

Azerbaijani Caramel

Halva

As Afet Nadirova from Baku, Azerbaijan, taught Lindsay Sterling in South Portland, Maine, February 25, 2012

Serves: about 30

Cooking Time: about 1 hr

Ingredients

- 3 sticks butter
- 2-3 cups flour
- 3 cups sugar
- 2 1/2 cups water
- pinch salt
- 1/2 tsp turmeric

Accompaniments:

- fresh grapes
- fresh strawberries
- fresh blackberries
- Earl Gray tea
- cardamon
- 1 lemon, sliced

Instructions

1. In a 6 quart soup pot, mix sugar and water and heat until the sugar dissolves and you have simple syrup. Remove from heat.

2. In a large saute pan with at least 2-inch high sides, melt the butter. Turn to low heat (setting 3 out of 10). Add flour and stir with a wooden spoon until the butter and flour mixture is a thick dough that looks like maple sugar candy, roux, or peanut butter cookie dough.

3. Continue to mash the mixture with the back of the spoon, and stir around for about 50 minutes.

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4. When the mixture turns from a dry dough to a thick paste with a wet shimmer to it, add a pinch of salt and 1/2 tsp turmeric, and keep stirring.
5. Put a pot of water on for tea.
6. When the color of the mixture has darkened to a deep caramel, remove from stove and put the pan on a trivet on the counter. (This should be just shy of an hour after starting)
7. Steep earl gray tea with cardamom pods.
8. Pour the simple syrup into the butter and flour mixture, stirring as vigorously as you can with the spoon without splashing. Use enough of the simple syrup to make a thick paste that's between a liquid and a solid.
9. Fill salad plates with large spoonfuls that spread out to the edges of the plate. Decorate the top of the halva by imprinting the tip of the spoon repeatedly, making a decoration of three columns of indents.
10. Serve plates of halva to guests along with an assortment of other chocolates and pastries, fresh fruit, and Earl Grey tea steeped with cardamom.