

Winter 2013

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Lighten Up: Eating  
Well This Winter P22

The "Cold War" P38

# Halal Consumer

A Publication of the Islamic Food and Nutrition Council of America | **magazine**

*Warm Up*  
HAPPINESS IN A  
BOWL P10







**J&M®** halal certified meals use only wholesome ingredients and have **NO MSG, NO SOY, and NO ARTIFICIAL FLAVORS OR COLORS**. Six varieties are gluten-free. Each meal is fully cooked and is conveniently packaged in either 10 oz. (283 g) microwaveable serving dishes or 8 oz. (227 g) travel and camping pouches. Reheat to eat in minutes.

**LAMB & BARLEY STEW:** Tender lamb, combined with barley, eggplant, red and green sweet peppers, zucchini and onions, create a true culinary delight! A scrumptious meal with a variety of textures, it is deliciously seasoned with herbs and spices of the Middle East.

**CHICKEN MEDITERRANEAN:** A hearty chicken meal with the flavors of the Mediterranean. Chunks of light and dark chicken with tomatoes, potatoes, chick peas and black olives in a tangy sauce.

**CHICKEN & NOODLES:** Chunks of light and dark chicken with Kluski noodles, peas, corn and carrots in a light sauce. A winning combination!

**BEEF STEW:** This satisfying stew is absolutely delicious. It has chunks of beef with chunks of potatoes, sweet peppers, tomatoes, cabbage, zucchini, chick peas and carrots in a flavorful sauce.

**CHEESE TORTELLINI:** Cheese-filled tortellini in a well-seasoned tomato sauce with the added protein of pinto beans. Excellent texture and flavor!

**VEGETARIAN STEW:** A meal perfect for vegetarian and hearty eaters alike! With macaroni, vegetables, potatoes, barley, lentils, peanuts and seasonings, this meal has great taste and a variety of textures.

**LAMB & LENTIL STEW:** Tender lamb joins a medley of tomatoes, lentils, onions, chickpeas, zucchini and red and green sweet peppers. Aromatic herbs and spices invite all to taste and enjoy this truly delicious meal.

**MY KIND OF CHICKEN:** A favorite combination! Chunks of light and dark chicken with brown rice, peas and carrots in a mild sauce.

**CHICKEN & BLACK BEANS:** A flavor from the southwestern states, this meal has chunks of light and dark chicken with delicious and nutritious black beans, tomatoes, potatoes, sweet peppers, corn and kidney beans. Simple seasoning brings out its full flavor.

**OLD WORLD STEW:** Chunks of beef, with brown rice, tomatoes, zucchini and pinto beans. The sauce is seasoned with the aromatic flavors of the Middle East.

**FLORENTINE LASAGNA:** This meal has small lasagna noodles mixed with a deliciously seasoned tomato sauce. In the sauce is Ricotta cheese, Parmesan cheese, spinach and pinto bean pieces to add more protein without meat. A meal influenced by the tastes of Florence.

**PASTA WITH GARDEN VEGETABLES:** This delicious and robust meal has rotini pasta with a pepper, mushroom, zucchini and tomato medley. It's perfectly flavored with traditional Italian seasonings.

**DHABIHA HALAL** حلال



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Tel: 847-948-1290 • Fax: 847-948-0468 • e-mail: [halalcertified@sbcglobal.net](mailto:halalcertified@sbcglobal.net)





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Editor in Chief | Roger Othman  
Contributing Editor | S. Farhat Quadri  
Content Manager | Alia Shalabi  
Recipe Editor | Salma Siddiqui  
Proof Reader | Haider Khattak

## HEAD OFFICE

777 Busse Hwy.  
Park Ridge, IL 60068-2470 USA  
+1.847.993.0034  
+1.847.993.0038 | fax  
halalaifanca.org  
halalconsumersifanca.org

## REGIONAL OFFICES

### IFANCA - CALIFORNIA

Walnut, California  
Dr. Ahmad H. Sakr  
drahmadak@hotmail.com

### IFANCA - CANADA

MISSISSAUGA, ONTARIO  
Haider Khattak  
h.khattak@ifanca.org

### IFANCA - ASIA PACIFIC

SINGAPORE  
Shahlan Hairalah  
shahlan.hairalah@gmail.com

### IFANCA - CHINA

BEIJING, CHINA  
Charles WenChuan Yu  
ifanca.halalayahoo.com.cn  
WUHAN, CHINA  
Daud WenTao Wang  
ifancahalalayahoo.cn  
TIANJIN, CHINA  
Lan (Ibraheem) Zhen Qiang  
cinb2b@hotmail.com

### IFANCA - PAKISTAN

FAISALABAD, PAKISTAN  
Prof. Dr. Javaid A. Awan  
ifancapk@gmail.com

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## ABOUT HALAL CONSUMER

Halal Consumer is a publication of the Islamic Food and Nutrition Council of America (IFANCA). IFANCA is a non-profit Islamic organization with the mission to promote halal food and the institution of halal. IFANCA objectives include making halal foods conveniently available, introducing halal to food companies and institutions, creating awareness of halal among consumers and providing halal solutions to consumer needs.

DESIGNED BY | Kung Pik Liu | [www.KungPikLiu.com](http://www.KungPikLiu.com)

## Editor's Note

*Assalamu Alaikum*

Winter is upon us and it may seem normal to curtail activities; however one might actually find opportunity in cold weather just as Quraish did during their two seasonal caravan trips as mentioned in the Quran:

*Their covenants (covering) journeys by winter and summer... (Quran 106:2).*

For many of us, the colder fall and winter months are times for watching sports and movies on TV while munching on snacks and high calorie beverages. But winter offers opportunities not available the rest of the year. It is up to us to make the most of them.

When we were growing up, we had to be forced to come in from playing in the snow; we would come in kicking and screaming with red cheeks and noses. As we got older, this was passed on to our children as we settled onto the sofa with a book or in front of the TV. This meant less activity for us and less supervision for the children outdoors.

When our children were growing up, I remember we used to hold our own Olympics during Olympic years. In the winter, we would have snowball target practice in place of biathlon shooting; sliding on the ice in place of ice skating (I didn't skate); sledding in place of the luge; snow shoveling in place of curling; and snowball fights just for fun. Okay, the snow shoveling was really work, but the boys enjoyed it. When they got older, they earned some extra spending money doing it!

Of course, one could actually go ice skating, skiing, or tobogganing, but mock Olympics can be held in the backyard or a local park for free. Everyone benefits from the exercise while enjoying a fun family activity.

This issue explores winter activities, staying fit, and comforting recipes to keep you engaged during the short winter days.

Stay warm and active and enjoy the season. Happy New Year.

Sincerely,

**Roger M. Othman** managing editor

[WWW.IFANCA.ORG](http://WWW.IFANCA.ORG)



## From the Publisher's Desk

*Assalamu Alaikum*

**The winter issue reminds us a year has already passed. Reflecting on 2013, we see there was a lot of halal related activity.**

A myriad of halal conferences were held over the past year across the globe, from here in the US to far away Indonesia and many places in between. We see the emergence of the Gulf States, particularly the UAE, seeking to play a more prominent role in the halal economy. Is the leadership moving west from the ASEAN region? A number of conferences focused on standards, with the goal of agreeing on a global halal standard. This would help the industry create products that are universally acceptable to halal consumers. So far this has proven difficult as consumers have varying ideas on what qualifies for halal and what does not.

A number of new concerns affecting halal consumers have emerged in addition to the ongoing issues. The idea of insect farming to help feed the growing world masses has been floated by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization. We know that locusts are halal, but raising locusts and other insects for food is another matter. Then there is the \$300,000 hamburger made from synthetic beef produced in a laboratory. Is synthetic meat halal? Lethal stunning of poultry is another topic gaining some popularity, especially in Europe. This goes beyond the matter of stunning in general to eating dead birds, which is clearly not allowed under halal requirements. The ongoing questions of machine slaughter vs. hand slaughter and halal certification of kosher meat are still issues the halal community is grappling with; but the momentum is moving to the most pure form of halal — Muslim hand slaughter of non-stunned meat and poultry. We still have a ways to go to achieve that, and consumers have a major role to play in this journey.

Finally, I am proud to announce IFANCA was awarded the prestigious Islamic Economy Compliance and Standardization Award at the Global Islamic Economy Summit held in Dubai on November 25. The award is a tribute to IFANCA's success as a leader in developing processes and procedures for halal certification and our 30 year service to the halal community.

As you look over this issue in the warmth of your living room, do reflect on the challenges facing the halal marketplace. Everything is possible if you, the consumer, make your needs known and do not settle for less than the best.

Sincerely,

**Muhammad Munir Chaudry** *president*

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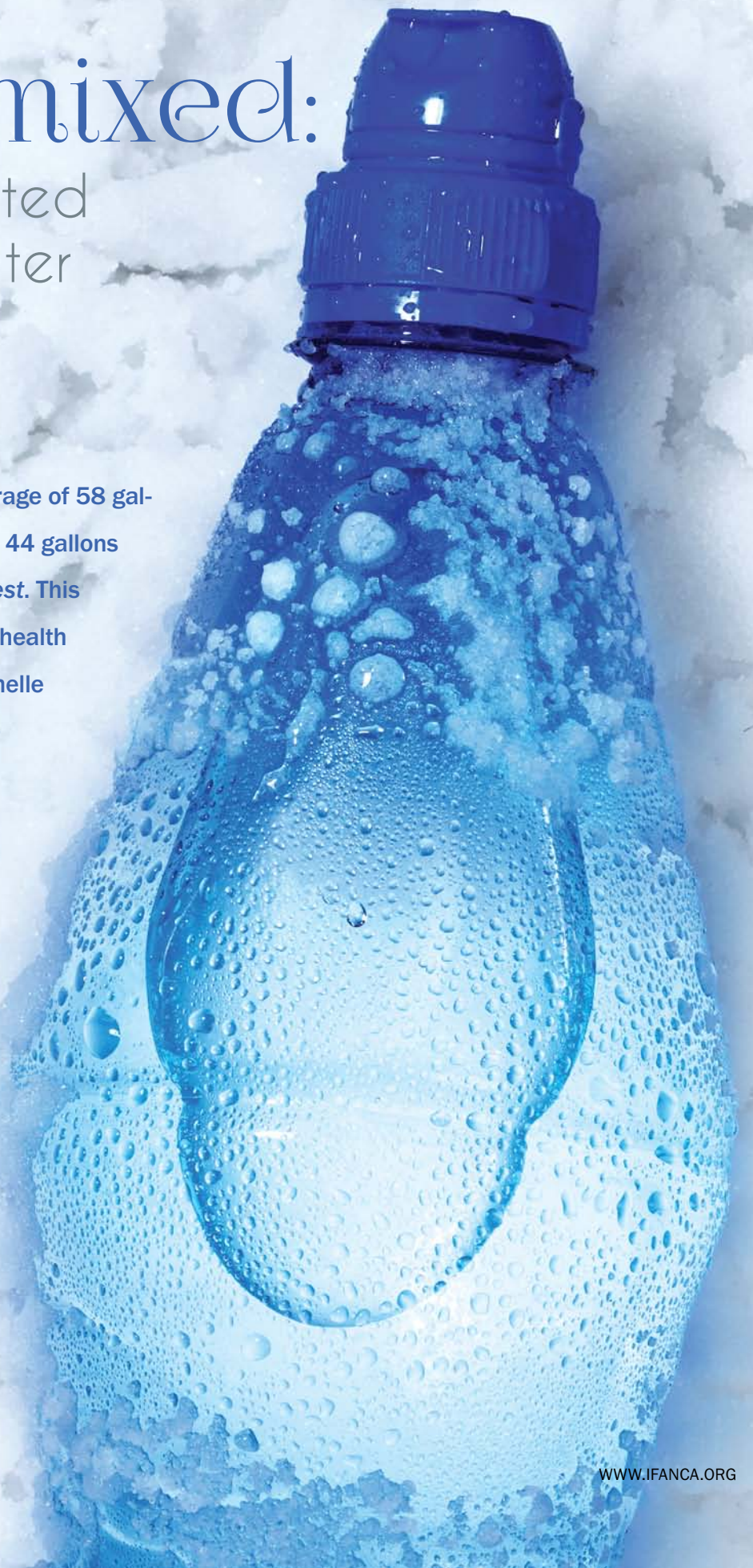


# H<sub>2</sub>O Remixed:


## Staying Hydrated During the Winter

By Aysha Hussain

Americans now consume an average of 58 gallons of water a year compared to 44 gallons of soda, according *Beverage Digest*. This is thanks in part to the efforts of health heavyweights like First Lady Michelle Obama, who has been encouraging people across the country to “drink more water,” and politicians like former New York City mayor Michael Bloomberg, who quickly became the face of the controversial soda ban debate. While water is steadily making its comeback, some people might still find the widely recommended consumption of eight to ten glasses per day somewhat daunting, if not unrealistic.







Unless we are working out at the gym or playing a sport, we tend to neglect the idea of consuming more water, especially when outside temperatures begin to drop. In fact, many of us can go all day without even thinking about drinking water, particularly if it is freezing outside and our bodies are no longer bombarded by the hot summer sun.

Lisa R. Young, a registered dietitian and adjunct professor in the Department of Nutrition, Food Studies, and Public Health at New York University, also states that even though we may not be sweating from the sweltering summer heat, it is just as important to drink up and stay hydrated during the cold, winter weather. “In the summer months, we’re sweating, so we’re conscious of it,” says Young. “You need to be hydrated in all months. The difference between summer and winter is in the summer you have a lot of measures that can tell you if you’re getting dehydrated. In the winter, you don’t think you need to drink more fluids.”

Even when the weather is brisk, the human body — made up of 60 percent water — naturally loses a lot of water through everyday breathing, trying to stay warm, and perspiring. Add to this loss the adverse effects of moving in and out of hot and cold temperatures — from overheated indoor spaces to the icy cold outdoors — all of which can lend itself to dehydration, when the body loses too many fluids and then becomes unable to carry out normal functions. If the body is not properly replenished, dehydration can easily manifest in the forms of fatigue, dizziness, and headaches, and can even cause drier-than-normal skin, hair, and nails.

Despite the lack of solid, scientific studies that support the recommended eight to ten glasses of water per day rule, according to the Institute of Medicine (IOM), men need roughly 3 liters (about 13 cups) of total beverages a day, whereas women require 2.2 liters (about 9 cups). Regardless of the required amount, water is still considered one of the best beverages to consume in order to stay hydrated as it promotes a healthy immune system, aids in regulating body temperature, and helps flush out body waste and other toxins.

But health experts, like Young, author of *The Portion Teller Plan*, say our daily water intake does not have to come from water alone. Nutrient-rich fluids can be obtained through other means, such as consuming fruits and vegetables. According to the IOM, approximately 80 percent of our water intake comes from drinking water and other beverages, while the other 20 percent comes from food sources. Fruits and vegetables are great substitutes because of their high water content and abundance of minerals. Young adds that the beauty of consuming fruits and vegetables over simply drinking water is that they have built-in hydration. Apples, for example, are made up of about 84 percent water; meanwhile tomatoes are made up of 94 percent water. Hot, herbal teas and soups are also alternatives to drinking water, although Young recommends staying away from caffeinated teas and soups loaded with salt, as these can dehydrate the body.

There’s no excuse. Be sure to eat and drink up this winter.

## Here are some helpful tips to keep you hydrated this winter and all year round.

1

Leave a glass of water at your bedside and drink it first thing before getting out of bed in the morning. You’ll feel more awake and refreshed.

2

Carry an extra water bottle in your purse or bag for when you are at work or running errands. Having a bottle of water with you at all times will encourage you to drink more.

3

Don’t enjoy the taste of plain, old water? Add fresh fruit like watermelon or even sliced cucumber to add some flavor.


4

Mix things up by eating flavorful and spicy foods (within moderation)! You’ll be reaching for that extra glass of water in no time.

5

Enjoy a challenge? Consider playing water drinking games with your friends and co-workers such as “water pong” or “water bank.” You’ll drink water and have fun at the same time.

6

“There’s an app for that” like Waterlogged — Drink More Water and other phone apps that can help you keep track and monitor how much water you consume each day. 

# *Make Your House A Home:*

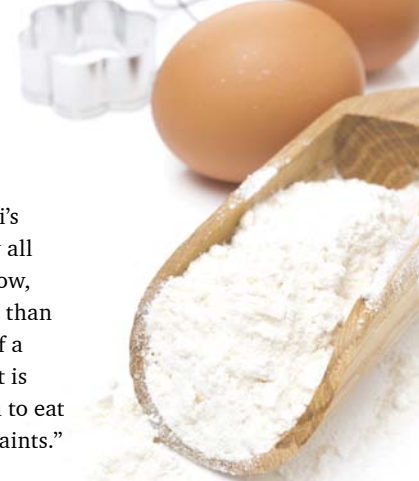
## AN AROMATIC ENDEAVOR

By Tayyaba Syed



After a long, tiring day at school, Haya heads to her youth group session on this dull, chilly afternoon. She enters her group leader's house deflated and beat only to be received by the warm, welcoming scent of delectable goods that immediately eliminates her fatigue and uplifts her mood.





"Oh my goodness! It smells like heaven in here!" proclaims the 16-year-old to her leader, who simply greets her with a welcoming smile and plate of fresh-baked brownies.

Haya Muhammad of Glendale Heights, Illinois, is a senior in high school and meets on a weekly basis with her youth group. "I have to admit that the yummy smelling snacks our leader serves us make us keep coming back for more," she laughingly shares. "She is big on making us feel at home, and we seem to focus better and are more productive while being blanketed by the warmth and comforting aromas in her house."

Smell is a very powerful sense. Often associated with memories, smell has a direct effect on one's emotions or moods. In order for the sense to work efficiently for us, many intricacies must take place. Molecules that are light and can easily evaporate must travel to the nose and reach a small patch of special neurons, called olfactory receptors, at the top of the nasal passage. (There are approximately 40 million olfactory receptors in humans!) Odor molecules bind to hair-like projections attached to the neurons and signal cells in the olfactory bulb, triggering our perception of smell. The olfactory tract leads to areas of the brain that are part of the limbic system, which is involved with emotional behavior and memory.

Melida Skenderi of Morton Grove, Illinois, has many childhood memories of her mother baking goods and filling their home with delicious smells. "When you open the door and enter the house, the first sense to activate is your sense of smell," says the mother of three. "There is nothing that welcomes you better than the aromatherapy of fresh baked foods."

Skenderi has carried this tradition of baking into her own home. "I definitely enjoy baking much more than cooking," she says. "I find it therapeutic and a great way to bring the family together, especially during the cold winter months."

She advises to stock up on apples during the fall harvest and bake apple cake in the winter, which fills the house with warm, inviting fragrances. However, the staple food in this Bosnian family's home is fresh baked bread, its scent taking over the house from top to bottom. "We are definitely bread people," says Skenderi, who recently performed the sacred pilgrimage of Hajj and greatly missed this simple pleasure. "All I was craving after returning home was my mother's warm, homemade bread."

Another must-have for the Skenderi's is hot, delicious soup to accompany all that bread. "After playing in the snow, nothing is more inviting to my kids than a hot bowl of fresh soup. It gives off a great aroma in the home, as well. It is also a great way for me to get them to eat their vegetables without any complaints."

When Skenderi used to work in real estate, one of the marketing techniques she learned was to have fresh-baked cookies in the homes that had showings or open-houses to give them a more "homely feel." In other words, igniting the sense of smell can even put consumers in a buying mood!

Skenderi believes it also helps to get kids out of bed. "On those dark, gloomy winter mornings, my kids willingly arise out of bed and run downstairs following the trail of their favorite breakfast aromas," shares Skenderi. "Whether it is French toast, pancakes, or crepes, it gets the job done. They start off their day content and satiated, and we have managed to spend time together as a family first thing in the morning."

Joan Gray, an artist from Pine City, Minnesota, also knows how to bring the family together during those freezing winter months. The mother of five and grandmother of seven grew up in the northern state of Minnesota, where temperatures can drop drastically. "When my children were younger, I would welcome them back into the home from playing in the snow with a fresh, homemade cup of hot cocoa," says Gray. "It would melt the cold right off."

Gray says that hot cocoa is the perfect winter drink with its cozy aroma and tasty flavor, and the specific recipe she uses has been passed down from her own mother and grandmother. "There is such a difference between this homemade hot chocolate and those instant mixes," shares Gray. "It is well worth the 10 short minutes it takes to make it," she advises.

From breads and cakes to soups and drinks, there are many great ways to bring comfort and warmth into your home this winter. Aromas from baked goods can help rid the winter blues. Many times these comforting smells trigger fond memories of family, togetherness, and happiness. This winter, make your house a home with a variety of culinary scents, new and old, and build new memories to last a lifetime.

***Smell is  
a very powerful  
sense. Often associated  
with memories, smell  
has a direct effect on  
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## Homemade Hot Cocoa By Joan Gray

PREP TIME: 5 MINUTES

COOK TIME: 10 MINUTES

SERVINGS: 4-5

### INGREDIENTS:

- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup cocoa powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup sugar
- water, enough to dissolve sugar and powder
- pinch salt
- 4 cups milk

### DIRECTIONS:

1. In a heavy saucepan, mix cocoa powder, sugar, salt, and add water to dissolve.
2. Stir until it turns into syrup.
3. Add milk and heat to drinking temperature but not to a boil.
4. Pour into cups and serve.

*Optional:*

*Add halal marshmallows or whipping cream on top.*

## Apple Cake By Nafida Ibisi

PREP TIME: 15 MINUTES

COOK TIME: 1 HOUR

SERVINGS: 8-10

### INGREDIENTS:

- 4 cups apples (peeled and chopped into small pieces)
- 2 cups sugar
- 2 cups flour
- 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoons baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 2 eggs
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup oil
- 2 teaspoons halal vanilla flavor
- 1 cup chopped walnuts

### DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Oil 9×13-inch glass or other baking pan.
3. Mix all ingredients together in large bowl.
4. Pour batter into pan.
5. Bake for about 1 hour or until cake center is fully baked.





## Home-baked Bread By Melida Skenderi

PREP TIME: 3 HOURS

COOK TIME: 1 HOUR

SERVINGS: 4-6

### INGREDIENTS:

- 5 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup whole wheat flour
- 1 cup ground flax seed, wheat germ, wheat bran
- 1 ½ tablespoons yeast
- ½ tablespoon salt
- pinch sugar
- water, enough for kneading

### DIRECTIONS:

1. Mix all the ingredients together and knead until dough is no longer sticky.
2. Cover the dough with a lid.
3. Let it sit for 2 hours, so it can rise to double its size.
4. Knead it down again.
5. Let dough rise again to double.
6. Preheat oven to 500°F.
7. Roll out dough into palm-sized balls.
8. Oil 2 9×13-inch baking pans (you may need more depending on size of your dough balls).
9. Brush oil lightly over dough.
10. Let it rise again for 30 to 40 minutes.
11. Bake dough balls at 500°F for 10 minutes.
12. Reduce oven temperature to 350°F and bake bread for another 50 minutes.

Serve hot.

For leftovers, let bread cool completely and place in sealed plastic. 

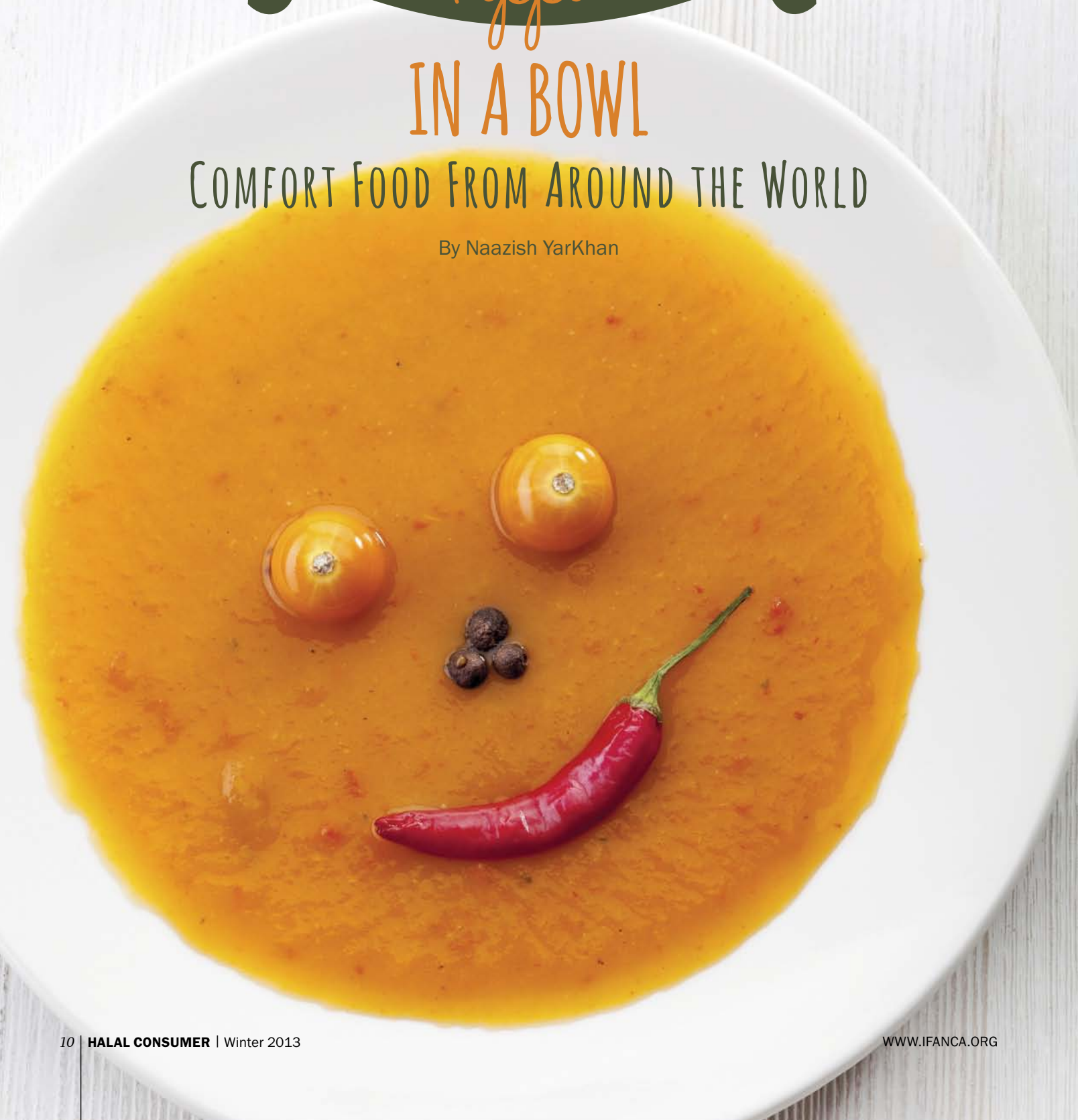




## IN A BOWL

### COMFORT FOOD FROM AROUND THE WORLD

By Naazish YarKhan





Nothing brings people together as food does, and when it's comfort food, the accompanying rush of memories are almost as heady as the flavor of melt-in-your-mouth goodness. The longing for comfort foods can be that much stronger when you've moved half way across the world. When it's a dish that's been passed down through generations of immigrants, you realize that food has more staying power than most cultural traditions. Where there is an immigrant population of significant size, it's only a matter of time before there's a grocery store, and soon after restaurants, fulfilling those cravings, serving memories on a platter.



### *Soup, Glorious Soup*

In speaking with first, second, or third generation immigrants from geographically far-flung Afghanistan, Sudan, Algeria, Morocco, Russia, and China, soup, in all its glorious forms, often made it as a number one comfort food. It really shouldn't have come as a surprise, especially given the time of year!

Chicagoan Rachid Belbachir, who is Algerian by birth, cannot forget the *harira* made by his mother and sister, despite nearing thirty years in the United States. A rich, hearty, delicious soup made of meat, vermicelli, root vegetables, chick peas, herbs like parsley and cilantro, and spices such as coriander, cumin, turmeric, and red chili powder, it is to the Algerian soul what chicken soup is to the American. It's exquisite, whether made in a slow cooker or a pressure cooker, and a winter treat.

"My mom makes it when we have guests or special occasions," reminisces Belbachir, "and it's often made in Ramadan, more than any other time. It brings back memories of weddings and of Ramadan, where we come together to eat as a family." Recipes for it vary, says Belbachir, and while his wife, born and raised in the US, has mastered many other Algerian dishes, "after 25 years of marriage, she's almost getting the *harira* right," he says. "You have to have a hand for it." The ingredients are found easily and Belbachir and wife Nancy live close enough to Devon Avenue in Chicago (known for its cultural diversity) to make Fresh Market their shopping destination.

Ibrahim Kutum, a resident of neighboring Carol Stream, Illinois, has memories of *fufu*, which looks like mashed potatoes and is served hot with a soup of lamb meat and spices. Great for dinner or lunch, it's an everyday food back in Sudan. Made of nutritious

sorghum, this gluten-free cereal grain flour is mixed with water and gently brought to a boil, stirring all the while until it is solid. "You prepare the *fufu* first and then serve it with the soup," says Kutum. Sorghum flour hasn't been the easiest for him to find in Chicago and, though he tries to make it with other kinds of flour, it just doesn't come out right, says Kutum. "My mother and sister make it back home and I miss it because we grew up with it. The different types of soup it's served with make it very delicious. You can change the soup on a daily basis, but the *fufu* remains the same."

Sometimes, there isn't even a soup. Kutum continues, "When we were little, my granddad used to make *fufu* himself. However, instead of soup, he served it with fresh goat milk and that was very good. You can also serve it with cow's milk or sheep's milk, but it has to be fresh."

Abu Daoud Café is Chicago's only Sudanese restaurant and in Ramadan they offer *iftar* (meal to end the fast), making it quite the culinary experience. It would be very surprising if they served fresh goat milk with *fufu*, though!

Kung Pik Liu was born and raised in Hong Kong before moving to the US at 19 for college. Now a resident of Corning in upstate New York, her comfort food is Chinese soup noodles, a street food. "It's hard to find in the USA, especially as a halal version," she says. "Our marketplaces in Hong Kong have a special section for food vendors. I grew up on it, always having it when I went with my parents to the market for groceries. It was a fun time."

Since she is originally from Southern China, her version of Chinese soup comprises rice noodles, vegetables, and a protein,



whether a fried egg, a few pieces of meat, or fish balls. “It’s very easy to make it in five to ten minutes if you have the ingredients,” says Liu. “You can buy ready-made fish balls in any Chinese store.”

While she does cook it when she has a craving, “my husband, Jontie, says it smells fishy.” Luckily for Liu, her daughter Aisha does ask for it, giving her reason enough to make it.

### Ready for the Main Course?

Rachid Belbachir’s co-worker, Hanane El Rhalib, a recent immigrant from neighboring Morocco, is raising her kids to love Moroccan couscous, her comfort food of choice. “I try to make it at least once a week. It’s tasty and healthy and now my son is asking me to make it for him. I consider it one of his comfort foods now!” she says.

El Rhalib’s recipe calls for couscous, onions, carrots, zucchini, parsnip, pieces of pumpkin or butternut squash, parsley, coriander, and tomato paste. “I consider it a comfort food because I feel better emotionally and it brings comforting thoughts of my home and childhood,” she says. “Back home we used to have couscous for lunch for our Friday traditional family gathering.” When it comes to dining out, Moroccan imports to Chicago vote for Shokran restaurant in Irving Park for its authentic taste.

Lasagna is another one of El Rhalib’s comfort foods as she says it “brings back a lot of memories from my trip to Italy. My elder sister used to make delicious lasagna and since her husband is Italian she learnt how to make it perfectly.” Though lasagna originates from Italy, it is often considered a traditional American comfort food, with layers of hearty meat, robust tomato sauce, and creamy cheese.

Azima Abdul-Azim, born in Kandahar, Afghanistan, and raised in “Little Kabul” (Fremont), California, now lives in Sauganash, Illinois. A busy mother, Abdul-Azim still makes time to make *mantu* dumplings, a popular Afghani comfort food. “*Mantu* is a delicacy made by few because of the amount of effort required to make it. Growing up, I only saw *mantu* served at very special dinner parties,” says Abdul-Azim. “But, once you sink your teeth into some, you will realize it’s well worth the effort.” A steamer that can be bought at Asian stores is required to make *mantu*. “It is a big pot with three tiers. The bottom tier holds water and the second and third tiers both have holes that hold the dumplings. Whenever I make this dish it’s for a dinner party, so I make a lot.” In the Chicagoland area, if you’ve got a craving but don’t fancy making it yourself, Kabul House in Skokie should be your go-to restaurant.

### Time for Dessert

For Saleha Akhooon of Glendale Heights, Illinois, who moved to Chicago from Burma (Myanmar) at age seven, nothing beats *tha-gu*, a dessert made of brown rice, oats, grits, flax seeds, tapioca, boiled yams, and boiled sweet potatoes in coconut milk with brown sugar and a pinch of salt. “Such a comfort right at home. It’s like a health food and they used to make it in school in big pots. We’d eat it daily during recess, and just thinking of it makes me feel hungry,” she says. As for her recipe, “Be creative, no measurement necessary, just add ingredients as available.”

Her children love *tha-gu* as much as she does. “I used to be the happiest girl eating this in my childhood or even when I just smelled its aroma. I wanted to pass that memory on to my kids. Now, when I make it for them, they are so happy,” says Akhooon. Prep and cook time is approximately twenty-five minutes and she makes it twice a week. While *tha-gu* can be refrigerated for at least a week, it invariably never lasts that long. The colorful tapioca is available from any Asian mart.

Jontie Karden, Kung Pik Liu’s other half, is of Circassian descent. For him, nothing spells family, love, and warmth as his Eid favorite, *haliva*, does. A “Circassian ethnic food, it’s a deep fried dough with either a homemade Circassian cheese or potato filling. The cheese is seasoned with salt, pepper and some add parsley. The potato filling is flavored with onions, salt, pepper, and some add cayenne pepper and parsley. The dough is simple, but the use of milk instead of water makes it very soft and fluffy. Overall, it’s a simple food, but the taste is heavenly! Really, who doesn’t like deep fried dough?” asks Liu.

“*Haliva* is my comfort food for multiple reasons,” says Karden, “primarily because of the way it tastes. The combination of the warm, flaky crust and the soft, salty cheese inside is intoxicating. I’m sure there’s a neuro-biochemical reason for this, probably the same reason deep-fried foods are a comfort food for many others. I have fond memories of my family sitting around the kitchen table making these delicious treats from scratch, rolling out the dough, flattening the circles with a pasta dough maker, adding the stuffing, folding and sealing it. Then it’s deep-fried. When you walk into someone’s house, the deep-fried dough smell puts you at ease.” When he visited family in New Jersey, each had a version. He recalls them making it a point to always visit the one relative who made the best version of *haliva*, passed three generations down from when his family first arrived to the US, Karden knows how food has its resilience. “It’s about memories of family. Making it together. Now my daughter, Pik, and I make it together from scratch.” Adiga Kitchen & Cafe in Wayne, New Jersey, is their recommendation for the best *haliva*, when they’d rather not make it themselves!





*Haliva*, a Circassian dessert, is deep-fried dough filled with either Circassian cheese or potatoes and onions. Photo by Jontie Karden.





## MOM'S ALGERIAN-STYLE HARIRA



Courtesy: [nanastastytraditions.com](http://nanastastytraditions.com)

SERVINGS: ABOUT 8

### Ingredients

- 1 ½ pounds halal beef chuck shoulder, trimmed of all fat and cut into thirds
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 2-3 large tomatoes, grated or 1 (14.5-ounce) can diced tomatoes
- ¾ cup dry lentils
- 1 zucchini, peeled and finely chopped
- 1 large potato, peeled and finely chopped
- 1-2 carrots, peeled and finely chopped
- 1 celery stalk, finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1 tablespoon ground coriander
- 1 tablespoon ground cumin
- ½ teaspoon turmeric
- ½ teaspoon hot paprika (optional)
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 tablespoon salt (or to taste)
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 cups parsley, chopped
- 2 cups cilantro, chopped
- 1 jalapeño pepper (traditionally, a green pepper but jalapeño works great)
- 1 (15-ounce) can chick peas, drained and rinsed

- ¾ cup vermicelli, angel hair pasta (broken into bite size pieces) or rice

### FOR THE SLURRY

- 3 tablespoons flour
- juice of 1 lemon (if your lemon is large, ½ a lemon is plenty)
- ½ cup water
- 1 tablespoon ground caraway
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin

### TO SERVE

handful of cilantro leaves, chopped  
lemon wedges

### Directions

1. Heat the olive oil in a large stock pot or Dutch oven over medium-high heat; add the beef, onions, tomatoes, ginger, coriander, cumin, turmeric, hot paprika, black pepper, and salt. Stir occasionally, until the beef is well browned, 8 to 10 minutes.
2. Add the cilantro, parsley, celery, potato, zucchini, lentils, and bay leaf. Stir to combine. Add 4 cups of water and let it come to a boil. Cover partially with a lid, reduce the heat to medium-low and

let simmer until the meat is fork tender about 45 to 60 minutes.

3. Remove the bay leaf and discard. Remove the cooked meat onto a plate and cut it into small bite size pieces (you can also shred it). Set aside.
4. With an immersion blender, carefully purée the soup. Return the meat to the pot of soup and add 4 to 6 cups of water (the amount of water added will really depend on whether you like thick or thin soups). Add the jalapeño pepper and let it simmer, uncovered, for 20 to 25 minutes. Taste and adjust seasoning. The soup might get foamy.
5. Meanwhile, in a small bowl, mix the flour, lemon juice, ½ cup of water, caraway, and cumin. Mix well making sure that there are no doughy lumps. Cover and let it sit at room temperature.
6. After the soup has simmered, add the vermicelli and the chick peas. While stirring, add the flour slurry. Keep stirring the soup until the foam magically disappears. Turn off the heat and add a handful of chopped cilantro.
7. Serve hot with lemon wedges and a big squeeze of LOVE.





## AZIMA'S MANTU RECIPE

By Azima Abdul-Azim

PREPTIME: 1 HOUR | COOKTIME: 1 HOUR | SERVINGS: 4-5



### Ingredients

#### DUMPLINGS

- 1 pound halal ground meat
- 2 onions, ground in a food processor
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon fresh, crushed garlic
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper
- 4 chopped onions
- 1 packet won-ton wrappers

#### TOPPING

- 1 onion, chopped
- 3 tablespoons oil
- 1 small can tomato paste
- ½ cup lentils (chana daal)
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon salt

#### YOGURT

- 4 cups halal yogurt
- 1 small bucket halal lebni (kefir cheese)
- juice of 1 lemon
- ½ clove garlic, ground
- 1 teaspoon ground mint
- salt to taste

#### GARNISH

ground mint, sumac, chili powder

### Directions

#### DUMPLINGS

1. Remove won-ton wrappers from fridge and keep at room temperature.
2. Place the ground meat, ground onions, salt, garlic, coriander, and black pepper in a frying pan with 2 cups of water.
3. Cook on high until it starts boiling. Reduce the heat to medium, stirring from time to time, until the meat cooks.
4. Once cooked, let the meat cool down and combine with the chopped onion.
5. Take each wrapper and wet one side with water.
6. Place 1 teaspoon of stuffing in the middle of the wet side of wrapper. Fold the wrapper in half and seal the edges. At this point it should look like a rectangle that is bulging with stuffing. Carefully bring the shorter sides together over your index finger as you fold over the longer side that was sealed and pinch to seal the shorter sides together.
7. Dip the dumpling in oil or place in a steamer.
8. Repeat for remaining dumplings. Place the dumplings next to one another. Do not place dumplings on top of one another because they will not cook properly.
9. Place water at the bottom of the steamer and place on stove.
10. Boil the water on high for 30 minutes.

#### TOPPING

1. Place the lentils in 2 cups of water and heat on high until it boils.
2. Then lower heat until it cooks, but do not let it disintegrate.
3. In a frying pan, fry the chopped onion until golden brown.
4. Add the garlic and fry for another minute.
5. Add the tomato paste, 1 cup of water, and salt. Mix well.
6. Cook on medium until the oil surfaces.
7. Strain the lentils and add to the topping.
8. Gently mix and cook for a couple minutes.

#### YOGURT

1. Mix the yogurt, lebni, garlic, lemon juice, and mint.
2. Whisk until mixed well. If the consistency is too thick, add some water and mix.
3. Once the desired consistency is obtained, add salt to taste.

#### PRESENTATION

1. Place some yogurt mixture in a platter and spread.
2. Place the dumplings in the platter.
3. Put the rest of the yogurt on top of the dumplings.
4. Spread the topping on top of the yogurt.
5. Garnish with mint, sumac, and chili powder.
6. Enjoy!



## KUNG PIK LIU'S FAVORITE BEEF BRISKET SOUP



Courtesy: ANGSRAP.NET

### Ingredients

- 3 large halal beef leg bones
- 1 ½ pounds halal beef brisket, diced
- ¼ pound halal beef ligaments, diced
- ¼ cup soy sauce
- ¼ cup oyster sauce
- 3 tablespoons red sugar
- 1 thumb-sized ginger, sliced
- 1 bunch onion leaves, chopped
- 3 tablespoons
- 1 teaspoon toasted garlic
- 1 packet fresh yellow egg noodles
- 1 bunch pak choy
- 3 large red onions, 2 quartered and 1 finely chopped
- freshly ground black pepper
- salt
- fish sauce to taste
- ½ teaspoon sesame oil
- 3 liters water
- 1 tablespoon green onion, chopped

### Directions

1. In a large pot, add 3 liters water, leg bones, beef ligaments, half an onion, black pepper, and salt to taste. Bring to a boil and simmer for 3 hours.
2. Once cooked, using a colander, drain the liquid and reserve.
3. Separate the boiled ligaments and carve any ligaments you can get from the bone. Set aside.
4. In a pot, add beef brisket and cooked ligaments, soy sauce, oyster sauce, red sugar, ginger, 1 liter of beef stock, and salt to taste. Bring to a boil and simmer for 1 to 1 ½ hours or until the beef is very tender and liquid should be reduced by then and the ligaments would make the consistency thick and sticky.
5. In another pot, boil the remaining beef stock together with onions, black pepper, 3 tablespoons toasted garlic, and fish sauce. Turn the heat off once the onions are cooked to the point of disintegrating. Using a strainer, drain and reserve the liquid.
6. In a separate pot, boil water with a dash of salt and blanch the pak choy. Drain, then set aside.
7. In another pot, boil water and cook yellow noodles for 3 minutes. Drain, then rinse with cold water.
8. Boil another pot of water and soak the cooked noodles, then drain.
9. In a bowl, place noodles and pak choy, then add soup and 2 scoopfuls of the brisket with the sauce. Top it with ½ teaspoon of sesame oil, 1 teaspoon of toasted garlic, and 1 tablespoon of chopped green onions. Enjoy while hot.

*Note from Kung Pik Liu: It's time-consuming to make and most people use some kind of instant soup base and add any kind of protein available at home such as fish balls, meatballs, or eggs.*





## MOROCCAN COUSCOUS

Courtesy: [allrecipes.com](http://allrecipes.com)

PREP TIME: 30 MINUTES | COOK TIME: 25 MINUTES | SERVINGS: 8



### Ingredients

- 1 ¼ teaspoons ground cumin
- ½ teaspoon ground ginger
- ¼ teaspoon ground cloves
- ⅛ teaspoon ground cayenne pepper
- ½ teaspoon ground cardamom
- ¼ teaspoon ground coriander
- ¼ teaspoon ground allspice
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 red onion, cut in half and thinly sliced
- 1 red, green, or yellow bell pepper, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 2 zucchini, halved lengthwise and cut into ¾-inch pieces
- ½ cup golden raisins
- 1 teaspoon salt
- grated zest of 1 orange
- 1 (14.5-ounce) can low sodium garbanzo beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 ½ cups chicken broth
- ½ cup orange juice
- 1 ½ cups couscous
- 3 tablespoons fresh mint, chopped

### Directions

1. Place a large, heavy bottomed pot over medium heat. Stir in the cumin, ginger, cloves, cayenne, cardamom, coriander, and allspice; gently toast until fragrant, about 2 to 3 minutes. Stir in oil and onion, cook until softened. Stir in the bell pepper and zucchini; cook for 5 minutes. Stir in the raisins, salt, zest, and garbanzos.
2. Pour in the chicken broth and orange juice; turn heat to high and bring to a boil. When the mixture is boiling, stir in the couscous and remove from heat; cover, and let stand 5 minutes. Fluff with a fork and fold in chopped mint. (M)



by Asma Jarad

The winter season is no doubt a time for enjoying the indoors with family and friends, or maybe even catching up on your reading list in the warmth of your home. For many people, the winter season also includes indulging in seasonal favorites like roasted chestnuts, cooked lamb, stuffed zucchini, warm apple pie, hearty pumpkin soup, and other traditional comfort foods. Unfortunately, by the time spring arrives, those inviting tastes we enjoyed for weeks have likely settled as pounds on our hips. This is one reason why being physically active is a year-round necessity. Sure, it is easier to get moving when the weather is more appealing, but cold winds and shivering bodies should not keep you from gearing up for some physical activity, whether it is at an indoor gym or right outside your door. Even a daily twenty-minute winter stroll can have a positive, lasting effect on your mind, body, and soul.

When the temperatures outside drop, so does circulation in some parts of your body. This causes you to feel cold. Benefits of staying active include stimulation of mood-boosting endorphins, achieving and maintaining a healthy weight, increasing blood circulation, staying focused, warding off stress, and, of course, warming up.

Another important result of physical activity is the ability to perform religious work. Bodily health and activity filters from the physical well-being to the religious well-being in terms of having the energy and positive state of mind to support oneself and the community. In Islam, the second pillar, salat, or prayer, requires physical activity. Therefore, without leaving the comfort of your home, you are performing exercise at the same time you are





performing an obligatory religious act. When carried out accurately, the movements of prayer involve all the joints and muscles of the body.

The fourth pillar of Islam, fasting in Ramadan, also requires significant physical and mental strength. The fifth pillar of Islam, Hajj, is arguably the most physically challenging performance for Muslims of all ages. Nevertheless, Hajj is a remarkable journey of a lifetime that every Muslim strives to experience at least once. For many Muslims, Hajj comes in the later part of life. For this reason, it is important to maintain a healthy lifestyle throughout the year and for years to come.

From a Sahih Muslim hadith we know that Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him [PBUH]) said that a strong believer is better than a weak believer. In this hadith, the Prophet (PBUH) was referring not only to the faith and

character of Muslims, but also to our physical strength. As long as God has bestowed upon us the blessing of health, it is indeed our responsibility to appreciate this blessing by attaining and maintaining our strength in order to fulfill our duties as Muslims. In his paper titled, “Physical Activity and Exercise: An Islamic Perspective,” Dr. Omar Hasan Kasule points out, “Physical activity is mustahabb [encouraged] for its physiological and health benefits. It is wajib [duty] when it is required as part of disease treatment. It is also mustahabb [encouraged] as a recreation.” Although some illnesses and ailments are beyond our control, it is nonetheless our duty to use whatever advantages we do have to prevent diminished health.

Dr. Kasule continues, “Physical exercise increases muscle and joint strength and flexibility, increases physical fitness, decreases body lipids, enhances the efficiency and endurance of the

cardio-respiratory system, and lowers mortality and morbidity from chronic diseases such as coronary heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, and colon cancer.”

Amena Syed, from Columbus, Ohio, points to another benefit of exercise: social interaction. She says, “When I walk outside, I meet neighbors who I never knew lived in my area. It is good to talk with these people; we relish the friendliness of our discussions as we exchange news and happenings.” Certainly, we live in a world where we must get along with others in order to benefit from their experiences and teach them from ours.

The Prophet (PBUH) taught his Companions to be active not only in daily life, but to take on sports such as swimming, archery, and horseback riding. At the same time, he reminded them that every action should include the remembrance of God. In another Sahih Muslim

hadith, the Prophet (PBUH) said, “Any action without the remembrance of God is either a diversion or heedlessness except four acts: walking from target to target (during archery practice), training a horse, playing with one’s family, and learning to swim.” From this, we know that Islam is not a one-dimensional religion that focuses on religious work without including the mind and body. There is plenty of evidence that our revered Prophets (Peace Be Upon Them) were not only known for their wisdom and intelligence, but also for their physical strength. Prophet Nuh (PBUH), for example, singlehandedly built the Ark without the assistance of any modern machinery. Prophet Ibrahim (PBUH) and his son, Prophet Ismail (PBUH), built the beloved Kaba, brick by brick, with their own hands.


For Murad Khalid, from Bensenville, Illinois, staying active is essential, even in the winter. Khalid strives for both indoor and outdoor activity. “For me, a combination of gym and outside exercise is the best. Being outside makes me feel energetic and fresh. Plus, I get to enjoy the nature God created. When you are out, you never know who you will meet at the local park, maybe you get asked to play some basketball, which doubles the fun and the calories burned.”

There are added benefits of being active outdoors in the winter. To start, it releases some stress of feeling trapped indoors and contributes to an overall healthy well-being. The cold air communicates to your body to step up to the demand by moving and warming up. Outdoor activity also lowers the risk of being overweight. The fresh air and wide open spaces naturally inspire more activity, especially when contrasted with the motionless couches and distracting devices of the indoors.

Remember, fitness and healthy living is a lifestyle; enjoy what your area has to offer during the season. Whether it is a special rate at the local gym or simply the great outdoors, try to take advantage of the time and your health. The winter offers plenty of enjoyable seasonal activities, so do not let the short days and cold weather ice over your healthy outlook. Be a health-conscious person who blends diet, nutrition, and exercise with the remembrance of God and an intention to fulfill religious obligations.

May God guide us and accept our good intentions.

## ***BUNDLE UP AND STAY ACTIVE BY:***

- Skiing/snowboarding/ice skating
- Walking to the mosque or library
- Building a snowman
- Visiting your local gym
- Checking out some exercise DVDs from the library
- Winter cleaning
- Playing indoor basketball/soccer 





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Dr. Muhammad Munir Chaudry, IFANCA President, right, receives the Islamic Economy Award for Compliance and Standardization from HH Muhammad bin Rashid Al-Maktoum at the Global Islamic Economy Summit in Dubai on November 25, 2013.



HH Sheikh Muhammad bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, middle, and Sheikh Hamdan bin Muhammad Al Maktoum, right, discussing the Summit with James C. Smith, CEO, President, and Director, Thomson Reuters.





IFANCA management and local staff at an appreciation lunch held in Chicago on December 17, 2013.



Attendees of the 2013 Global Islamic Economy Summit.

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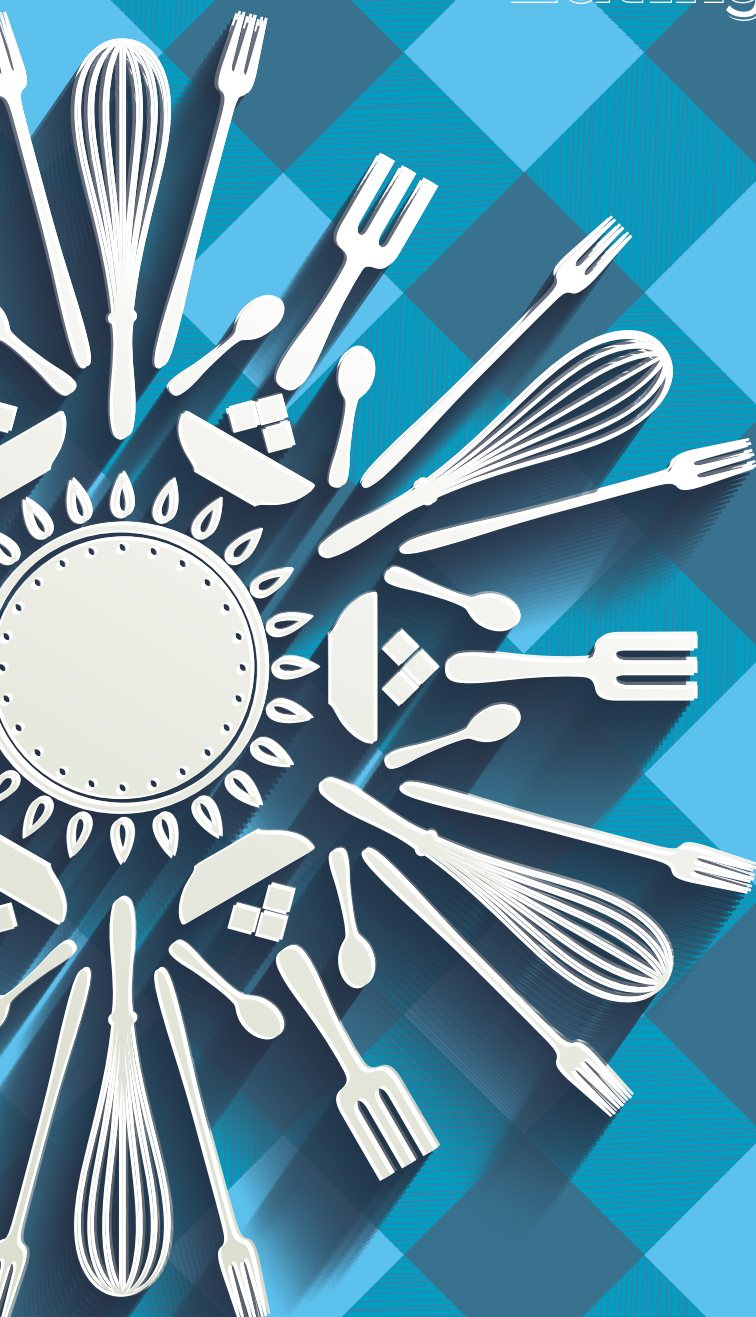
# LIGHTEN UP: Eating Well This Winter

By Sarene Alsharif, MPH

The cold of winter, the howl of the icy winds, and the short gloomy days create the perfect setting for warm blankets, thick logs crackling in the fireplace, scented candles flickering in the background, and a cup of warm tea accompanied by relaxing comfort food. The thought of winter brings back many cozy memories only to be brought to life with our favorite comfort foods. Foods like warm cookies, oozing grilled cheese sandwiches, steamy pasta dishes, and bread straight out of the oven paired with a hearty soup help us relax after a stressful day and spread warmth to every cold limb in our body.

It's not just the cookie or pasta that brings us satisfaction; the memories connected to those foods play a major role. They remind us of Mama's cooking, Grandma's baking, relaxing evenings with friends, family dinners, and many other happy memories. Enjoying these meals brightens our days and sharing them with friends and family brings joy and satisfaction.

Notice a similarity between those very different foods? If you said high in fat and sugar, you are right, as this tends to define comfort food. But consuming these delights on a







regular basis will lead to an expanding waistline. So what should you do, stop eating the foods you love? Anyone who has attempted to diet knows that is a recipe for failure. What is the solution?

### STOP THE MINDLESS EATING

Does this scenario sound familiar? You are cuddled warm in the evening watching TV with a bag of chips next to you, munching along while enjoying your favorite show. You reach for some more chips only to find the bag empty. Who ate the chips? You opened a brand new bag and no one was sharing it with you. You did not realize you ate the whole bag; in other words, mindless eating. Without realizing it, you just consumed over one thousand calories. The solution according to Dr. Brian Wansink, the director of Cornell University Food and Brand Lab and author of *Mindless Eating*, is to put a serving on a plate and leave the bag of chips in the cupboard. Next time you want to enjoy some cookies over coffee with a friend make sure to put only a couple on your plate so you do not keep reaching for more. Visual keys are most likely to make us stop eating. Dr. Wansink found in his research that most people do not stop eating because they are full but due to an external trigger, like the empty plate.

### FOCUS ON YOUR FOOD

Putting what we plan to eat on a plate is only part of the solution: focusing on what we are eating also helps us stop the mindless munching. Now back to the chips in front of the TV. This time you put a serving on your plate and begin surfing Facebook while munching along. But before you know it your plate is empty and you are not feeling satisfied at all. Do you remain frustrated because you did not enjoy your snack? Or do you go get another plate? The correct answer is neither! What you should have done was focused on the food you ate the first time around. Eat far away from

electronics, books, televisions, and newspapers. Pay attention to what you are eating — its taste, texture, and smell. By focusing on what you eat, all of your senses register that you have eaten, inducing a feeling of satisfaction and satiety, thereby minimizing the amount of food you need to consume in order to feel full.

### USE SMALLER PLATES

Most of us have been trained to finish all the food on our plates while plate sizes have been gradually increasing for years, according to Dr. Wansink. As a result, we keep filling bigger plates with more food, then forcing ourselves to finish every last bit, consuming even more calories. The painless solution is to use smaller plates, reducing the amount of food and calories without wasting food. Remember the hadith by Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him [PBUH]): “The worst container to be filled to its utmost capacity is the stomach. It is enough for people to eat what will suffice to keep them standing, but if that is not attainable, then one third for food, one third for drink, and one third empty for air” (Tirmidhi 2380). Using smaller plates will make adhering to that hadith much simpler. Overeating has numerous damaging effects: diabetes, cancer, heart disease, and obesity just to name a few. It’s easy to see how following the fourteen hundred year old advice of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is crucial for maintaining a healthy body.

### HEALTHIER COOKING METHODS

In addition to reducing your portions when enjoying your favorite foods, using healthier ingredients can boost nutrition or reduce calories without sacrificing taste if you make the right choices. Sneak pureed yellow squash into macaroni and cheese. Or simply add more vegetables to that lasagna. These small changes will ensure the whole family gets more fiber, increased nutrients, and less calories and fat without changing the taste or texture. The volume of the serving will not change, keeping the fullness factor (how full you feel after consuming a serving) the same according to Dr. Barbara Rolls, Chair of the Nutritional Sciences Department at Pennsylvania State University and coauthor of *The Ultimate Volumetrics Diet*.

Using healthier fats also makes meals more nutritious. By now you have probably heard that not all fats are created equal, and it is actually essential to include healthy fats in your diet. In short, saturated and trans fats increase





cholesterol and risk of heart disease while monounsaturated fats and polyunsaturated fats have positive health benefits and do not result in elevated cholesterol levels. Use olive oil, naturally rich in monounsaturated fats, whenever possible instead of butter or ghee, high in saturated fats, to help make meals healthier. Olive oil provides more than just healthy fat; it also fuels your body with vitamins and cancer-combating antioxidants. No wonder olives and olive oil are mentioned numerous times in the Quran and Sunnah. *“And a tree (olive) that springs forth from Mount Sinai, that grows oil, and (it is a) relish for the eaters”* (Quran 23:20). Prophet Muhammad [PBUH] even recommended using olive oil generously all over the body in the hadith narrated by Abu Aseed: “The Prophet [PBUH] said: ‘Eat the oil and use it on your hair and skin, for it comes from a blessed tree’” (Tirmidhi 1775).

Olive oil provides nutrients and antioxidants in addition to the blessings of God and His prophet; but it is important to understand that fat is fat and the calorie content will remain the same. Reducing the amount of fat or oil you add to meals will minimize calories but may affect the moisture and texture of cakes and cookies. Have no fear, the solution is easy. Use apple sauce or freshly grated apples instead. Let’s say the recipe calls for one cup of butter; instead use half a cup of butter and half a cup of apple sauce or grated apples instead. Congratulations! You just eliminated 760 calories from your recipe with that one easy step.

*“And a tree (olive) that springs forth from Mount Sinai, that grows oil, and (it is a) relish for the eaters”* (Quran 23:20).

Making calories just disappear is so exciting, but the healthy tricks do not stop there. Everyone loves cheese, but it is high in saturated fats. Grilled cheese sandwiches are a favorite comfort food for many, and so is homemade macaroni and cheese with gooey cheese sauce. Despite their amazing taste and happy memories, these dishes contain high amounts of saturated fats, which increase ones risk of heart disease. Reducing the amount of cheese will affect the taste but using smaller amounts of stronger cheeses will actually

boost the flavor. Try sharp cheddar instead of plain cheddar, or parmesan, Swiss, blue, or many other strong, fragrant cheeses. These will intensify taste while using less cheese, resulting in reduced calories. Hend Alhinnawi, cofounder of Humanitarian Tracker from Los Angeles, California, uses low-fat mozzarella combined with Swiss cheese sprinkled with garlic herb and dried mint for an excellent taste and outstanding texture and fewer calories than a conventional grilled cheese sandwich. Experiment with different combinations of halal cheeses, use a low-fat version of your favorite cheese paired with a sprinkle of a stronger cheese for exceptional flavor, great texture, and less saturated fat.

Changing the cheese is not the only way to make a grilled cheese sandwich healthier. The bread is just as important. Use smaller pieces of bread or the 100-calorie thin buns to cut down on calories. When in the bread aisle, compare the nutritional information on several varieties and select one with fewer calories per serving to help reduce calories even further. If you are looking for a boost in the nutrients, look for breads made from 100% whole grain flour. Check to see if you can actually see pieces of wheat, seeds, and grains in the bread because even 100% whole grain can be over-processed, reducing the nutritional content.

Whole wheat and whole grain are also important when deciding what grain to serve with a meal. Try whole grain or, for a gluten-free option, look for buckwheat pasta. Explore grains like barley, bulgur, quinoa, and wild rice, all of which provide protein, vitamins, minerals, fiber, and antioxidants. They are not lower in calories than regular pasta or white rice, but they are definitely packed with more nutrients. Try quinoa with stir fry, bulgur with chili and other tomato-based dishes, and wild rice mixed with white rice for a healthier, more fragrant companion for many meals.

#### TRADEOFF

Let’s face it, sometimes despite our best intentions we overeat or indulge in more cake than we mean to. The key is to keep tabs on those and make the proper tradeoff. For example, if you overate at lunch then eat less for dinner. If you visited family over the weekend and enjoyed some heavy family favorites, have a big salad with dinner for the rest of the week to counteract that weekend indulgence. Making appropriate tradeoffs will help you maintain your weight while still enjoying your favorites occasionally.







## EXERCISE

People exercise to keep the pounds off without monitoring what they eat thinking that exercise alone is enough to control their weight. Let us do the math: running 5 mph for one hour burns 560 calories for a person weighing 155 pounds. How many calories was the 16 oz. bag of chips we discussed earlier? Between 1800 and 2500 calories depending on the type of chips. Researchers have studied the link between exercise and weight gain and maintenance extensively. The bottom line is exercise alone is not enough to prevent weight gain, but exercise and diet control together are proven to be the most effective method to weight loss<sup>1</sup>.

**If you visited family over the weekend and enjoyed some heavy family favorites, have a big salad with dinner for the rest of the week to counteract that weekend indulgence.**

Everyone enjoys food and has their personal favorites, but food is more than just about taste. It's also about the memories and feelings attached to the dish. By making changes to preparation methods and serving styles, we can enjoy healthy, wholesome food without sacrificing taste or nostalgia while improving our health at the same time. Experiment with different foods; the options are countless so you are bound to find something that suites your taste.

Try these healthier versions of some traditional winter favorites. By incorporating healthy grains, less fat, more vegetables, and tasty herbs, these recipes are good for your taste buds and waistline.

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## \* VEGETARIAN LASAGNA \*

by Sarene Alsharif

SERVINGS: 12

*Most people like meat in their lasagna, but you will not miss it with this healthy recipe. Using cottage cheese instead of ricotta will reduce calories and fat, while the fresh spinach and mushrooms add texture, flavor, and nutrients.*

### INGREDIENTS

- 9 lasagna noodles
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 8 ounces fresh portabella mushrooms, sliced
- 4 cloves minced garlic
- 1 red bell pepper, chopped
- 1 (15-ounce) container cottage cheese, drained
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
- ½ cup fresh grated parmesan cheese
- 1 teaspoon dried basil
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- pepper to taste
- 1 bag fresh spinach
- 1 (30-ounce) jar of vegetarian spaghetti sauce
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese

### DIRECTIONS

1. Cook lasagna noodles according to the directions on the package. Drain and rinse with cold water.
2. While noodles are cooking, heat olive oil in a heavy-bottomed skillet and sauté the onions and garlic until translucent. Next add mushrooms and sauté for 2 minutes. Then remove from heat and stir peppers in with the rest of the vegetables.
3. In a bowl combine drained cottage cheese, 1 cup mozzarella, parmesan cheese, basil, oregano, and pepper. Once cheeses are mixed together well, add mushroom mixture and stir contents together.
4. In a 9×12-inch baking dish, spread ½ cup of the spaghetti sauce on the bottom. Use 3 lasagna noodles to cover the bottom. Add another ½ cup of spaghetti sauce followed by half of the cheese mixture and half the bag of spinach. Repeat the process until you come to the final layer of spaghetti noodles. Now add ½ cup of spaghetti sauce and spread it evenly over the noodles. Sprinkle the remaining cup of mozzarella cheese on top evenly.
5. Cover with foil and bake for 30 minutes in an oven preheated to 375°F. Remove the foil and allow lasagna to cook for 10 more minutes until the cheese on top is melted and bubbly.





## HEALTHIFIED CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES

by Sarene Alsharif

SERVINGS: MAKES 48 COOKIES

*These cookies are as healthy as it gets when it comes to chocolate chip. The oatmeal and whole wheat flour add vital nutrients and fiber. The whole flaxseeds provide healthy fats, fiber, and antioxidants. Reducing the butter and sugar minimizes calories and saturated fats, but the apple sauce adds moisture and healthy sweetness so you will not even miss the eliminated sugar and butter.*

*Creamy, soft, flavorful, and packed with nutrients, what else could you ask for?*

### INGREDIENTS

- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup softened butter
- 1 cup unsweetened apple sauce
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup packed brown sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon halal vanilla flavor
- 1 cup whole wheat flour
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup unbleached flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt
- 1 cup whole flaxseed
- 3 cups old fashioned uncooked oatmeal
- 1 cup bittersweet chocolate chips

### DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 375°F.
2. Mix together the softened butter, apple sauce, brown sugar, eggs, and vanilla flavor with electric mixer for 30 seconds in a large mixing bowl.
3. In a separate mixing bowl, combine whole wheat flour, unbleached flour, baking soda, salt, and flaxseed until congruent.
4. Pour flour mixture into the large bowl with the butter and mix.
5. Add oatmeal and mix.
6. Fold in chocolate chips.
7. Spoon golf ball-sized dollops of cookie batter onto an ungreased baking sheet. Leave about 2 inches between each cookie. Place cookies in the preheated oven for 10 to 12 minutes.
8. Once cookies are finished baking, transfer them to a cooling rack. 🍪

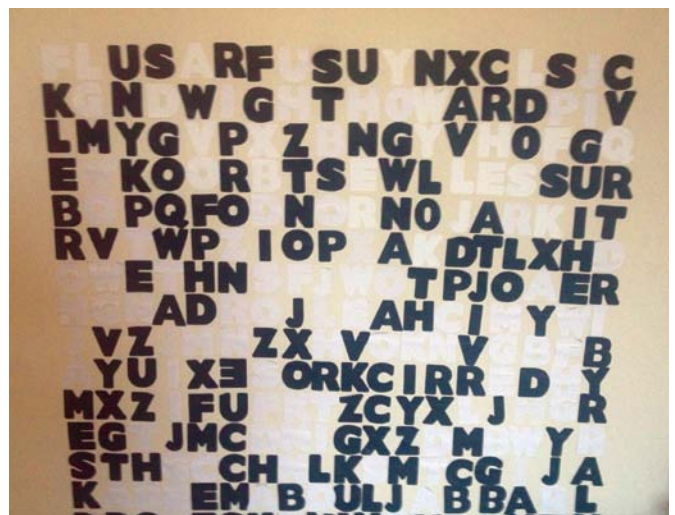


Just because there are fewer things to do outside as the temperature drops, that doesn't give children (or adults) a free pass to be glued to a screen all day. According to the Craft & Hobby Association, 56 percent of US households (which is around 63 million people) craft at least once a year. Walk through the aisles of a craft store or dare to browse Pinterest and even the busiest parents will be inspired to create some memories with their kids this winter.

## WALL WORD SEARCH

Yusuf Rasul, 11, of Elgin, Illinois wanted a basketball theme for his bedroom. His mom was not too keen on plastering posters of NBA players on each wall for religious and aesthetic reasons. So they came up with an ingenious way to bring all his favorite players into his room without any faces staring down at them.

The mother-son duo bought pre-cut paper letters from the craft store (also available in the craft section at large grocery stores)



Word search puzzle on the wall. How many NBA player names can you find?

and created a word search puzzle. Up and down, diagonal and backwards, they hid names of NBA athletes, which Yusuf and his friends enjoy finding whenever they hang out in his room. Instead of pre-cut letters, you could paint letters on the wall using stencils or, if you are adventurous, freehand. If you do not want to risk damaging walls, you can replicate the project on poster board and hang that instead.



## SIMPLE SCRAPBOOKING

The long nights of winter are perfect for cozying up near a fireplace with some hot chocolate, looking through old pictures, and sorting through new ones. Most photo websites like [www.shutterfly.com](http://www.shutterfly.com) and [www.yorkphoto.com](http://www.yorkphoto.com) offer free prints on your first order. Scrapbooking need not be expensive nor time consuming. If you are not aiming for perfection (with kids in tow, that is a good thing), you can gather some supplies from the dollar store and mix and match them with stuff you already have at home. Print a few of your favorite pictures from baseball games and Eid parties and have fun cropping and gluing them onto decorative paper. Add captions with funny things the kids say so you (and they) can laugh about it years from now. Add a few embellishments such as buttons, gems, paper flowers, or ticket stubs and programs you have saved throughout the year. Just slip your pages in clear, plastic sleeves and you have created a lifelong memory.

This year, don't feel overwhelmed at the thought of how to keep your kids constructively occupied during too-cold winter days. Be willing to try out a few new ideas and, even if your project does not turn out as perfect as you hoped, the time you spend together with your children will be. ☺



## ICE ART

Take the kids on a scavenger hunt around the house and gather containers of all shapes and sizes — the weirder the better. Empty cans of beans, silicone cupcake cases, food storage containers, a tray from an empty chocolate box...you get the picture. Fill a few jugs with water and add a different food color to each. Teach some color theory (by mixing blue and red to make purple for instance). Place all the containers outside (or in the freezer if it is not very cold where you live). Observe with the kids how ice forms quicker in small and shallow containers as opposed to wide and deep ones. In the days that follow, have the kids dress warmly and play with their ice blocks outside. Help them make towers and forts; just like a sand castle, but minus the beach.

Put a twist on this activity by pouring some undiluted tempera paint in an ice cube tray. When the paint is half-way frozen, insert Popsicle sticks and let it freeze completely. Let the kids have a blast with "popsicle paints." Just make sure they don't lick them!

*TOP RIGHT: Instead of printing 300 family vacation pics that you might never have the time to sort through, choose a few of the best ones and, with the help of patterned paper and embellishments, encapsulate a vacation into a page or two.*

*BOTTOM RIGHT: Sesame Street scrapbooking page. In addition to photos, remember to write down memories of what your child said or did at that time. It's priceless to go back and read years later.*





NOT LIKE MAMA USED TO MAKE:

## *Vegetarians and Vegans Redefine “Comfort Food”*

by Alia Shalabi

In today's health-conscious society, more people are adopting healthier eating habits, from cutting processed foods to reducing red meat intake. This can be a difficult feat in the heart of winter when the dinner table often overflows with heavy, meaty meals that warm bodies and comfort souls. Where does that leave those who assume a completely meat-free lifestyle? Can they still find comfort in food when so many foods are off-limits?



## FEEL-GOOD FOOD

The phrase “comfort food” can typically be described as a food that soothes your emotions like a hug from a loved one. It can warm you up like a cozy sweater. It can bring you solace like your favorite blanket. But each individual has his or her own idea of what constitutes a comfort food.

“Comfort food to me describes food that makes me nostalgic for my childhood,” says Beth Soltis of Orland Park, Illinois. “To me, these foods are warming, and mostly foods my mom would have made in the colder months as opposed to summer BBQ type foods.” Her old favorites include hearty, meat-laden beef stew and lasagna.

Marian Glenn of Lombard, Illinois, agrees that her comfort foods take her back to her childhood, but she adds that those foods also remind her of her Sicilian and Eastern European roots, with meaty pasta dishes and meat-and-potatoes topping her feel-good food list.

Culture does play an important role in the foods we eat, especially when living somewhere outside of our native region. Whether we do not want to forget where we came from, or we simply miss our old surroundings, we tend to bask in the comfort of foods from “back home.”

Nada El Barshoumi, an Egyptian born and raised in Bahrain, is a vegan food blogger who has been a vegan for two and a half years now. She says her “comfort foods were most definitely all the dishes my mother used to cook for us kids — traditional Egyptian dishes like *molokheya* (a green soup of sorts, made with broth and jute leaves), *mahshi* (stuffed cabbage, baby marrow [zucchini], or vine [grape] leaves), *koshary*, ... and even vegetable stews like *fasolia* (green beans) or *bamia* (okra), which are typically made in a tomato sauce and served over white rice with vermicelli.”

The foods Jessica Johnson of Downers Grove, Illinois, finds comfort in are those that reflect her Mexican heritage. Much of her childhood was spent with her grandmother, who loves to cook. Johnson’s picks include her grandmother’s *sopa de arroz* (rice made with chicken

broth and tomato sauce) and homemade flour tortillas, fresh beans, and cheese.

Sometimes our source of succor has nothing to do with our memories or culture. Gina Alm from Buffalo, New York, states, “Comfort food is something that makes me feel good when I’m feeling gloomy.” Prior to becoming a vegetarian four years ago, Alm took comfort in the spicy flavors of chili and the sweet taste of General Tso’s chicken.

## HEALTHY CHOICE

Glenn adopted a vegetarian lifestyle ten months ago after blood work showed she had extremely high cholesterol. “I’m not overweight, so I always thought I was healthy. But this made me realize I actually wasn’t.” Glenn says, “I decided to revamp my diet and try eliminating meat.”

Since implementing her new diet, Glenn has improved her cholesterol. “But most importantly,” she adds, “my meals aren’t as ‘meat-centric,’ which allows me to focus more on healthier options, like vegetables and whole grains.”

Glenn brings up a good point: when choosing a diet that is exclusive of certain foods, it is crucial to ensure

you are still obtaining all of the nutrients your body needs to thrive.

Sophie Jenkins from London, United Kingdom, spent much of her youth with a vegetarian mother, so meat was hardly a part of her diet growing up. “Then when I became Muslim,” Jenkins says, “I lived in an area with no halal meat available, so I became vegetarian out of necessity.” Illnesses possibly related to a cow’s milk intolerance led Jenkins to go strictly vegan a year ago. Since then, Jenkins, who spent much of 2012 fighting off one bout of tonsillitis after another, says, “I haven’t had a single proper sore throat since December 2012, let alone anything more serious.”

Whether for health reasons or others, embracing a vegetarian or vegan lifestyle has become increasingly more common in the last several years. A 2008 study by

*...3.2 percent of US adults follow a vegetarian-based diet. Of those 7.3 million people, about 1 million are vegan.*

*Vegetarian Times* showed that 3.2 percent of US adults follow a vegetarian-based diet. Of those 7.3 million people, about 1 million are vegan. With the growing variety of vegan products available in supermarkets, those numbers have surely grown in the last five years.

### OUT WITH THE OLD...

For those who consider comfort foods to be meals eaten in childhood, newer subscribers to plant-based diets can find themselves redefining what makes them content.

As a vegan for nine years, what does Soltis now consider a suitable beef stew replacement? “I get the same comfort vibe from soup,” she says. “Lentil soup is my favorite!” Glenn, too, says that soups and stews have become her new cold-weather cuisine of choice. “They are warm and delicious and make me feel cozy!” She is also interested in trying various risottos with vegetables and experimenting with quinoa, a protein-rich whole grain.

Johnson, who has been a vegetarian for three and a half years, has traded her south-of-the-border favorites for those of south Asia. “I eat a lot of Indian food since becoming a vegetarian,” Johnson states. “That is becoming a new comfort food for me.”

For El Barshoumi, comfort foods have not changed as dramatically as they have for others. One favorite she mentioned, *koshary*, is already vegan. A mix of rice, macaroni, lentils, chickpeas, and tomato sauce, it is considered one of Egypt’s staple street foods. For those dishes not traditionally vegan, El Barshoumi recreates them by giving them a healthier, vegan twist. “For example,” she explains, “I substitute white rice for millet or quinoa, which tastes great in stuffed vegetables.” She calls these spins a success because they have the same richness and flavor as her old favorites, “but pack a better nutritional punch,” making her feel better about what she is eating.

Sue Amr of Marion, Iowa, has been a vegetarian for over forty years. Unlike most people, her reason for going meatless has nothing to do with health benefits or animal welfare. Amr simply does not like the taste or texture of meat. A lover of rice and vegetables, she often ate the same dishes growing up as the rest of her family, just without eating the meat. She has carried that on with her husband and children, cooking meat dishes for them but leaving the meat out for herself.

And then there are people like Samer Abbas of Chicago, Illinois, who says he had never really believed in comfort food, calling the concept “a bit alien” to him. “I’ve never seen food as comfort,” says Abbas, a vegan for three years. Since adopting a vegan diet, however, he now considers chili comfort food. “It helps me deal with the winter, and the vegan option tastes even better than the meat option.”

### OH, WHAT A FEELING

Doing what you feel is best sometimes means making sacrifices. In the world of food, special diets often require relinquishing what was once relished. Vegetarians and vegans may be satisfied with their decision to steer clear of animal flesh and by-products, but they may not receive the same satisfaction from their new comfort foods as they did from their old ones. New comfort foods may be suitable replacements for old, but the memories associated with those dishes from the past are irreplaceable.

Soltis admits, “I definitely miss my mom’s lasagna,” while Glenn confesses, “I miss a big, juicy steak with sautéed mushrooms and potatoes!” El Barshoumi says, “The one thing I will say I do miss is *molokheya*; I haven’t been able to make a vegan version that’s just as good as the original — but I’m working on it.”

Even Amr, a vegetarian since the young age of 10, concedes, like a true Palestinian, “*Macluba* (rice, cauliflower, chicken upside-down dish) would be a missed comfort food, even though I did not eat the meat in it. And it is not so much as the taste, it’s the family gathering, anticipating the meal as it is unmolded. You just don’t get that reaction from a vegetarian *macluba*.”

With healthier food options readily available in supermarkets, the younger generation of vegetarians and vegans can easily raise their future children on their new foods if they choose. This gives the next generation a lighter, healthier version of feel-good foods that will also provide them with nostalgia. In the meantime, those avoiding any or all meat products can continue to console themselves in the dead of winter with their veggie spins.

Remember, whatever diet you follow, “...eat and drink, but be not excessive. Indeed, He likes not those who commit excess” (Quran 7:31).





# VEGAN CHILI

by Samer Abbas

## INGREDIENTS

- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup dry beans (mix of black, pinto, and kidney)
- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup onion (yellow, white, or red), chopped
- 4 cloves garlic
- 4 shitake mushrooms
- 4 cherry tomatoes
- 1 cup crushed tomatoes (Eden Foods Organic with no added sodium recommended)
- 6 ounces non-GMO vegan soy chorizo
- dash each of the following: cumin, turmeric, chili powder, cayenne pepper, paprika, red curry powder, garlic powder, ginger, nutritional yeast

## DIRECTIONS

1. Soak dried beans in water overnight.
2. The next day, place drained beans in a crockpot. Add remaining ingredients.
3. Cook on low setting for at least 5 hours. Stir every hour, if possible. 🍲



*To Serve with Love*  
**Halal Desserts**

Compiled by Naazish YarKhan



## Chocolate Cheesecake

Courtesy [www.nanastastytraditions.com](http://www.nanastastytraditions.com)

### INGREDIENTS

#### CHOCOLATE CAKE

- 1 cup melting chocolate
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup butter
- 4 eggs, separated
- 1 teaspoon halal vanilla flavor
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon instant coffee

#### CHEESECAKE FILLING

- 1 pound cream cheese, softened to room temperature
- 3 eggs
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup melting chocolate
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon halal vanilla flavor
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon instant coffee
- pinch salt

#### MOUSSE

- 1  $\frac{1}{4}$  cups melting chocolate
- 2 cups cold heavy cream
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon halal vanilla flavor
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon instant coffee

#### GANACHE

- 1 cup melting chocolate
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup heavy cream
- 1-2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 tablespoon butter

#### TOPPINGS

- 1 square of chocolate for each slice
- whipped cream (optional)



## DIRECTIONS

### MAKE THE CAKE LAYER

1. Heat the oven to 350°F. Butter a 9-inch springform pan and line the bottom with parchment paper.
2. In a double boiler, melt the chocolate, butter, vanilla flavor, and instant coffee. Set aside to cool.
3. With a hand mixer, beat the egg yolks with ½ cup sugar until they thicken and turn pale yellow. Fold the melted and cooled chocolate into the egg yolks. Set aside.
4. In the bowl of a stand mixer, beat the egg whites until frothy. Gradually add the remaining sugar and beat to a stiff peak. Gently fold the egg whites into the egg yolk and chocolate mixture. Evenly spread the mix into the prepared pan.

### CHEESECAKE LAYER

1. Start the cheesecake filling by melting the chocolate in a double boiler until completely smooth. Set aside and let cool slightly.
2. In the bowl of a stand mixer, combine the cream cheese, instant coffee, vanilla flavor, and salt. Beat on medium-high until smooth and fluffy, about 2 minutes. Beat in the sugar and continue mixing about 2 to 3 minutes more, scraping down the bowl as needed. Add the cooled chocolate to the bowl and mix on medium-low. Beat in the eggs one at a time, mixing each just until incorporated. Make sure not to over-beat the cream cheese mixture after the eggs are added or the cheesecake will puff like a soufflé.

3. Pour the cheesecake batter on top of the cake layer. Bake for 50 to 60 minutes or until the center jiggles very slightly when you gently and carefully shake it. Turn off the oven and open the door wide. Let the cake sit in the oven with the door wide open for 45 to 50 minutes. Once cool, cover and refrigerate until thoroughly chilled, at least 4 hours.

### MOUSSE LAYER

1. Make the mousse by melting the chocolate, vanilla flavor, and instant coffee in a double boiler. Remove from heat to cool.
2. In the bowl of a stand mixer, beat the very cold cream until somewhat thick. Beat in the melted, but cooled chocolate until soft peaks form. Layer the mousse over the top of the cheesecake and chill for a few hours or overnight (recommended).

### GANACHE LAYER

1. Place the chocolate in a small bowl. In a small saucepan, heat the cream and the sugar to a simmer. Pour over the chocolate and let stand for 1 or 2 minutes. Whisk just until a smooth ganache has formed. Add the butter and whisk until well incorporated. Cool in the refrigerator until the ganache is somewhat spreadable. Be careful, a hot ganache will melt the mousse!
2. Spread the ganache in an even layer over the mousse. Refrigerate the cheesecake until the ganache has completely set and chilled through.

### BAKER'S NOTES

Inspired by Godiva's Chocolate Cheesecake that is famous at The Cheesecake Factory, this is the ultimate chocolate decadence. It is rich, but light and creamy. It is everything you want in an indulgent slice of chocolate heaven! The addition of instant coffee is my little change and it is an absolute must! It intensifies the cocoa flavor and gives it more body.

### MELTING THE CHOCOLATE IN THE MICROWAVE

The microwave works just as well as the double boiler. Make sure to microwave the chocolate in short intervals and stir frequently. Depending on the quantity, microwave the chocolate for 5 to 10 seconds, stir, and repeat. A warm spoon works best for stirring, so run the spoon under hot water and wipe it dry before stirring the chocolate.

### WHY ADD INSTANT COFFEE?

The coffee brings out the taste of the chocolate without overpowering it.

### SLICE & SERVE

When ready to serve, carefully unmold the sides of the pan. Warm the blade of a sharp knife under hot water and wipe dry with a towel. Slice the cheesecake. Make sure to repeat the hot water trick before you cut each slice. This is the only way to get clean, presentable slices! Top with whipped cream, a chocolate square, and serve it with warm wishes and lots of LOVE!



## Chocolate Pear Pudding

Courtesy [www.nigella.com](http://www.nigella.com)

### INGREDIENTS

- 1  $\frac{1}{4}$  sticks unsalted butter, softened; plus more for greasing
- 2 (14-ounce) cans pear halves, in juice
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup plus 1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup cocoa
- 1  $\frac{1}{4}$  cups sugar
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon baking soda
- 2 eggs
- 2 teaspoons halal vanilla flavor

### DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F and grease an 8  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch square ovenproof dish with butter.
2. Drain the pears and arrange them on the base of the prepared dish. Put all the remaining ingredients in a food processor and pulse until you have a batter with a soft dropping consistency.
3. Spread the brown batter over the pears and bake in the oven for 30 minutes. Let stand for 5 or 10 minutes and then cut into slabs. Serve with chocolate sauce.





## Classic Tiramisu — Without the Alcohol

Courtesy [www.myhalalkitchen.com](http://www.myhalalkitchen.com)

The perfect marriage of coffee, cream and cookies, dessert doesn't get much better than this. Substitute decaf coffee, if desired.

SERVINGS: 6-8

### INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups cold coffee (strong, espresso or bold roast)
- 1 cup mascarpone cheese
- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup whole milk
- 2 tablespoons crème fraîche
- 3 teaspoons halal vanilla flavor
- 1 tablespoon powdered sugar or raw cane sugar
- 16 lady finger cookies
- 1 tablespoon chocolate shavings
- 1 tablespoon cocoa powder

### DIRECTIONS

1. Make coffee and set it aside in a large bowl to cool.
2. Mix mascarpone, milk, crème fraîche, and vanilla flavor. Add powdered sugar and mix well. It should be the consistency of pourable cream; add more milk, if needed ( $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon at a time).
3. Line the bottom of a square glass dish layer with the mascarpone-milk mixture.
4. Soak each lady finger cookie one by one in the coffee for about 6 to 10 seconds, or until the cookie has absorbed enough coffee but it's still firm enough to set flat in the glass pan.
5. Line the pan with one row of soaked cookies. Next, add the mascarpone mixture and smooth over with a spatula. Repeat this one more time, or until all of the cream and cookies have been used.
6. In a separate bowl, mix the cocoa powder with the chocolate shavings. Dust the top layer of the dish with this mixture.
7. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour before serving, or overnight, giving it time to set.
8. Cut and serve chilled either on small plates or in small cups. ☞



# The “Cold War”

By Husna T. Ghani

Well, it is that time again. The time where we distinguish the gladiators from the galloshes, the fashionistas from the fur-istas, and the winners from the whiners. Yup, it is winter-time in Chicago! As a true blue Chicagoan, I embrace the cold because my love for this town is unconditional. You have to accept the meteorological challenges along with the architectural marvels. Just like you have to accept the warmth of Uggs with the fact that they are ugly (don't deny it, just accept that Ugg is short for Uggly).

Okay, now where was I...oh yes, cold weather. When you get into the car in the morning and keep pressing all the buttons as if you are operating NASA, remember that the car will not magically turn into a sauna. STOP doing that. However, if it does, please contact me because I will buy it from you, along with your magic beans.

Speaking of winter and snow, when people say that two snowflakes are not the same, I want to see the scientific data collected regarding every single snowflake that has fallen on earth since the creation of snow...don't you? Next time someone says that, you should say, "I'm sorry, I disagree. In 1994, I found two snowflakes with the same symmetry, size, and lattice structure." Can you back up your data? Don't worry, neither can they.

I do notice that, in the winter, we tend to contemplate and ponder more. Some of these cerebral musings include confirmation of cold. "I'm cold. Aren't you cold?" If the other person says no, does that make you less cold? People wonder how a person can eat ice cream in the winter. Well, how can you drink coffee in the summer? Then we question why winter came early this year. No, it pretty much came around the same time as last year and every year of recorded history before that. Of course, the most pressing question we ask is, "When does Ramadan come in the winter again?" In about two decades; sit tight!

Now where was I? Seriously, I could never be a GPS. Oh yes, winter tips. Because we live on deciduous turf, we need to



bundle up, turn up the heat, and indulge in some healthy habits. Proper hygiene is vital. We need to stop being vectors for germ transportation. The winter season is not necessarily germier than any other season. However, we get so distracted by the cold and all the snow that our common sense fails us...which is pretty common. So here are fifteen tips to stay warm this winter and fight the "cold war."

15. Make sure you maintain a clean home. This may sound odd, however, think about what germs, bacteria, and viruses love...messy, dirty, and warm places to thrive and multiply. Cleanliness is part of our faith for a vital reason.
14. Keep facial tissues (that is the generic term for Kleenex) with you. Use them when you cough or sneeze. If you do not have any, cough or sneeze into your elbow as a last resort. Please do NOT place used tissues into your pockets afterwards. That is unhygienic...and gross.
13. Wash your hands with soap regularly. You may want to keep some hand sanitizer with you. Obviously soap and water are best; however, until they make cars with faucets, this is your backup.
12. Use caution when touching doors, elevator buttons, and other "high traffic" areas. You may not cough phlegm into your hands, but others might, and then touch the doorknob. Just thinking about it sends chills up my spine!
11. Eat healthy foods during the winter. You need vegetables and fruit. You also need to keep your mind alert with lean proteins. Incorporate wild seafood; it is healthier and yumier than farm-raised varieties. I know, I know. You just want to ingest warm mashed potatoes and hot cocoa from now until April. Please, refrain from doing so. No, really, please do not do that.
10. Home remedies can be incorporated, as well. They have been used for centuries. Turmeric, vitamin C, honey, green tea, cloves, and lemon juice all have health benefits such as anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and immunity boosting properties.
9. If you have a scarlet colored throat, however, a fever that makes you delirious, and are coughing up stuff in various shades of green, then you should not just drink a cup of green tea and think you are fine. You need to see a doctor to check



and see if you need prescription medication. Plus, I have heard pneumonia is not as fun to have as it is to pronounce.

8. Stay hydrated! In the winter, we forego the eight to ten glasses of water we should drink due to the cold. Water is one of the most vital elements for a healthy immune system and overall good health. Winter weather is notorious for dehydration. We have the heat on the inferno setting at home, work, school, and in our car. We need to continue drinking water throughout the day. No, a humidifier will not work because making your room climate like the amazon jungle will not solve the problem. Drink some water!
7. Wear a coat. This is for every teenager who thinks that being warm-blooded means you do not need a coat to be warm.
6. Wear gloves. Those gloves that are sitting in your closet will not help you if they are sitting in your closet. It is polite that you want to keep them warm, but that is not the point. Plus, it is always good to have fingers intact!
5. Wear a hat. Your head is sensitive to temperature change. Get a cool hat, preferably one with just the eyeholes. No, it is not necessarily warmer, just more entertaining!
4. Wear appropriate footwear. This means actual warm, ugly shoes. I know you're stylish but preserving your feet from turning purple and falling off is more stylish.
3. Make sure you include vitamins and exercise. A multivitamin and 1000 mg of Vitamin C daily to boost your immune system. No, not the candy kind. You are an adult now...go buy actual vitamins. Keep exercising in the winter, too. Regular exercise boosts the immune system and helps you bounce back from a cold or the flu faster. Just because it is cozy sweater season is no excuse not to maintain physical fitness.
2. Sleep! You need to give your body proper rest so it can function the next day. Proper sleep is needed for a healthy immune system, healthy metabolism, cellular repair and function, and so you're not as crabby while you complain about the weather.
1. Do some good for the less fortunate and be thankful to God for all the blessings He has bestowed upon you. This will warm your heart and your soul!!!





# Recipes



## ..... Homemade ..... Cold Comforter

By Husna T. Ghani

### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup hot green tea
- 1 tiny piece fresh ginger (about  $\frac{1}{8}$  to  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch)
- 1-2 teaspoons pure honey
- 2-3 cloves
- 1 small piece fresh cinnamon (about  $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch)
- 1-2 drops fresh lemon juice

### DIRECTIONS:

1. Stir ginger, honey, cloves, cinnamon, and lemon juice into the green tea.
2. Cover and let sit for a few minutes.
3. Enjoy!



## ..... The “Uncocoa” ..... .....

By Husna T. Ghani

### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup/mug hot milk
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon turmeric powder
- pinch saffron threads
- 1 teaspoon honey (optional)

### DIRECTIONS:

1. Mix turmeric, saffron, and honey into the hot milk.
2. Enjoy! ☺



2-INCH

CLAWS.

YET IT STILL NEEDS

OUR HELP

TO HOLD ON.



To help the polar bear, we're partnering with World Wildlife Fund to help protect its Arctic home. To raise awareness and additional support for this initiative, we're turning our cans and bottle caps white, and inviting the world to join us in our effort to create an Arctic refuge. By working with local communities, supporting research and through additional conservation work, WWF will strive to protect the space the polar bear so desperately needs and help ensure they have a place to call home. Arctic Home is just one example of our efforts to effect positive change in the world as part of our Live Positively commitment. LEARN MORE AT [ARCTICHOME.COM](http://ARCTICHOME.COM)

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