

Ghormeh Sabzi

Season: Autumn/Winter/Spring

Serves: 30 tastes in the classroom
or 6 serves at home

Fresh from the garden: chives, coriander, dill, fenugreek, lemon, onions, parsley, spinach

Ghormeh sabzi is the national dish of Iran, and is an ancient Persian classic. *Sabzi* means 'vegetables' or, more literally, 'greens'. The technique of cooking the herbs until they are dry is a key part of this dish and deepens the flavour.

Fenugreek is a bitter leaf, popular in Persian cuisine. It's a great plant to have, as it grows quickly and fixes nitrogen in the soil. You can buy fenugreek from Indian shops, where it might be labelled 'methi'. If you can't grow fresh fenugreek, substitute 1 tablespoon of dried fenugreek leaves and a handful of spinach.

Dried limes have a pleasant, tangy smell and are sometimes called 'black limes' even though they are a dusky, grey-green colour. They can be found in Middle Eastern shops.

Note: You can add meat for a heavier, more traditional *ghormeh sabzi*, but you will need to allow for 45 minutes simmering time instead of 20 minutes. If using dried kidney beans, soak in cold water overnight then simmer for 1 hour and drain.

Equipment:

large bowl for soaking the beans (optional)
large saucepan
colander
clean tea towel
chopping board
cook's knife
metric measuring spoons, scales and jug
juicer
small bowl
2 large saucepans, 1 with a lid
wooden spoon



Ingredients:

2 dried limes or 1 tsp sumac
2 small handfuls of chives, finely chopped
2 small handfuls of dill, finely chopped
2 big handfuls of flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped
2 big handfuls of fresh coriander, finely chopped
2 big handfuls of fenugreek leaves, finely chopped or 1 tbsp fenugreek seeds plus 2 big handfuls of spinach
4 tbsp sunflower oil
2 onions, diced
1 tsp powdered turmeric
pinch of dried chilli flakes (optional)
400 g beef, thinly sliced (optional)
2 x 400 g cans of red kidney beans or 200 g dried kidney beans soaked overnight then simmered for 1 hour and drained
2 tbsp tomato paste
1 L warm vegetable stock or water
juice of ½ lemon
¼ tsp salt, to taste
¼ tsp pepper, to taste

What to do:

1. Prepare all of the ingredients based on the instructions in the ingredients list.
2. 'Crack' the dried limes (like an egg) by banging them on the bench. The outer skin needs to be cracked just enough to let water in.
3. Place the dried limes in the small bowl. Fill with water and set aside.
4. Place the large saucepan over a medium heat. Add the chives, dill, parsley, coriander and fenugreek leaves (or dried fenugreek seeds and spinach).
5. Stir constantly over a medium heat. The herbs will gradually darken to a green-brown colour. They will begin to look like dried herbs as you cook all the water out of the leaves. Be careful not to burn them or the dish will be very bitter!
6. Continue cooking and stirring for about 10 minutes, at which point the herbs will be dried and crisp. Remove the pan from the heat, toss the contents to cool, and set aside.
7. Place the second large saucepan over a medium heat and add the sunflower oil.
8. Add the onion and cook, stirring frequently, for about 2 minutes or until the onion is translucent and soft.
9. Add the turmeric and chilli flakes, if using. Cook for a further 2 minutes.
10. Add the sliced beef, if using, and cook, stirring, for about 3 minutes, until it begins to brown.
11. Add the kidney beans, tomato paste and reserved dried herbs.
12. Drain the dried limes and add to the pan.
13. ***Add the vegetable stock or water, cover the saucepan and bring to the boil.**
14. Lower the heat to a simmer, uncover and cook for 20 minutes or 45 minutes if using beef.
15. Taste the stew, and season with the salt and pepper.
16. Add the lemon juice and stir.
17. Serve with rice and/or flatbread.

***Adult supervision required.**

