

Iraqi-Jewish Oral History | Ghetto In Diwaniya, Iraq 1941: Lynette's interview With Daniel Sasson

ראיון עם דניאל ששון בעברית עם כתוביות באנגלית: הגטו בדיווניה, עיראק Jan. 15, 2020

I had the honor of interviewing Daniel Sasson about his book, "The Untold Story" (available in Hebrew). Inspired by the ghettos in Europe during the Holocaust in 1941, then Iraqi Prime Minister Rashid Ali set up a Nazi-like ghetto for over 600 Jews in the small city of Diwaniya, located just outside Baghdad.

Daniel was only 5 years old, and his family was one of the most prominent Jewish families in Iraq at the time. A couple days after the ghetto's release came the 'Farhud', a pogrom in which hundreds of Jewish homes were looted and destroyed, 200 Jews murdered, thousands injured, and Jewish life in Iraq forever changed. Its 79th anniversary was a few days ago.

Daniel was one of my first interviewees last summer, when I was conducting interviews for my Master's thesis. I spent the entire Fall semester processing the things he and other interviewees told me- stories I couldn't get out of my head for months. I am honored to have met such a resilient person like him, and I believe that English-speaking communities have so much to gain by learning about the stories and experiences of Iraqi Jews.

(If the English translations don't come up automatically, press "CC")

היה לי כבוד להיפגש עם דניאל ששון ולדבר על הספר שלו, "הסיפור שלא סופר", על הגטו הראשון (והאחרון) בעיראק. אין לי מספיק מילים להודות לו על ההזדמנות הזאת. למדתי על ההשפעה של הנאציים בעיראק, חיים שלו בבגדד, ומה קרה בתוך הגטו. הקהילה היהודי העיראקית חזקה מאוד, עשירה, ומלא עם סיפורים מדהימים ☺ זה כדאי לשמוע, להבין, וללמוד מהם.

"CC" אם אין כתוביות באנגלית, לחץ על

The Art of Cooking - Kubba Shawandar



This dish reminds me of my grandmother in Israel. Whenever I visited my grandmother as a kid this was what I was looking forward to the most.

And my grandmother knew this and always made sure to fill my plate with kubba!

The smell of cooking this dish gives me a great feeling of nostalgia.

Kubba Shawandar looks more difficult to make than it is and I hope you will try it out yourself.

The ingredients are very easily obtained and the flavour is a classic Iraqi Jewish taste.

Ingredients:

For the soup:

- 3 medium sized onions
- 4 medium sized red beets (or 2 cans)
- 1 small can tomato paste
- 1 lemon
- 2 dried bay leaves
- sugar
- salt & pepper
- paprika powder
- olive oil
- 1 liter of chicken broth

Beef mixture:

lean ground beef
1 onion
salt
fresh parsley
ras el hanout
turmeric

Kubba dough:

semolina
water
salt

Making the kubba balls:

Start with mixing the beef with minced onion and minced parsley in a bowl.

Add the salt, ras el hanout and turmeric and mix well.

(make a small patty and pan fry it, taste this for salt and seasoning make sure it is not too bland)

In another bowl add 2 cups of semolina with salt and 1 cup of water mix until it is a sticky dough.

Do not over mix it and make sure it stays sticky and does not become a dry dough.

Next let's make these kubba balls. In your hand take a small ball of dough and press a hole in it with your thumb.

Add the beef mixture into the dent and start folding the rest of the dough around it.

Once the beef has been covered squeeze the ball lightly and roll it around in your hand to form it into a ball shape.

When done place it on a non-stick surface and continue making the rest, do not let them touch each other!!!

(you can be a bit rough with making these balls)

Making the soup:

In a big pot we start with caramelizing diced onions with olive oil.

When the onions become translucent add all the dry ingredients.

(bay leaves, salt, sugar & pepper, paprika powder)

Give a quick mix and when all the dry ingredients have become a single mixture add the bite size diced red beets.

Fry for a couple of minutes on low heat, when it starts to become dry add the tomato paste, chicken stock and lemon juice.

Mix well!

Wait until the soup starts simmering on low heat.

Once the soup starts simmering gently place the kubba balls we made to the soup. These solidify very quickly once they go into the soup.

Add all the balls to the soup. You can make small meatballs with any leftover meat and throw them to the soup as well.

Make sure everything is covered with liquid and simmer for 45 minutes.

Always taste for salt before serving!

Garnish with some fresh parsley.

Kubba Shawandar has a neutral taste and works well with some salad, bread or rice.

Beteavon!