

Freekeh a

Iman Renno learned how to cook the traditional Syrian dish freekeh when she was a child so not cooking it perfectly is not an option. **TAHNAE GOLDSWORTHY** reports.



Iman Renno loves cooking a Middle-Eastern dish with wheat and chicken called freekeh.

FOR more than 30 years, the smell of the Middle-Eastern dish freekeh has wafted from Iman Renno's kitchen wherever she lived.

Whether it was in Syria preparing the dish with her mother or at her Raby home with husband Bassam, Mrs Renno has cooked the Syrian dish for as long as she can remember.

Incorporating grilled wheat grains with meat, the dish is healthy and light.

Mrs Renno said freekeh

was an easy recipe to follow with only a few ingredients needed, yet it took experience to nail the right flavour.

Her husband said people needed to have cooked freekeh for a while to get it just right.

Mrs Renno is well-known for her freekeh and said guests often requested there be a plate on the table when they came.

Freekeh is garnished with meat often chicken, lemon,

topped with roasted almonds that add a crunch and is eaten with a bowl of plain yoghurt sprinkled with dried mint and a side salad.

Mrs Renno said if guests liked garlic, she would often crush a couple of cloves to mix in with the yoghurt to add even more flavour to the dish.

Aside from Freekeh, Mrs Renno also cooks Keba, a traditional dish featuring mince meat and wheat cooked on the grill.

tasty treat



FREEKEH

INGREDIENTS

- 400g lamb stew meat, cubed, or 8 chicken pieces
- 2 cups grilled green wheat, (widely available including at Coles)
- 1 medium-sized peeled onion
- 2 tbs of vegetable oil or butter
- 1 tsp of salt; 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon; 1/2 tsp mixed spices
- 1/2 cup pine nuts fried in vegetable oil
- 1/2 cup blanched and fried almonds

Freekeh is a favourite with Syrian families.

Pictures: IAN SVEGOVIC

Freekeh is often top of the menu at any Syrian restaurant.

The meal is a favourite of Mr Renno and his two children, who often enjoyed Mrs Renno's creation as an everyday meal because of its healthy ingredients and tasty flavours.

Meal Mates runs a cooking class at The Fields Neighbourhood Centre, Glenquarie.

Details: Fatin on 4627 1188.

METHOD

1. Cover lamb or chicken with water, add peeled onion, salt, cinnamon and spices, cook over medium heat until well done.
2. Remove lamb/chicken and put aside but keep the juice.
3. Wash the grilled green wheat and drain then fry in oil or butter.
4. Boil the juice that is left from the meat and add the grilled wheat grains (the juice will sit about 7cm above the wheat).
5. Bring to boil over medium heat then reduce and cook for 30 minutes (don't stir).
6. Serve garnished with the meat and nuts.



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