

## Culinary therapy in 'Cooking New İstanbul Style'

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Published by Boyut Publications, "Refika'nın Mutfağı -- Cooking New İstanbul Style" presents a wide array of easy and delicious recipes ranging from kadayif to manti and from yufka to Turkish sushi. Along with all these recipes, there are details on which vegetables and fish are best during which season and how a table should be set up.

You may be baking a simple cake or a complicated multiple-step dish. The most important ingredient you can put into your food is care. Not just for the food but also for the person you are preparing the dish for. Perhaps this is why our grandmothers' food is always so delicious. This is how Refika Birgül, the author of "Refika'nın Mutfağı," explains the secret to great food. Her 370-page book contains everything you need to know about food -- from spices to dried fruits, selecting seasonal vegetables and fish, growing your own herbs and decorating a table. We've chosen a few recipes from Birgül's book, who explains that eating and being in the kitchen are healing processes. "I highly recommend that those who are depressed cook and stay busy baking," she says.

### Köfte with chickpeas

**Ingredients:** 400 grams boiled chickpeas; 4 cloves garlic; 1 onion; half a bunch of parsley; a quarter of a bunch of dill; 2 eggs; 1 tsp flour; 1 tsp pepper paste; 1/2 cup and 3 tsp breadcrumbs; 3 tsp cumin; 1 tsp black pepper; half a block of hellim cheese; sunflower oil

**Preparation:** Place the chickpeas and garlic into a blender and blend until it attains a ground beef-like consistency. Mince the onion and parsley into very small pieces and add to the blender. Remove the mix to a container in which you can knead it. Add in the pepper paste, eggs, cumin, black pepper and three teaspoons of breadcrumbs. Knead until it is similar to köfte meat -- approximately two to three minutes. Then chop the hellim cheese into one-centimeter cubes and add to the mixture, which will now be slightly more watery than köfte meat. Place half a cup of breadcrumbs into a plate, shape the mixture into meatballs and roll them in the breadcrumbs. Be gentle with the meatballs at this point because they fall apart easily. After resting for 15 minutes, the meatballs will be ready for frying in sunflower oil.

### Sour cherry aş

**Ingredients:** 500 grams of sour cherry compote; 1 cup sugar; 3 cups water; 1/3 package of güllaç; 6 handfuls of walnuts

**Preparation:** Boil the sugar and water. Add the sour cherry compote, together with all of its liquid, into the mix. After five minutes of boiling, allow to cool. Cut five leaves of güllaç pastry into the size of your plate with scissors. Save the portions that have been cut for layering later on. First, place one full, pre-cut leaf and pour the syrup (if the syrup is hot or too much is used, the güllaç will melt). Then place one layer of the pieces of the güllaç which you had saved for layering. While preparing güllaç, you must pour syrup on each layer. Place another full, pre-cut güllaç pastry leaf and pour syrup on top as before. Then place three handfuls of walnuts over the güllaç, add two more layers (of the scraps of güllaç pastry set aside and syrup). Place the remaining walnuts and add more sour cherries on top. Last, place three full, pre-cut güllaç leaves and add cherries. Garnish with walnuts. Place your dessert in the fridge to cool for two hours.

