

Mix everything except the last 4 ingredients, and pound thoroughly in a mortar. With a long sharp knife make a hole in the centre of the meat and rub inside with spices. Take the piece of fat, which should be about the same length as the meat, (any mutton fat may be used except kidney fat) dip it in spices and insert in the hole. Rub the spices all over the meat and tie round firmly with a long piece of string. Put the meat in a pan and three quarters cover with cold water. Add the onions, bay leaf and any remaining spices. Bring to the boil and skim once. Cover the pan tightly and put a piece of thick blanket over the lid. Cook in a low fire for 1½ hours. When ready take out the meat, allow it to cool, remove the string and slice.

17. Stuffed Pancakes.

1 egg	¼ k. minced meat
½ tin flour	Frying fat
Water	1 tbsp. parsley
Salt and pepper	1 medium onion

Beat the egg, add the flour and water gradually and beat till like thick cream. Season. Allow to stand for half an hour. Fry the meat, and the chopped parsley and grated onion and cook further. Season. Grease a small frying pan and cook very thin pancakes. This quantity make 16. Cook lightly, put on a spoonful of the meat mixture, fold in the ends, roll up and re-fry three or four at a time.

A richer batter may be made by adding a spoonful of butter and using milk instead of water. If double the quantity of batter is made when the pancakes are stuffed they may be re-dipped in batter and then re-fried. Any savoury fish, meat or cheese filling may be used for these.

Coffee Customs

The offering of coffee is the most usual form of hospitality in the Middle East. It is served at any time of the day particularly in the forenoons when much important business is settled over a cup or two of coffee, as was the custom in Britain two hundred years ago and still is, to a lesser extent, to-day. In Egypt, at the present time, the name of a business man's coffee house may be seen inscribed on his visiting card.

Coffee (*Coffea Arabica*) of which there are more than thirty varieties, is indigenous to Abyssinia, and has been used in that country since time immemorial. From there it was introduced into Arabia where it was known to exist in the 15th century and from whence it spread over the east during the next century. The stimulating and sleep dispelling properties of coffee were early appreciated by the Mufti of Aden, and according to La Roque*,

**Traité Historique de l'origine et du progrès du café, tant dans l'Asie que dans l'Europe; de son introduction en France, et de l'établissement de son usage à Paris.*

when the dervishes of the Yemen wished to remain wakeful during long prayers they received coffee from their superior, decanted from a red earthenware vase of a type still seen in the Sudan at the present time.

The drinking of coffee gave rise to serious disturbances on religious and medical grounds in Mecca, Cairo and European cities. Some believed that, like wine, it should be forbidden to Moslems; and others, like the young French doctor. That it was harmful to the health. In spite of the heated controversies on this subject the use of coffee became more and more widespread.

The first coffee house, which took the form of a club, was opened in England in Oxford in 1650 and in London two years later. The coffee house soon became the fashionable meeting place for wits and philosophers, and also for business men as it still is in the east to-day, Lloyd's, at present the biggest insurance concern in the world, originated in a coffee house of that name. In France La Roque's father brought the cups & necessary utensils to Marseilles in 1644, and coffee was offered privately in the houses of merchants who had acquired a taste for it on their journeys to the east. In due course all medical and religious controversies on the subject of coffee ceased and its popularity has continued undiminished to the present time.

In Arab countries, the preparation and drinking of coffee is a traditional ceremonial associated with hospitality. Among the wealthy tribesmen the preparation of coffee begins early in the morning. The beans are roasted in a metal spoon or "mihmas"—the bowl of which like a large-shallow basin. The long thick handle may be handsomely ornamented with brass and in some instances is supported on small wheels, on which it is rolled forward to the fire the name of which varies in different tribes. It is built on three supports—the "manasib"—usually of brick which are famed in Arab poetry. The "gahwachi" whose duty it is to prepare the coffee, knows exactly how much heat is necessary to roast the beans without burning. He turns them continuously with his "qashuga", a long metal rod with a small, flattened cemicircular end. When ready the beans will have decreased twenty five per cent, in weight but increased fifty per cent, in bulk, which results in the splitting of the fine outer covering of the bean. They are then tipped into a large brass mortar—the "hawan"—and the gahwachi begins to pound them rhythmically. In some parts of the country the use of a wooden mortar is believed to result in better coffee. As he pounds the gahwachi strikes a resounding note on the mortar and as the grinding continues the speed of the rhythm increases, alters and finally, as the coffee reaches its powdery state, there is a hurried and repeated crushing, followed by a violent ringing on the mortar and a final single resonant note.

The rhythmic beating of the beans with its associated bell like notes varies according to the gahwachi but is not purely an amusement. It is a summons to coffee, and pounding of the coffee without ringing would imply

that the coffee is not ready or, if in the morning, that the family is not yet up.

The utensils for coffee making are assembled round the fire. The coffee pots with their fat bellies and long pointed spouts are usually of three sizes. They are made of brass or tinned copper and may last many years, depending on their quality and usage and the number of each increases with the importance of the sheikh. In the smoke blackened "gum gum" which may be two or three feet in height is the "sharbat" the fluid remains of previous brews of coffee to which water is added to make up the volume. The coffee is made in the "tel gama" into which is thrown the freshly ground coffee and over it is poured the hot sharbat from the gum gum. It is heated slowly and allowed to foam up about seven times. The gahwachi then tastes it to be sure there is no flaw which will ruin his reputation. When it meets with his approval it is decanted into the small shining coffee pots, generally known as "dallas", although this term may be applied to a coffee pot of any size and from these it is poured into tiny porcelain cups without handles which the gahwachi holds in a tier in one hand. Only a small quantity is handed in the cup as it is customary to pass round coffee about every quarter of an hour, and furthermore, it is unpleasant trying to hold a full cup of hot fluid when the vessel has no handle.

Unless a guest of great importance is present, the sheikh receives the coffee first and thereafter it is passed round the circle, in some places in a clockwise direction, but this is variable. Coffee is received in the right hand, taking it in the left would be impolite. It is usually drunk in two sips, noisy sipping indicating great appreciation. Unless one refuses it coffee is offered three times to each person. If one does not wish more the cup is shaken as it is returned to the server. If coffee is refused after it poured is tossed out of the cup and more is poured for the next person. If, however, the cup is accepted the guest must not refuse to drink the contents. A man who has drunk coffee with a tribe is under the protection of the sheikh and should misfortune befall him it is great shame to the host. Should the man handing coffee by accident miss out someone in the circle of people present it would be an unpleasant moment should he do so obviously by intent the insult to the guest would be deep and significant.

Arab coffee is taken without sugar and is somewhat bitter. When of the best quality it should be thick and syrup like and coat the cup when it is tilted and the fluid rolled round the sides. Coffee readily absorbs flavours from anything standing near it and an expert can detect absorptions. A story is told of a connoisseur of coffee from the Beni Temim who visited an amir of the Shammar. The servant who handed the coffee noticed that the guest, instead of drinking the coffee, poured the small quantity in the cup behind his head kerchief which was worn across the lower part of his face. At first the guest denied the accusation that had not drunk the coffee, for having accepted the cup, by the laws of hospitality he was bound

to drink of it, but later he admitted there was something disagreeable about the aroma. A new brew of coffee was prepared and the same thing happened. To prove the purity of the coffee the amir ordered the contents of the tel-gama to be spread on a tray before the company. Nothing was found, and the amir believing himself to be insulted was on the point of ordering the visitor to be killed. He restrained himself, however, and called for another tray into which the contents of the gum gum was emptied. When the last of the fluid was being poured out a small spider dropped into the plate. "That," said the guest, "is the flavour I detected in the aroma of the coffee." "And we," said the amir "give you the title of 'Connoisseur of Coffee, Class I.' since none of us detected any fault; and," he continued, "for the rest of your life you will have no need to buy coffee for you will have it from us."

Such experts must obviously drink coffee unspoiled any other flavour, but it is not uncommon to find coffee perfumed with cardamom which is a pleasant variation for those not among the first grade of connoisseurs, who regard cardamom flavoured coffee as only a second rate coffee.

In towns Arab coffee is served in coffee shops and in private houses. In one of Baghdad's most famous coffee shops the coffee is crushed in a huge stone mortar by means of shining steel pestle. The use of modern machines for grinding coffee is despised as an inefficient method since only by pounding, it is maintained, is the oil satisfactorily extracted from the beans. The method of preparation differs somewhat from that among the tribes. Either warm sharbat, that is the remains from previous recent makings, is poured over the ground coffee (Recipe 220) and very slowly brought to the boil or boiling sharbat may be poured over the fresh grounds (Recipe 221) and stirred vigorously to cause the much prized froth to rise. The coffee is allowed to precipitate for a few moments and then a piece of date palm fibre or "lif" is inserted into the long spout to act as a filter. A filter may look like a tiny, long, thin broom, the fibres being bound of one end with brass wire, or it may simply be a few pieces of loose fibre pushed into the spout of the coffee pot. The coffee is then poured through the filter into the cups. In some instances it is strained from one dalla into another from which it is served. In this case the former is known as the "misfat" (the strainer) and the latter the "masabb" (the pourer). If cardamom is liked the seeds are crushed and added to the mistat.

Among city dwellers sweet Turkish coffee is probably more used than Arab coffee. (Recipe 223). When for only a few persons the sugar and coffee are mixed in a small coffee pot rather like a narrow necked pan with a long handle. Cold water is added and it is heated slowly over a low fire. As tiny bubbles show at the edge of the fluid the flame is reduced or the pan lifted higher from the stove. The purpose of bringing to the boil slowly is twofold. Firstly time is given for the sugar to melt and secondly to allow the froth, which is one of the qualities of good coffee, to form in more generous amounts. With rapid boiling such is not the case. When serving a little of

the froth must first be placed in each cup before filling with coffee.

Coffee whether Arab or Turkish is usually made with finely powdered coffee, whereas French coffee (Recipe 222) is made with coarsely ground beans. America is a great nation of coffee drinkers but the fluid is usually diluted with an equal volume of hot milk and is drunk in large quantities. In Britain, it is not popular, but it is customary to serve it in small cups after dinner. In the occident many pieces of apparatus, simple and complicated, have been devised for the preparation of coffee, but the excellent of oriental coffee justifies the contempt with which such appliances are regarded in the east. For exact details of the preparation of coffee turn to the section on beverages. (Recipes 220—223).

Lunch

In the west lunch is usually a light meal of one or possibly two courses followed by biscuits and cheese and coffee. One of the reason for this that working hours are commonly from 9 a. m. to 5 or 6 p. m. with only one hour allowed for lunch. Under these circumstances few people have either the time or the inclination for a large meal, and the habits of the wage earner are followed by his family at home. In Iraq where, because of the intense heat, hours are early in summer, it is customary for most Iraqis to complete the day's work without more than a snack and to return home at two or three o'clock in the afternoon to a substantial meal, which is as heavy if not heavier than the evening meal.

Some oriental dishes, a number of which are mentioned in the following pages, are suitable for the light occidental lunch and are popular with residents in Iraq. Many more will be found under other headings.

18. Baked Rabbit.

1 rabbit	Herbs
Flour	Dripping
Salt and pepper	Bacon (optional)
8 medium onions	Stock or water

Clean the rabbit and cut it into small neat joints. Roll each piece in well seasoned flour. Slice the onions very finely; wash and chop some fresh herbs such as parsley, thyme, marjoram or fennel and mix with the onions. Season. Arrange this mixture in layer in a fireproof dish generously greased with dripping. Lay a few strips of bacon on top and cover with the pieces of rabbit put a few more pieces of bacon on the rabbit or cover with greased paper, add a tin of stock and cook in a moderately slow oven for about an hour and a half. When ready thicken the gravy with a little flour mixer to a cream in cold water.

19. Baked Savoury Potatoes and Tomatoes.

$\frac{1}{2}$ ki potatoes	$\frac{1}{2}$ cloves of garlic
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