

Sabahat's Sour Soup

When I was a child, it was very common for us to receive several bowls and plates filled with different dishes and desserts. Neighbours would knock on our door saying, "Your child scented the smell, he will crave it." We used to taste these different dishes, if it was a new recipe, we would make comments about it, and the dishes were carefully washed. Whatever was cooked in the house the next day, with ingredients, be it sweet or salty, sour or bitter, whatever we ate, we would also give some to the neighbour while returning their plate.



Sidar Tekin

- So, what would you like to say more about sour soup? Tell me a bit more.
- All right dear. My mother-in-law was the one who cooked sour soup. My late father-in-law had said to me: "After the birth of your first child I will buy you a huge cooking pot, you will cook sour soup in it and serve it on my behalf to your neighbours." Each time I cook sour soup I think of my father-in-law and I still have this huge pot.
- Really, where?
- In Dörtüol. When I lived there, I used to cook sour soup in this pot and serve to my neighbours. And if I cook it, I always have to give some away because there is always plenty.

Since I was a child, sour and bitter have been my two favourite flavours. An ingenuity of Antakya's pomegranate syrup and hot pepper paste. Two of the best flavours combining these two tastes are sour soup and *tutmaç* soup. Actually, the two are very similar. Same sauce, similar

appearances, similar main ingredients. But one has a lot of ingredients, the other is a simpler soup. On the day I got these recipes, my mother was making *tutmaç* soup. She says that she makes this soup on the days she cleans the house:

“With tutmaç soup, we generally prepare kısır. You can also cook it quickly for guests who come to your house. For example, if it is an unannounced guest or a very close friend, this soup and some kısır can be prepared immediately.”



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As the youngest of the family, when I was accepted to a high school in Istanbul, my parents decided to move, as they probably thought there was not much that tied them to Antakya anymore. Their two children were already living in Istanbul, and the other was at a 2-hour drive from Istanbul. I remember that the adaptation period was difficult for all of us. My parents, both retired teachers, had neither friends nor knowledge about this city. My father made friends in coffee shops near the house, but my mother’s sense of loneliness lasted for a long time. Nowadays, she is one of the familiar old faces of the neighbourhood. I think I realized the value of neighbourliness while watching this evolution.

“Sour soup has a lot of ingredients, it is harder to prepare, it has a lot of vitamins too. Even here (in Istanbul) I served some to my neighbour next door. As it is a little bit spicy, I told them the sour soup was a remedy soup. Sour soup is plenty, as it has a lot of ingredients. You absolutely have to give away some of it.”

***Tutmaç* soup**

First you clean and rinse the lentils, then you put them in a pot with cold water. 3-4 glasses of water is enough. You will know when the lentils are cooked when you take one out and taste it. Towards the end of cooking, you add vermicelli if you have some, otherwise you can crush some butterfly pasta and throw it in. You let those cook together. As the pasta is cooked in only 10 minutes, the soup will be ready soon because the lentils were almost cooked. Of course, you add the salt while the lentils are still cooking, so that they don't fall into small pieces too much. Salt keeps the lentils a whole. You put sunflower oil in a small pan, crush 1 or 2 garlcs and put them in it, just fry for a little while and then add the pepper paste. You use red pepper paste, not tomato paste. You put 1 spoon of red pepper paste, then you add 1 spoon of sour. After the sour, you add the dried mint and let it boil up for a while, then throw this mixture into the soup and eat with pleasure.

Ingredients

- Green lentils
- Garlic
- Butterfly pasta or vermicelli

Sour soup

You soak dry beans and chickpeas overnight. When you get up in the morning, you boil them separately. Then you put these two in a pot. You add a little bit of bulgur, one teacup of coarse bulghur or cracked wheat in it. You cook these. Then you chop the green beans into small pieces (5-6 stalks of bean) and throw them in. It continues to cook. On the other hand, you cut 2 eggplants into small squares. It's already soaked in water. When you see that the other ingredients are fully cooked, you add small green hot peppers or finely chopped tomatoes. Then you add the eggplant in. Keep cooking. When you realize that all is well cooked, you turn the heat off. In a pan, you put 4 spoons of sunflower oil, then you crush 2 cloves of garlic, you fry lightly. You put 1 full spoon of pepper paste. You add 1 tablespoon of sour, and squeeze half a lemon. While frying these in the pan, you add 1 tablespoon of dried mint at the end. You pour some of the soup's juice on top of this sauce. Then you add all

of this sauce into the soup, you are done. You add salt and sourness according to your preference. That's it, bon appetit!

Ingredients

- 1-1,5 cups of dry beans and chickpeas
- Bulghur or cracked wheat
- Eggplants
- Green beans
- Tomatoes
- Green pepper

For the sauce of these two soups

- Red pepper paste
- Pomegranate syrup
- Dry mint
- Garlic
- Sunflower seed oil
- Lemon (for sour soup)