be compared to other Italian recipes, such as the *focaccia genovese*, which includes potatoes in the dough to soften it. The two words *ciaccino* and *chapati* share the same original meaning of a dough which is 'flat', 'slapped' or 'pressed down'.





# CIACCINO TOSCANO

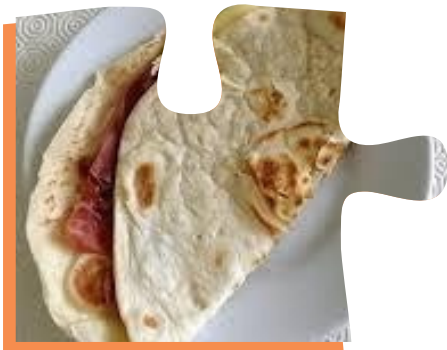
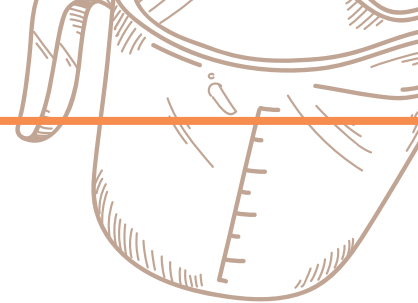
## or *Schiacciata*

Italy

Tuscan-style flat white pizza



Ingredients	Instructions
450 g of wheat flour	1. In a bowl, pour warm water and olive oil, add the brewer's yeast and stir with a spoon to melt the yeast into the liquid.
180 ml of water	2. Add flour in small quantities and stir the dough. When it becomes thick, start kneading it with your hands. Slowly add sugar and salt, and continue kneading for a few minutes.
4 tbs of extra-virgin olive oil	3. When the dough looks homogeneous and soft, leave it in the bowl and cover with a plastic film: it needs to rest for a couple of hours or until it doubles in volume.
10 g of brewer's yeast	4. Turn on the oven and set it to the maximum temperature (usually 250°C).
2 tsp of salt	5. Roll out the dough: you can choose its thickness according to taste.
1 tsp of sugar	6. Cover a baking tray with oil (to avoid sticking) and transfer the rolled out dough. Season it with some olive oil and salt.
	7. Cook in the oven for 10 minutes (if the <i>ciaccino</i> is very thin) or more, according to its thickness.
	8. Take it out of the oven when it looks a bit brown on the surface.
	9. Enjoy it plain or add other ingredients!

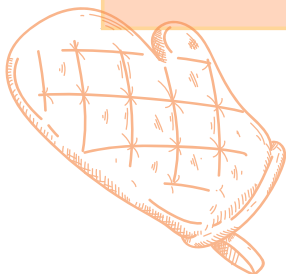


# PIADINA ROMAGNOLA

Italy

Romagna-style flat bread

Ingredients	Instructions
300 g of white flour	1. Mix flour and water, and then add some olive oil and salt.
150 g of water	2. Knead a soft and non-sticky dough (adjust by adding water or flour as needed).
30 g of extra-virgin olive oil (or lard)	3. Let the dough rest for 20 minutes.
A pinch of salt	4. Divide the dough into 4-6 balls (according to the pan size) and roll them out.
<b>Serving:</b> 4-6 Pieces	5. Heat a pan and cook the discs one by one, turning them when you see bubbles on the surface.
	6. You can eat them hot or cold, filling them with vegetables, cheese and cold cuts.



## Historical and Cultural Note

The original recipe of *piadina romagnola* includes lard, since pigs were the most common (most often the only) kind of meat available for peasants along many centuries.

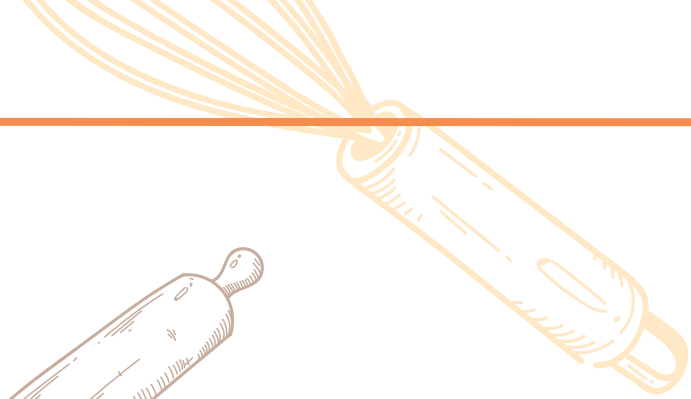
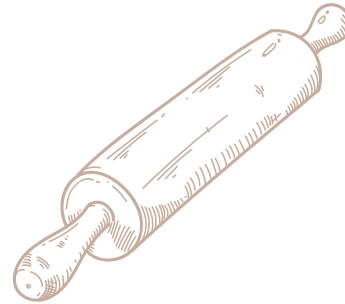




# CHAPATI

## Pakistan

Flat bread



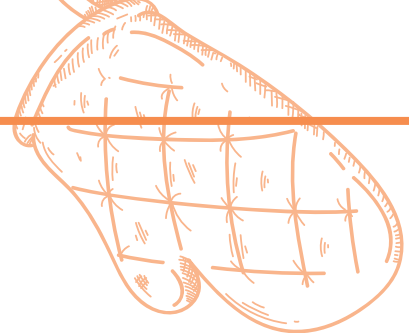
Ingredients	Instructions
2 cups of whole wheat flour ( <i>atta</i> )	1. Mix flour and salt.
$\frac{3}{4}$ cup of water (adjust as needed)	2. Gradually add water.
$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp of salt (optional)	3. Knead for 8-10 minutes into a smooth dough.
1 tbs of oil or <i>ghee</i> (optional, for softness)	4. Cover with a damp cloth, rest for 20-30 minutes.
<b>Serving:</b> 8-10 Pieces	5. Divide into small balls and roll each into a thin circle (6-8 inches).
	6. Cook on a hot skillet/ <i>tawa</i> for 30-40 sec, flip. When golden spots appear, flip again and press lightly; it may puff up.
	7. Serve hot and enjoy!



# PARATA

## Pakistan

Flat bread



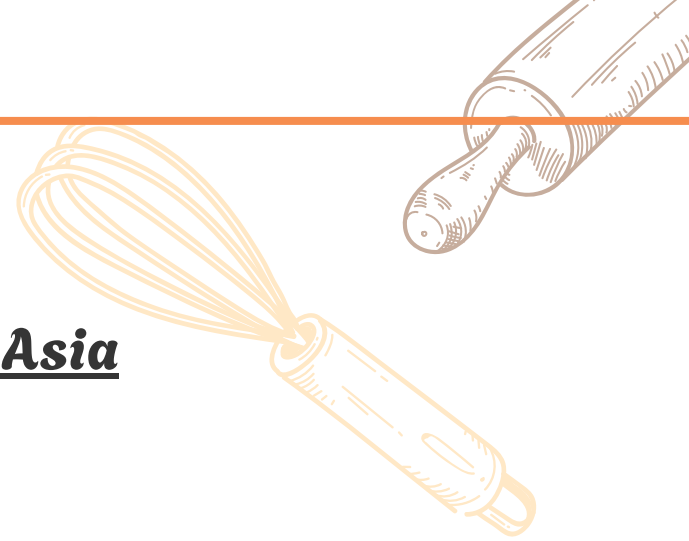
Ingredients	Instructions
2 cups of whole wheat flour ( <i>atta</i> )	1. Mix flour, salt, and oil. Add water gradually to form a soft dough.
½ tsp of salt	2. Rest for 20-30 minutes.
¾ cup of water (adjust as needed)	3. Divide into equal balls.
2 tbs of oil or <i>ghee</i> (for the dough)	4. Roll one thin sheet, brush with oil or <i>ghee</i> .
Extra oil or <i>ghee</i> (for cooking)	5. Fold into layers (square or triangle). Roll again into the desired shape.
<b>Serving:</b> 6-8 Pieces	6. Cook on a hot skillet, brushing with oil or <i>ghee</i> , until golden brown on both sides. 7. Serve hot and enjoy!



# NAAN

## South and West Asia

Flat bread



Ingredients	Instructions
2 cups of white flour ( <i>maida</i> ) (all-purpose)	
1 tsp of sugar	1. Melt the yeast with warm water and sugar, let it sit for 10 minutes until foamy.
½ tsp of salt	2. Mix flour, salt, yoghurt, and oil in a bowl.
1 tsp of active dry yeast	3. Add yeast mixture. Knead until it is soft and smooth (8-10 minutes).
2-3 tbs of yoghurt	4. Cover and let it rise for 1-2 hours until doubled.
2 tbs of oil or melted butter	5. Divide into balls. Roll into ovals or rounds (not too thin).
½ cup of warm water (adjust as needed)	6. Cook in a hot oven (250 °C), skillet, or <i>tandoor</i> , 2-3 minutes per side.
Extra butter or <i>ghee</i> for brushing	7. Brush with butter or <i>ghee</i> , and serve warm.
<b>Serving:</b> 6-8 Pieces	

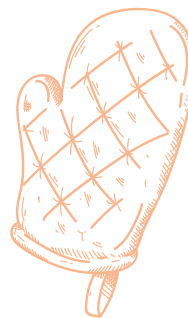


# AFGHANI BOLANI

## or *Boulanee e Katchaloo*

### Afghanistan

Flat bread



Ingredients for the dough	Ingredients for the filling	Instructions
3 1/2 cups of all-purpose flour	2 medium to large potatoes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Make the filling first. Boil the potatoes with a bit of salt until they are done and soft. Put them in a large bowl and add salt, oil, black pepper, and coriander powders. Mash the potatoes and the ingredients.</li> <li>2. Add the chopped coriander leaves and scallions and mix well. Keep aside.</li> <li>3. Now make the dough. Put flour, salt, and oil in a bowl. Slowly add 1 cup of water and knead until you have a smooth and elastic dough, adding as much more water as required.</li> </ol>
1 1/2 cups of water (as required)	1 tsp of salt	
1 tsp of salt	1 tsp of black pepper	
<b>Serving:</b> 8 Pieces	1 tsp of coriander powder	
	1/3 cup of fresh coriander leaves (finely chopped)	
	1/2 cup of scallions, finely chopped (both the white and green parts)	

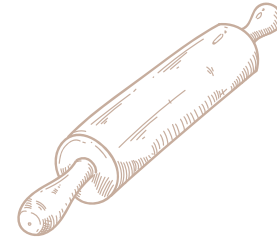


# AFGHANI BOLANI

## or *Boulanee e Katchaloo*

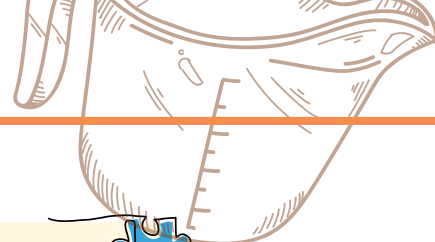
### Afghanistan

Flat bread




#### Instructions

4. Shape the dough into a ball and place it in an oiled bowl, cover with a cloth, and let it rest for about an hour.
5. Now make the Bolani. Divide the dough into 8 equal portions. Work with one portion at a time, keeping the others covered so they do not dry out.
6. Take one portion and roll it into a smooth ball. Flour your working surface lightly and roll out the ball of dough into a round shape. A thinner piece of dough is desirable.
7. Now add the ingredients to one half of the dough. Fold the dough over the filling to form a half-moon shape and press the edges with your fingers to seal well.
8. Repeat this with the rest of the dough and filling to make 8 Bolani.
9. Pour the oil into a shallow frying pan. When it is hot enough, place one Bolani in it. The oil around the Bolani should sizzle. Turn the heat down to medium, and cook the Bolani on both sides.
10. When done (it should take about a couple of minutes), the Bolani should be golden brown on both sides.
11. Let the Bolani drain on paper towels.
12. Add more oil when necessary and repeat this with the other 7.



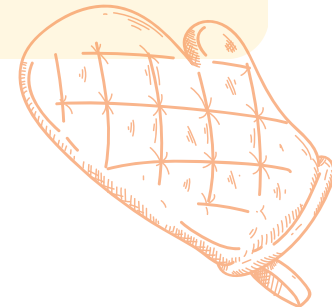
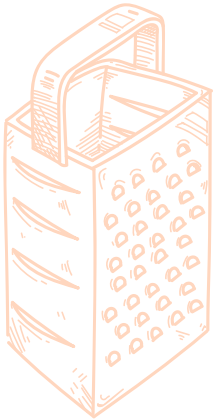

## Historical and Cultural Note



*Bolani* (also spelt as *Bulani* or *Boulanee*) is the Farsi word for “filled bread” and is an unleavened and stuffed turnover-style flatbread from Afghanistan. It is vegan and can be either savoury or sweet, and commonly used fillings include spinach, red lentils, pumpkin, chives (*gandana*), potatoes, onions, or scallions.

Afghanistan is geographically located on the historically important trade route called the Silk Road, which meant that Afghan cuisine shows the influence of other presences on that trade route, including Iran, Pakistan, India, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and China.

*Bolani* is unique to Afghanistan and is not only a much-loved street food but also served in homes as an appetiser or as a side dish at special events and parties. *Bolani e Katchaloo* is the version of the flatbread that is filled with mashed and seasoned potatoes. Sometimes, the potato filling includes chives or scallions. The *Bolani* is similar to the Indian stuffed flat bread called *paratha*, and the *Bolani e Katchaloo* is very much like the Indian *Aloo Paratha*.





## *Creative with Dough*

The mixture of flour and water (in its many different versions and manifestations) is closely related to human evolution: only human beings can 'create' a new food from ingredients that are available in nature, and 'cook' it. This is what distinguishes human beings from animals: it is culture vs. nature.

In the previous section, we have seen how flour and water are the basic ingredients for bread. These same ingredients are also used across the world to make a different type of dough used for pasta and noodles.

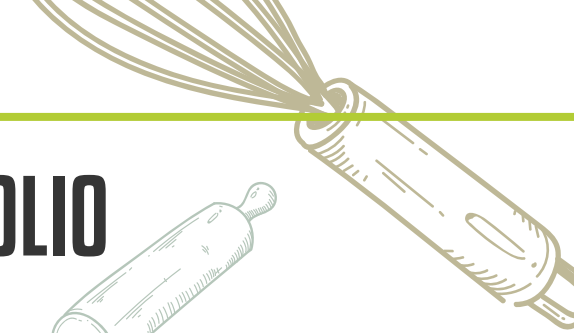
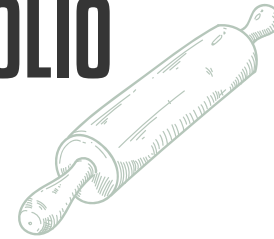
Pasta dough can be stuffed with a wide variety of ingredients to create dumplings in many different shapes (round, half moon, square, triangle, or pinched to resemble a 'hat', etc.). In many cultures, such traditional shapes and decorations can also be highly symbolic; for instance, they can refer to specific religious celebrations.



# SPAGHETTI AGLIO, OLIO E PEPERONCINO

Italy

Spaghetti with garlic, olive oil, and chilli pepper



Ingredients	Instructions
300 g of spaghetti	1. Pour a good quantity of high-quality olive oil into a pan; make sure that the base of the pan is completely covered.
2 garlic cloves	2. Cut the garlic cloves into very small pieces and slice the red hot chilli pepper into thin pieces.
1 red chilli pepper	3. Put the garlic and the chilli pepper in the pan, add some salt and black pepper (according to taste).
Extra-virgin olive oil	4. Boil water in a pot and cook the spaghetti "al dente", in the meantime, heat the pan and let the oil, garlic and chilli pepper fry softly for a couple of minutes (they should not burn nor get very brown).
Salt	5. Drain the spaghetti and put it in the pan, adding a spoonful of the boiling water.
Black pepper	6. Stir for one minute and serve covered with parsley (optional).
Parsley (optional)	
<b>Serving:</b> 4	



# SPAGHETTI AGLIO, OLIO E PEPERONCINO

Italy

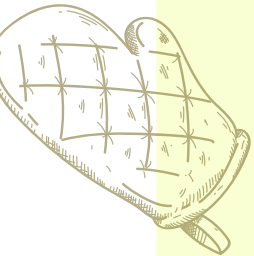
Spaghetti with garlic, olive oil, and chilli pepper

## Historical and Cultural Note

The history of pasta narrates the multifaceted and multicultural history of Italian cuisine.

The fresh version of pasta (*pasta fresca*), the one made with flour, water and eggs, is the most ancient one and was widely spread during ancient Roman times. Nevertheless, the most common pasta that Italians eat every day is dry pasta (*pasta secca*), whose only two ingredients are durum wheat flour and water. This kind of pasta was introduced by the Arabs during the Middle Ages, when they ruled Sicily, and was indicated by the Arabic word *itriya* (this word is still used in Sicilian dialects).

The recipe described above also includes spices (in this case, hot chilli pepper). Until the end of the Middle Ages, spices were a luxury that only rich people could afford; they were a status symbol and differentiated the food of the nobility from the food of the lower classes. Spices arrived from the East, thanks to expensive travels and trades.



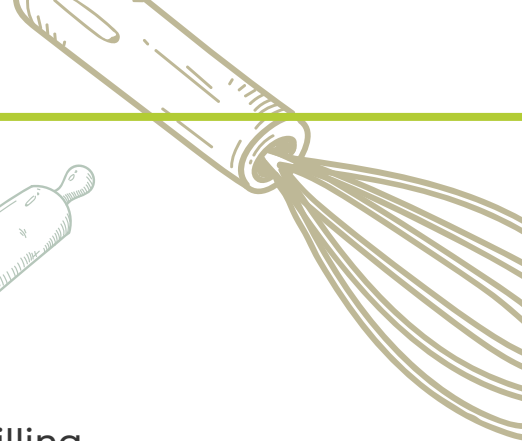
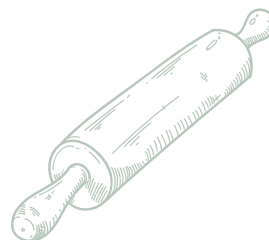


# VARENYKY

## (Savoury)

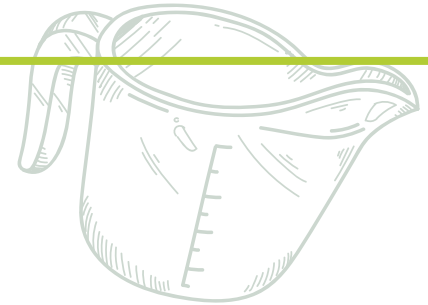
### Ukraine

Varenyky with potato and onion filling



"Varenyky" by Bo&Ko is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0.

Ingredients for the dough	Ingredients for the filling	Instructions
400 g all-purpose flour	600 g potatoes	<p><b>Prepare the dough:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In a large bowl, mix the flour and salt.</li> <li>2. In another bowl, whisk together warm water, egg, and oil.</li> <li>3. Pour the liquid mixture into the flour and obtain a dough.</li> <li>4. Knead for 5–7 minutes until smooth and elastic.</li> <li>5. Cover the dough with a bowl or wrap and let it rest for 20–30 minutes.</li> </ol>
200 ml warm water	200 g onions	
1 egg	40–50 g butter or 30 ml oil	
1 tbsp oil (about 15 ml)	50–70 ml milk or cream (optional for extra creaminess)	
1 tsp salt (about 6 g)	Salt and pepper to taste	
<b>Serving:</b> 4 Pieces	<b>Ingredients to serve</b>	
	40–60 g butter for tossing cooked varenyky	
	Sour cream (optional)	



# VARENYKY

## (Savoury)

### Ukraine

Varenyky with potato and onion filling

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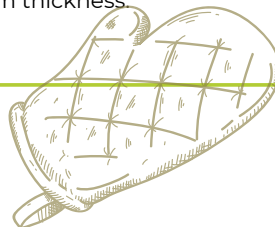
#### Instructions

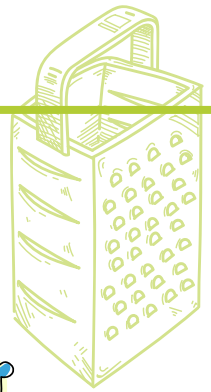
##### **Make the Filling:**

6. Peel and cut potatoes into chunks.
7. Boil in salted water until very soft (15–20 minutes).
8. Drain the potatoes and mash them smooth; add milk or cream.
9. Finely chop the onions.
10. Fry onions in butter or oil until golden and sweet (8–12 minutes).
11. Mix onions and mashed potatoes.
12. Season with salt and pepper according to taste.
13. Let the filling to cool completely.

##### **Form and cook the Varenyky:**

14. Roll the rested dough to about 2–3 mm thickness.
15. Cut circles about 7–8 cm in diameter using a cookie cutter or glass.
16. Place about 1 teaspoon of filling in the centre of each circle.
17. Fold the dough over and pinch firmly to seal the edges (press again to ensure no filling leaks).
18. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil.
19. Drop varenyky in batches; stir gently to prevent sticking.
20. Cook until they float plus 1–2 minutes (about 4–5 minutes total).
21. Remove with a slotted spoon and toss with butter.
22. Serve hot with butter and/or sour cream.
23. For richer taste, fry boiled varenyky in butter until golden.





### Historical and Cultural Note



Like most meals in Ukrainian cuisine, varenyky are a highly nutritious dish. Made of dough, it can include various fillings, from potatoes and cabbage to cottage cheese or cherries.

Preparing varenyky is a time-consuming process of dedication and patience; it is something we learn from our grandmothers. Varenyky is a dish you love to cook and enjoy eating.

In a family circle, dining with friends, and having a snack, it suits every occasion. Varenyky is something we always have in our freezer; it is often the number one dinner choice.

This dish represents strength and takes a special place in the heart.



## Heartwarming Food

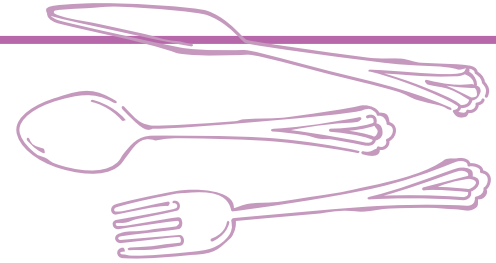


# FRITTATA IN TRIPPA

Italy

Fake tripe or tripe-like omelette

Ingredients	Instructions
4 eggs	1. Beat the eggs and add some salt and pepper according to taste.
300 g of tomato sauce or 400 g of canned peeled tomatoes	2. Add some olive oil to a large pan and fry the eggs.
1 small onion	3. Once the omelette is cooked, remove it from the pan and put it on a plate.
Extra-virgin olive oil	4. In the same pan, add some more olive oil and one chopped onion, and let it fry on low heat for a few minutes.
Salt	5. Then add the tomato sauce (or peeled tomatoes if you prefer), season it with salt and pepper and let it cook for 20 minutes (add some water if it gets too thick).
Black pepper	6. In the meantime, roll the omelette and slice it into very thin pieces (around 0.5 cm).
<b>Serving:</b> 4	7. Once the tomato sauce is cooked, add the sliced omelette and let it cook for 10 minutes.
	8. Your fake tripe is ready! Serve and enjoy!



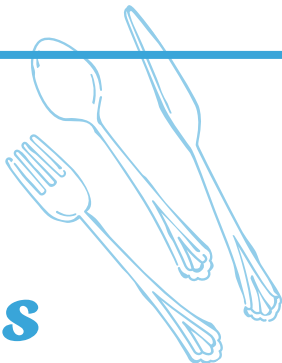
### Historical and Cultural Note

This recipe recounts a very common past habit: until the beginning of last century, when meat was very expensive and could only be consumed by wealthy people or on special occasions, the poor tried to find surrogates for it, and eggs were a good option since in farms they were always easily available.

So this recipe narrates the desire to eat something that could recall the appearances of meat while using cheaper ingredients, a sort of self-deception and a way to fool one's senses.



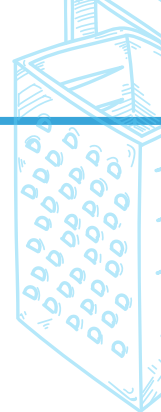
# Rice Dishes



## KABULI PULAO

### Afghanistan

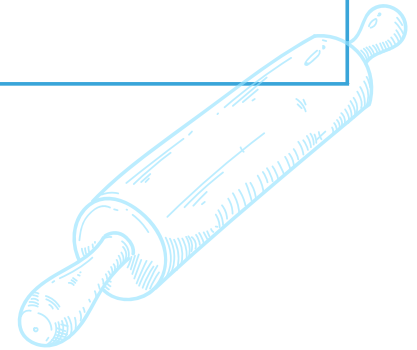
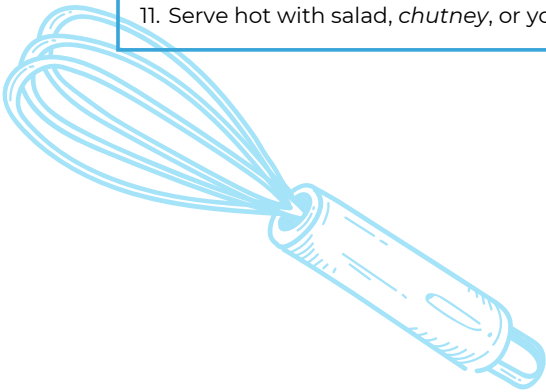
Rice Pulao



Ingredients for the rice	Ingredients for the meat	Ingredients for the topping
2 cups basmati rice	500 g lamb or beef (bone-in pieces preferred)	1 carrot
	1 sliced onion	¼ cup raisins
3 cups water	1 tsp garlic paste	2 spoons sugar
	1 tsp ginger paste	2 spoons oil or <i>ghee</i>
2 tbsp oil or <i>ghee</i>	1 tsp cumin powder	¼ cup slivered almonds or pistachios (optional)
	1 tsp coriander powder	
Salt (to taste)	½ tsp <i>garam masala</i> (optional)	
<b>Serving:</b> 4	2 cups water	
	Salt (to taste)	

## Instructions

1. First, heat oil in a pot, and fry the sliced onion until golden. Add ginger and garlic paste, then the meat and all spices. Sauté for a few minutes until the meat changes colour.
2. Add 2 cups of water, cover, and simmer until the meat is tender (about 45–60 minutes).
3. Then, wash and soak rice for 30 minutes.
4. In a separate pot, bring water to a boil with salt and a little oil.
5. Add rice and cook until 80% done, then drain and set aside.
6. Now prepare the topping. In a pan, heat oil and add sugar, and let it caramelize slightly. Cut carrots into thin julienne strips and add them to the pan. Sauté until soft.
7. Add raisins and almonds, toss for 1–2 minutes, then remove.
8. Finally, in a heavy-bottomed pot, spread half the rice, add the cooked meat with its gravy and top with the remaining rice.
9. Sprinkle the carrot-raisin mixture on top. Cover tightly (you can seal with foil or a cloth under the lid). Steam (on very low heat) for 15–20 minutes.
10. Gently mix before serving so the toppings distribute nicely.
11. Serve hot with salad, *chutney*, or yoghurt, and enjoy!





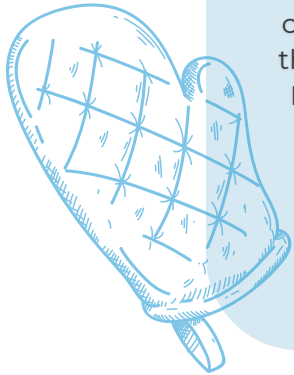
### Historical and Cultural Note

Originally a Pashtun delicacy, *Kabuli Pulao* has become the national dish of Afghanistan, a symbol of generosity and celebration shared across the country.

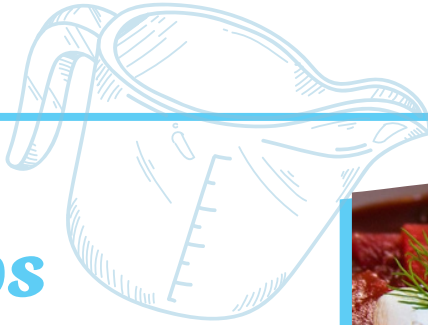
In Pashtun culture, hospitality (*melmastia*) is sacred: welcoming a guest with food and warmth is both an honour and a duty. *Kabuli Pulao* embodies that spirit: a meal that speaks of kindness, pride, and the joy of sharing.

In the heart of Afghanistan's mountains, where the scent of spices drifts through the air and the sound of sizzling rice fills the kitchen, this dish tells the story of a people. Once reserved to noble feasts, it now graces wedding tables, festive gatherings, and family celebrations alike. Each grain of rice carries a story, tender lamb recalls the country's pastoral roots, sweet carrots and raisins speak of life's gentle pleasures, and the intense taste of spices whispers of the ancient Silk Road. They say no guest leaves Kabul without tasting its *pulao*: served at the centre of the table and shared among friends, it captures the essence of Afghan (in the original meaning of Pashtun) hospitality: generous, proud, and deeply human.

Every bite is a small journey through memory, heritage, and love.



# Soups and Stews



## BORSCHT

### Ukraine

Ukrainian Soup

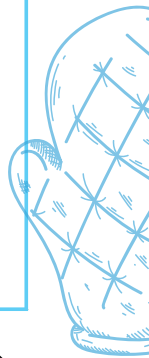
Borscht served\* by Liz West is licensed under [Wikimedia Commons](#)



Ingredients	
2 beets	5 grains of allspice
1 large onion	White vinegar to taste (start with $\frac{1}{8}$ cup and add as needed)
2 potatoes	Salt and pepper to taste
2 carrots	Dill fresh or dry, to taste (start with 1 teaspoon dry dill or half a bunch of fresh dill)
4 garlic cloves minced	Fresh parsley and/or cilantro (optional)
6 cups water	Sour cream ( <i>smetana</i> ) (optional)
2 cups chopped frozen vegetables mix or 1 cup frozen green peas	<b>Vegetarian option</b>
Bay leaf	



## Instructions

1. Peel and dice the following into small cubes: beet roots, onion, carrots, and potatoes.
  2. Mince garlic.
  3. Add vegetable oil to a heavy-bottomed pot.
  4. Add the beets and sauté until a bit softened, about 30 minutes, covering after 10 minutes. Uncover, add the carrots and sauté for an additional 15 minutes.
  5. Add the onion and garlic, and sauté for another 10 minutes before adding the potatoes and water.
  6. Cover, increase the heat and bring to boil.
  7. Once boiling, add bay leaf and allspice, reduce the heat to medium and let everything cook together until all vegetables are soft, about 20-30 mins.
  8. Add the frozen vegetables and chopped herbs.
  9. Taste, and season with vinegar, salt and pepper, as needed.
  10. Serve with sour cream and more herbs.
  11. You can eat the *borscht* right then, though it is best allowed to rest overnight for the flavours to come together.
- 



## Historical and Cultural Note



*Borscht* is a family dish; it is an everyday food, and it is every mother's own recipe. You know you are home when you smell the sweet and sour aroma. It is a dish that has no limits; its ingredients might vary. In Autumn, it is common to add mushrooms and meat; in Spring, it can be a cooling vegetarian option, but it always includes beets that give it its unique colour. A hot plate of ruby-red *borscht* is perfectly warming for an Autumn day. Often, you will add a generous spoonful of sour cream, and its colour changes to a pleasant crimson.

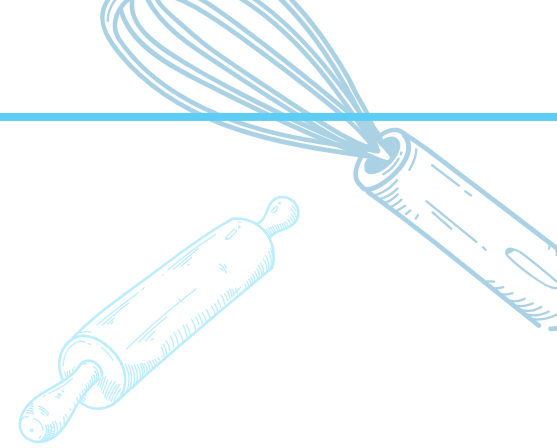
*Borscht* is a favourite food that always brings comfort; it reflects how we cherish our family and tradition. UNESCO included *borscht* in the list of intangible cultural heritage in need of protection and called it "an integral part of the Ukrainian family and everyday life."



# SHINWARI ROSH

## Pakistan

Traditional Pashtun Dish



Ingredients	Instructions
1 kg of mutton or beef (preferably with bones and a bit of fat)	1. First, prepare the meat. Wash the meat and drain well.
1 large onion (quartered)	2. In a heavy pot (preferably a <i>degchi</i> or pressure cooker), add the meat, onion, garlic, salt, and water. If you choose to use animal fat (tallow), add it now: this gives the real <i>Shinwari</i> aroma.
1 whole garlic bulb (cut in half across the middle)	3. Bring to boil, skim off any foam on top.
1 ½ teaspoon of salt (or to taste)	4. Lower the heat, cover tightly, and let it simmer for 1.5-2 hours (until the meat is soft and the broth is rich). If using a pressure cooker, cook for about 30-35 minutes on low heat after the first whistle.
½ teaspoon of black pepper (optional)	5. Once the meat is tender, check the broth and add a pinch of salt or black pepper if desired.
1 green chilli (optional)	6. If you like a slightly spicier version, slit a green chilli and add it for the last 5-10 minutes of simmering.
3-4 cups of water	7. Serve hot in deep bowls with the clear broth and meat pieces.
2 tbsp of animal fat (tallow) or oil (optional, for richer flavour)	8. Enjoy with Afghani <i>naan</i> or <i>tandoori roti</i> . Traditionally served with fresh salad, lemon wedges, and green <i>chutney</i> on the side.
<b>Serving:</b> 4	



### Historical and Cultural Note

*Rosh* (also called *Peshawari Rosh* or *Shinwari Rosh*) is one of the most iconic Pashtun dishes from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, especially famous in Kunduz, Peshawar, and Quetta. It's a simple meat broth (usually mutton or beef), it is slow-cooked in its own juices, there are no heavy *masalas* (strong spices), just pure meat flavour with salt, garlic, and sometimes black pepper.

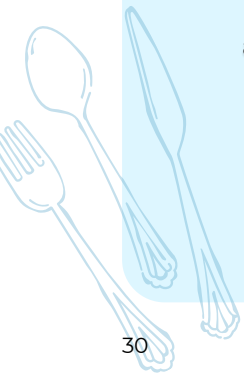
Among the Pashtun people, hospitality (*melmastia*) is a sacred duty, and welcoming a guest with warmth and food is an act of honour.

The Shinwari, a Pashtun tribe from the rugged borderlands between Afghanistan and Pakistan, embody this tradition through their signature dish: *Rosh*. Simple yet profound, it reflects the values of their land: strength, generosity, and purity.

Traditionally, *Shinwari Rosh* is prepared in large metal pots over open wood fires. The meat simmers for hours as family and friends gather around, sharing stories and tea while the aroma fills the air. When a visitor arrives, a fresh batch is often started, because *Rosh* is not merely food: it is a gesture of respect, community, and timeless Pashtun pride.

The Pashtuns, also known as Pathans, are one of the oldest and most deeply rooted peoples of Central and South Asia. Their cuisines mirror their landscapes and ways of life: from the robust, meat-rich dishes of the *Shinwari* to the lighter, spiced foods of the eastern highlands.

Every recipe carries the flavour of a tribe, a landscape, and a way of being, all bound by the generosity that lies at the heart of the Pashtun spirit.





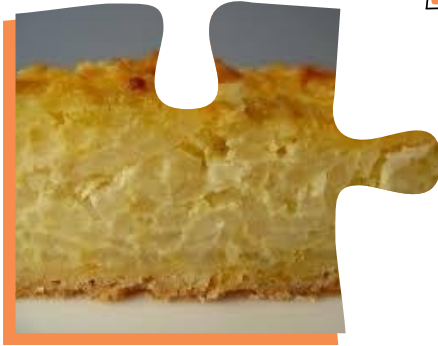
## **RICE DESSERTS**

Until the Renaissance, rice was considered a spice, and its consumption was usually limited to the higher social classes. When transportations and travels made rice more easily available, it started to have a sort of double identity: on the one hand, it was indicated by doctors as a kind of food suitable for children, the elderly and sick people; on the other hand, the influence of French cuisine started to spread new refined recipes, underlying the qualities of rice and its versatility.

***Sweet  
Greetings!***

### Historical and Cultural Note

This recipe is an example of a delicate and refined cake made with rice; its origin dates back to the Renaissance time: it used to be a traditional cake for the *Corpus Domini* holiday in Bologna.



# TORTA DI RISO

## or *Budino di Riso alla Toscana*

### Italy

Tuscan-style rice custard or cake

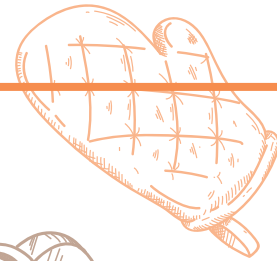
#### Ingredients

1 litre of full-fat milk  
250 g of arborio rice  
1 vanilla pod  
1 lemon zest  
100 g of peeled almonds  
100 g of raisins (optional)  
130 g of sugar  
3 eggs  
1 pinch of salt

Powdered sugar

#### Instructions

1. Soak the raisins in warm water.
2. Boil the milk together with the lemon zest, vanilla seeds, 50 gr of sugar and a pinch of salt.
3. Add the rice and cook on a low heat for 20 minutes, until the milk is completely absorbed and the rice becomes creamy. Stir often so that it does not stick to the bottom of the pot.
4. Let the rice cool down.
5. Roast the almonds and blend them very finely with a spoonful of sugar.
6. Cover an oven tray with baking paper.
7. Add drained raisins and almonds to the rice and stir accurately.
8. Whip the 3 eggs with the remaining sugar and add them gently to the rice dough.
9. Pour the dough into the oven tray and bake at 160°C for 50 minutes, then at 180°C for 10 minutes.
10. When the rice cake is cool, add powdered sugar on top of it.



# CHAWAL KHEER

## Pakistan

### Rice Pudding

Ingredients	Instructions
1 litre of full-fat milk (about 4 cups)	1. First, prepare the rice: wash it and soak it in water for 30 minutes.
¼ cup of basmati rice	2. Drain and crush it lightly (you can grind coarsely or crush with your hands, not into powder).
½ cup of sugar (adjust to taste)	3. Then prepare the milk by pouring it into a heavy-bottomed pot and bringing it to boil. Add cardamom pods for fragrance.
3-4 green cardamom pods ( <i>elaichi</i> )	4. Add the soaked, crushed rice to the boiling milk and stir continuously for a few minutes so that it does not stick.
2 tbs of condensed milk (optional, for extra creaminess)	5. Reduce the flame to low and cook for 40-50 minutes, stirring occasionally: the milk will reduce and thicken, and the rice will become soft and creamy.
2 tbs of chopped nuts (almonds, pistachios, cashews)	6. Add sugar and stir until dissolved. Add condensed milk (optional), saffron, and a bit of <i>kewra</i> or rose water.
1 tbsp of <i>kewra</i> water or rose water (for aroma)	7. Mix well and simmer for another 5-10 minutes.
A few strands of saffron (optional)	8. Garnish with chopped nuts: stir them in or sprinkle them on top when serving.
	9. You can serve it hot, especially comforting in winter, or chilled (let it cool, then refrigerate for 3-4 hours before serving), which is popular in summer.



### Historical and Cultural Note

There are several versions of this recipe (traditional *chawal kheer*, *seviyan kheer*, baked *kheer*, etc.), but this one is for the authentic Pakistani-style *Chawal Kheer* (Rice *Kheer*): rich, simple, and perfectly creamy.



If you really want to make a perfect *Kheer*:

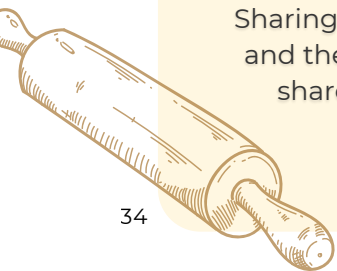
- always use a heavy pot to avoid burning the milk and stir often, especially once the milk thickens;
- add condensed milk or cream for a richer texture;
- add a few raisins or coconut flakes, if you like.

In Pakistan, *Chawal Kheer* is more than just a dessert. It is a symbol of celebration, blessing, and togetherness. From village kitchens to urban homes, *Kheer* marks moments of joy: weddings, Eid festivities, the birth of a child, or the breaking of the Ramadan fast.

Its preparation is slow and patient: the milk is reduced over low flame until creamy and fragrant, often enriched with saffron, almonds, or pistachios.

Each family guards its own way of making it, passed down through generations.

Sharing *Kheer* is an act of hospitality and devotion. It is often distributed to neighbours, friends, and the poor as *sadaqah* (charitable offering), embodying the Pakistani belief that sweetness shared brings blessings multiplied. In every spoonful, there is warmth, gratitude, and the gentle sweetness of community.



# Desserts With Grain



## KUTYA

### Ukraine

Sweet porridge cooked only for the Winter Holidays (Ukrainian Christmas)

"Kutia in traditional Ukrainian bowl 2023" by Віщун is licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0



Ingredients	Instructions
350 g wheat grains	1. Wash the wheat grains thoroughly and let them soak overnight in cold water.
200 g poppy seeds	2. The next morning, drain and rinse the grains and cook them until tender over low heat, until soft and crumbly.
200 g walnuts	3. Cool the wheat grains and mix them with 1 tbsp of honey.
150 g raisins	4. Place the poppy seeds and raisins in separate bowls and soak them in boiling water for 30 minutes.
3 tbsp honey	5. Drain the poppy seeds, add 1 tbsp of honey, and grind them in a blender.
<i>Uzvar</i> (dried fruit punch) (optional)	6. Fry the nuts until crispy in a small frying pan.
	7. Drain the raisins.
	8. Mix the wheat, poppy seeds, and raisins. Add the remaining 1 tbsp of honey. If the Kutya is too thick, add some uzvar.



### Historical and Cultural Note

*Kutya* is one of the most symbolic dishes in Ukrainian culture and tradition. This dish originates in Ancient Greece and has roots deeply embedded in Ukrainian customs.

Originally, *Kutya* was made on a wheat basis; nowadays, rice or other cereals are also used in alternative recipes. When wheat is boiled and dressed with honey and poppy seeds, it creates a smooth, sweet flavour. It is also customary to add nuts and dried fruit, as this dish is a sweet one in the tradition of a holiday.

*Kutya* is prepared for major holidays when the family gathers together. In the light of candles in a family circle, it is common to remember those who have passed, expressing gratitude, and celebrating life.



# Other Desserts



## VARENYKY (Sweet) Ukraine

Sweet dumplings with cherries

"Vareniki" by Brücke-Osteuropa is licensed under the Wikimedia Commons



Ingredients for the dough	Ingredients for the filling	Ingredients to serve
400 g all-purpose flour	450–500 g pitted sour cherries (fresh or frozen)	Additional sugar (5–15 g) to sweeten sour cream if desired
200 ml warm water	60–80 g sugar (adjust to taste)	150–200 g sour cream ( <i>smetana</i> )
1 egg (optional)	10 g cornstarch (or 1 tbsp)	
15 ml oil	a few drops vanilla extract (optional)	
6 g salt		
<b>Serving:</b> 4		

## Instructions

### For the Dough:

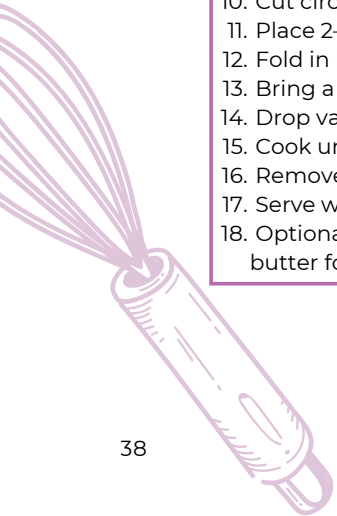
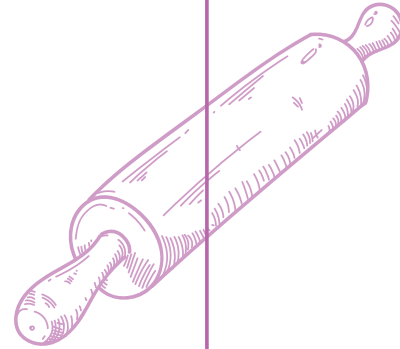
1. In a large bowl, combine flour and salt.
2. Mix warm water, egg (if using), and oil in another bowl.
3. Pour liquid ingredients into the flour; mix until the dough forms.
4. Knead 5–7 minutes until smooth and elastic.
5. Cover and let rest for 20–30 minutes.

### For the Cherry Filling:

6. If using frozen cherries, thaw in advance and drain excess juice (reserve for syrup if you like).
7. In a bowl, gently mix cherries with sugar, cornstarch, and vanilla (optional).
8. Keep chilled until ready to fill; colder filling leaks less.

### Form and cook the varenyky:

9. Roll the rested dough to 2–3 mm thickness.
10. Cut circles about 7–8 cm in diameter.
11. Place 2–3 cherries with a little sugar mixture into each dough circle.
12. Fold in half and pinch edges tightly to seal (you may crimp or double-seal for safety).
13. Bring a large pot of lightly salted water to boil.
14. Drop varenyky in small batches.
15. Cook until they float plus 1 minute (3–4 minutes total).
16. Remove with a slotted spoon.
17. Serve warm with sour cream (plain or mixed with a little sugar).
18. Optionally, spoon leftover cherry juice over the top. You can also lightly fry the boiled varenyky in butter for a golden edge and a richer taste.



# Quench Your Thirst! Warm Drink

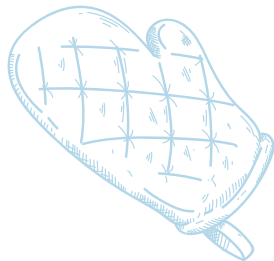


## CHAE Pakistan



Traditional Pashtun Chai

Ingredients	Instructions
Water (cups depending on serving)	1. In a small pan, pour a little water and add the cardamom pods. Bring it to a gentle boil so the aroma releases.
Fresh milk (as needed for the number of cups)	2. Add the milk and bring it to a full boil.
Black tea powder	3. Stir in the black tea powder and let it simmer until the colour deepens to a warm caramel tone.
A few green cardamom pods, lightly crushed	4. Sweeten to taste: cane sugar gives a delicate sweetness, but <i>gurr</i> (more traditionally used), the Pashto word for jaggery, adds depth and earthiness, recalling the flavour of rural hearths and wood fires.
Cane sugar or <i>gurr</i> (unrefined jaggery)	5. Strain into small cups and serve hot, with warmth in your hands and kindness in your heart.



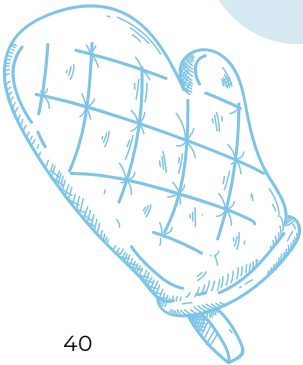


## Historical and Cultural Note

“*Chai ske?*” (Shall we have some tea?)

In Pashtun and Pakistani homes, these words are a heartfelt gesture of welcome; offering tea means opening one’s door and one’s heart. It marks friendship, hospitality, and that sacred moment pause when life slows down long enough for conversation and connection.

A cup of *chai* is not merely a drink: it is a ritual that binds people together. The scent of boiling milk and cardamom fills the air, the clinking of cups echoes softly, and time seems to stretch, just enough to remind you that you are home.



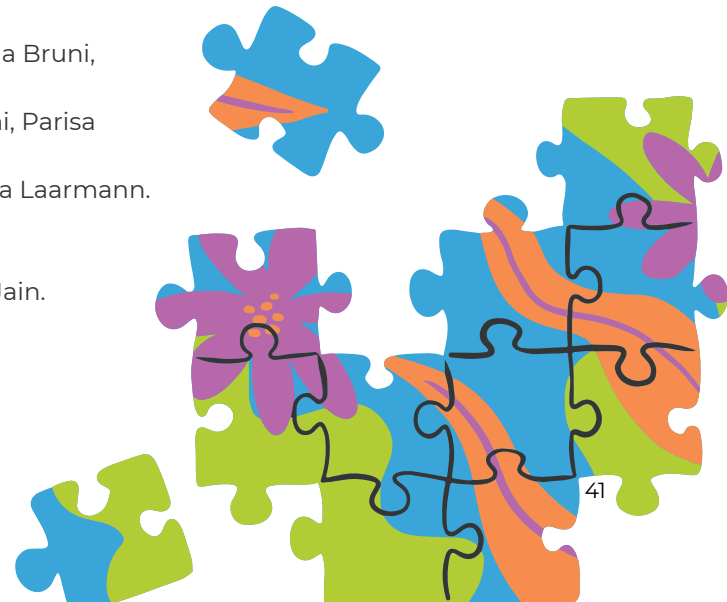


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MILAGRO

Migrants and Local communities  
Actively GROWing together for  
inclusive societies