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“Cooking with Chef Vered Guttman”

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Shavuot, the harvest holiday celebrating receiving the Torah, is known for its delicious dairy dishes. Chef Vered Guttman explores the origins of this tasty tradition and demonstrates some of her favorite Shavuot dishes from across the Jewish diaspora. To cook along with Vered, view the video at <https://momentmag.com/moment-zoominar-cooking-with-chef-vered-guttman/>.

Vered Guttman is a contributor to ***Moment's Talk of the Table***, which celebrates the rich cultural history of Jewish foods worldwide. An intellectual take on favorite foods and little-known dishes – plus recipes. momentmag.com/talk-of-the-table

For more recipes follow Vered on Instagram [@veredguttman](https://www.instagram.com/veredguttman)

Feta and roasted eggplant burekas pie

Recipe by Vered Guttman

For this recipe we're using Italian eggplants, that are smaller and lighter than the common eggplant. You can use common eggplant as well, but in America they tend to be a little bitter, so make sure you choose an eggplant that is relatively light and that its skin is shiny and black.

Work with very cold puff pastry. Take it out of the fridge only at the last minute when you're ready to roll the pie.

Serves 8-10

Ingredients:

- 3 Italian eggplants (or 2 regular eggplants, see note above)
- 8 oz. feta cheese, crumbled
- Small bunch Italian (flat) parsley, finely chopped
- 1 lb. puff pastry, thawed in the fridge overnight
- 1 egg
- 2 tablespoons sesame seeds
- 2 tablespoons black sesame seeds (or more of the regular)

Directions:

1. You have three options for roasting an Italian eggplant (do the same for regular eggplant, but increase the time until its fully roasted):
 - Place the eggplant on the grates over a gas burner and roast on all sides, until the skin is charred and wrinkled, and eggplant show no resistance to the touch, about 6-8 minutes.
 - Roast in a 475 F degrees oven, flip the eggplant every few minutes until ready as described above.
 - On a charcoal or gas BBQ grill, turning every few minutes until ready.

Transfer eggplant to a colander and let cool just until you can handle it with you hands. Use your hands to peel eggplant. Chop eggplant on a cutting board and transfer to a medium bowl, without the juices that come out.

2. Add crumbled feta and chopped parsley to eggplant and mix gently. Set aside.
3. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Lightly dust a working surface with flour. Take the puff pastry out of the fridge. If your puff pastry is divided into two square sheets, attach them to each other to create a long rectangular sheet. You want to get a 10" by 20" sheet. You can also use a lightly dusted rolling pin to roll your dough into a rectangular. Using a knife, divide the rectangular sheet into two 5" by 20" long sheets and leave them next to each other.



4. Spread half the eggplant-feta filling lengthwise in the center of each sheet. Fold the dough to cover the filling, making sure the seam is closed tight. Repeat with the second sheet.
5. To create the swirl pie, starting with the first roll, transfer it to the center of the baking sheet in a swirl shape. Continue with the second roll and tuck the end under the pie. Attach the two rolls where they connect.
6. Lightly beat egg and brush the surface of the pie. Sprinkle with black and white sesame seeds in a swirl design. For the best result, cover the sheet with double plastic wrap and freeze for one hour and up to a month. Alternatively, you can bake it immediately.
7. Oven to 325 degrees. Remove pie from freezer. Bake for 1 hour if the pie is frozen, and about 40 minutes if it's not, until the top is golden-brown and the pie is cooked through. Wait for 15 minutes before serving.

Seven species salad

Recipe by Vered Guttman

You can use farro, freekeh or brown rice instead of wheat berries for this salad. You can also substitute the dried fruit with any that you like, and substitute hazelnuts with other nuts, as long as they're toasted.

Serves 4

Ingredients:

- 1 cup wheat berries
- 6-8 dried figs
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 3 cups chopped herbs, such as Italian parsley, cilantro, mint, tarragon, oregano
- 2 cups baby arugula
- ½ red onion, finely chopped
- ¼ cup pomegranate seeds
- 6 sliced radishes
- 2 tablespoon lemon juice
- 3 tablespoon olive oil
- Kosher salt to taste
- ½ cup toasted hazelnut, chopped
- 4 pitted dates, sliced

Directions:

1. In a sauce pan combine wheat berries with 4 cups salted water. Bring to boil over medium-high heat, reduce heat to low, cover, and cook for 20-25 minutes until wheat is al dente. Drain and let cool in a colander.
2. In the meantime, cut figs to small pieces. Heat butter and brown sugar in a non stick pan over medium heat and sauté figs until golden-brown, about 3-4 minutes. Transfer to a baking sheet to cool down.
3. Put wheat berries in a large bowl, add herbs, arugula, onion, pomegranate and radish. Add lemon juice, olive oil and salt. Taste and adjust salt/lemon. Add figs, hazelnut and dates, mix gently and serve.



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Romanian malai cake

Recipe by Vered Guttman

Malai, or alivenci, is a cornbread-like cake from the Romanian cuisine. The large amount of cheese and sour cream in the batter makes it a favorite for Shavuot.

There are savory and sweet versions to malai (the word for corn in Romanian). To make the savory version, simply omit the sugar from the recipe and reduce salt to 1½ teaspoons.

Have all the ingredients at room temperature before starting!

Yields 9" x 12" pan

Ingredients:

- 1 cup corn meal (polenta)
- 1 cup all purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 2½ teaspoons kosher salt
- 1 cup sugar
- 6 large eggs
- 1 lb. sour cream plus more for serving
- 1 lb. Greek yogurt (low fat is fine)
- 1 lb. cottage cheese (low fat is fine)

Directions:

1. Turn oven to 325 F degrees. Grease a 9" x 12" pan.
2. Put dry ingredients in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment. Mix for a minute on medium-low speed. With mixer running, add eggs one by one and mix briefly just until incorporated. Add sour cream, yogurt and cottage cheese, mix briefly and remove from mixer.
3. Pour batter into prepared pan and bake for 45 minutes until cake feels firm in the center and is golden on top.
4. Cool on a cooling rack for 10 minutes. Serve warm with a generous dollop of sour cream.



No-bake Israeli cheesecake

Recipe by Vered Guttman

Known in Israel as the crumble-cheesecake, this is one of the most popular cheesecakes in the country. This cheesecake uses the Israeli white cheese, which is similar to the German quark. A good alternative is Turkish labneh, which is less sour than the traditional labneh, available at Middle Eastern supermarkets. Another, more readily available alternative, is to use a combination of cream cheese, sour cream and Greek yogurt.

Yields 9" x 12" cake or a 11" round cake (a slightly smaller or larger pan will work as well, and will just make a higher or lower cake)

Ingredients:

For the base:

2 1/2 cups flour

1/2 tsp baking powder

1/2 cup sugar

1/2 teaspoon kosher salt

15 Tablespoons butter, cold

2 egg yolks

For the cheese filling:

2 cups heavy cream

10 TBSP sugar

3.7 oz. pack instant vanilla pudding mix

1 1/2 lb. Israeli white cheese, quark or Turkish labneh

(Or a combination of 6 oz. cream cheese, 10 oz. sour cream and 8 oz. Greek yogurt)

Zest of one lemon

Directions:

1. Make the base: turn oven to 325 F degrees. Grease a 10" x 12" pan and line a small baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Put flour, baking powder, sugar and salt in the food processor, then cut butter into the mix and pulse. Add the yolks and pulse to get crumbs, add 2-4 tablespoons cold water if crumbs are not created after the first few pulses.
3. Using your hands, gently flatten 2/3 of the dough into the greased pan, pour the rest on the baking sheet. Bake until just begins to turn golden - 15-18 minutes for the pan, 12-14 minutes for the baking sheet. Let cool completely on a cooling rack. After 15 minutes you can transfer the cake pan into the fridge, to make the cooling process faster.
4. If you're using the combination of cream cheese, sour cream and Greek yogurt in a food processor and blend briefly until smooth. Set aside. Continue with the directions as usual.
5. To make the cheese filling whip the cream with the sugar. Sprinkle pudding powder in and mix briefly. Add Israeli cheese or cream cheese mixture and lemon zest to the cream and mix. Pour the mixture on the baked crust in the pan.
6. Crumble the baked dough from the baking sheet on top of the filling. Refrigerate covered for 8 hours before serving.



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