

Mastava Recipe

Most of the time, the first question that comes to my mind about mastava is, “Why do so many people in my family love the rice porridge mixed with yoghurt so much?” Perhaps the answer to this question is hidden in the fact that mastava is a local dish that has been cooked since forever and is a ‘penury food.’ I say penury food, because it is made with three basic ingredients that can be found in almost every house, and at the end of the day you end up preparing a very filling dish.



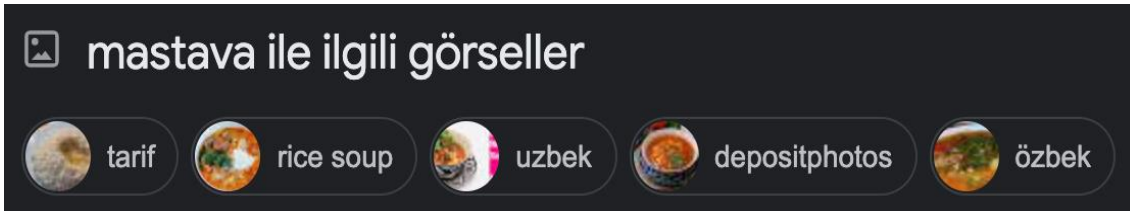
Zeynep Kılıç

Mastava is a dish that I never liked. When I was a kid, I thought that only old people ate this dish, I had never seen a child who ate it. I don't know if it's because of the appearance, the consistency or the taste, but there was something that pushed me away from this dish. So now, it is a little weird for me to give you the recipe for this dish. Maybe at the end of this article I will be craving for mastava, I don't know. While I was writing the previous recipes, I tried to cook most of the dishes as soon as the article was over, but what I am telling is for the reader as well as for me... So, what you do with this recipe at the end of the article is entirely up to you. Maybe for the first time, I'm only going to give you the recipe of a dish I'm not very fond of, and tell its story.

Most of the time, the first question that comes to my mind about mastava is, “Why do so many people in my family love the rice porridge mixed with yoghurt so much?” Perhaps the answer to the question is hidden in the fact that the meal is a local dish that has been cooked since forever and is a *penury food*. I say penury food, because it is made with three basic ingredients that can be found in almost every house, and at the end of the day you end up with a very filling dish. Considering that in the past large families lived together, this meal must have been a quick fix. As I said, this dish is prepared with the most basic ingredients –yogurt, rice, eggs, water– as this is the case, my mother used to cook this dish instantly, and no one would understand when she cooked

it. The consistency of the dish is quite dense, like *keşkek*. Once it is placed on a plate for serving, you make a hole in the middle and add butter; the dish is served as such. While this dish is made with ground wheat called *teftî* in Diyarbakir, it is made with rice in Hakkari. The name of the dish prepared Hakkari way is *gulol*. My maternal grandmother from Hakkari and my paternal grandmother from Diyarbakir used to have sweet quarrels over whether the name of this dish was *gulol* or *mastava*.

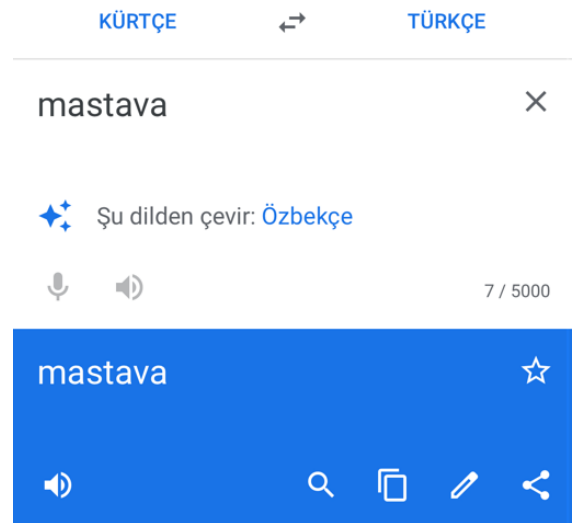
When I googled *mastava* to dig deeper into the etymology of the name of the dish, I came across surprising things. The first piece of information that I found was the *mastava* soup from Uzbek cuisine, it is a rice soup with plenty of vegetables. After scrolling down many Uzbek soup recipes, I finally found the *mastava* of Diyarbakir.



I could guess that the dish did not only belong to Diyarbakir, but it never occurred to me that we also shared this dish with the Uzbeks. By the way, the two recipes are completely different; it is not prepared as a soup in Diyarbakir and there are no vegetables in it. The fact that these two different dishes were called the same led me to question whether *mastava* meant something in Uzbek or not.

In Kurdish *mast* is yogurt and *av* is water. As I write the word in order to find out the meaning in Uzbek, I get the same word thrown back at me, so I think *mastava* doesn't mean anything in Uzbek. Then I write *mastava* on Google Translate and try to translate it into Turkish, but the application proposes to translate from Uzbek.

After my little research and all these astonishments, I can't happen to understand how we, Kurdish people share the name of *mastava* with Uzbeks. But after all my discoveries, I will give another chance to *mastava* and try to like it.



Here I share with you our mastava recipe that I have seen prepared by women of my family.

Ingredients

- Yogurt
- Eggs
- Teftî - Rice
- Water
- Butter
- Salt
- Red pepper flakes

Preparation

Stir up yogurt with water, eggs and salt. Stir until it boils. Once it boils add the rice. When it has the consistency of *keşkek*, turn off the heat. When you put it in a plate to serve, make a hole in the middle and add melted hot butter mixed with red pepper flakes.