



# Afghanistan Reads! افغانستان لولي!

Community Libraries and Literacy Program



## Recipes from the Women of Takhar



Prepared by Women Graduates of the Afghanistan Reads! / Afghanistan Lowalee! Community Literacy and Libraries Program, implemented in Takhar through the Afghan Women's Empowerment Program (AWEP)



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# Introduction

We are pleased to present here a selection of 10 recipes that have been translated to English from the Dari language of Afghanistan. There are more than 50 recipes that were developed and written by women in the province of Takhar who graduated from literacy classes implemented by Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan (CW4WAfghan), through the Afghan Women's Empowerment Program (AWEP). AWEP is a project of the Aga Khan Foundation Canada, in partnership with Aga Khan Foundation Afghanistan, undertaken with the generous financial support of the Government of Canada.

Takhar is a rural province that is home to nearly one million people, situated in the northeastern region of Afghanistan, west of Badakhshan province and east of Kunduz province. To the north lies the country of Tajikistan; to the south lies Baghlan and Panjshir. The capital is Taloqan.

AWEP aims to advance women's empowerment by increasing social and economic participation of women in 36 districts of Takhar, Baghlan and Bamyán provinces of Afghanistan, over a four-year period, 2016-2020. To learn more, visit: <https://www.cw4wafghan.ca/afghanistan-womens-empowerment-program-awep>

In AWEP, CW4WAfghan draws on its successful methods from its Afghanistan Reads! Community Literacy model in delivering literacy classes for 1,800 AWEP beneficiaries. We emphasize literacy and numeracy skills, life skills such as family nutrition and hygiene, reading promotion, and equipping teachers with librarian skills so they effectively engage literacy learners in reading activities. Each literacy class has a small mobile library, and women take the books home to read with their families.

To learn more about the Afghanistan Reads! model, visit <https://www.cw4wafghan.ca/afghanistan-reads-afghanistan-lowalee-community-libraries-literacy-and-books>

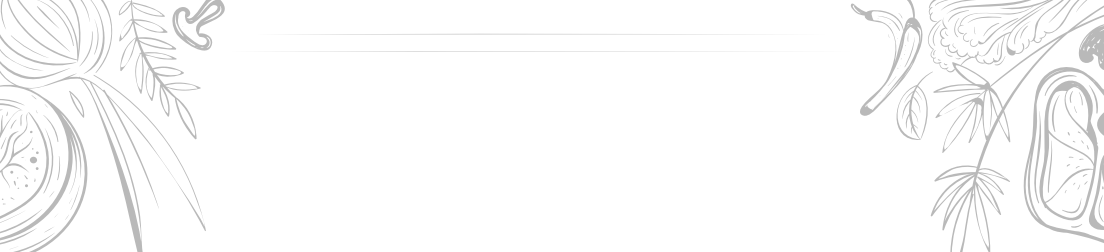
As our Senior Director, Murwarid Ziayee, recently wrote for International Literacy Day,

“

Every student walks into our classes with a story of courage and struggle trailing behind them. To ask any of our students how they got here is a humbling and eye opening experience, and a compelling reminder of the value people attribute to this all-important skill, being able to read and write.

”





“ Literacy is a gateway to more functionality in the practicalities of life — reading a map for instance — but it is ultimately about much more: it is the single most potent path to empowerment. It is the gateway to other learning, opening a world of possibilities, a world of dreams that suddenly seem achievable. Research has shown that reading and writing is linked to improved self-esteem and confidence, more informed decision-making, improved health, increased household wealth, and increased participation in social and political life. And literacy is also the key to freedom — freedom from the limitations that have been imposed on one’s life, dismantled one by one, one letter, one word at a time, often only mastered ever so painfully. ”

**Murwarid Ziayee**, *Senior Director, CW4WAfghan*

Visit [www.cw4wafghan.ca](http://www.cw4wafghan.ca) to read more.

We invite you to read these recipes, try them out in your kitchen, and as you cook and enjoy these unique and tasty dishes, think of the significance of the moment when the authors of these recipes arrived at the point that they could write down their recipes, putting their voices out into the world. Here you are, somewhere in Canada, cooking a recipe developed by a woman on the other side of the world – because that woman learned to read and write, and thus to share her knowledge and life experience with you, a world away. It’s really something.

And yet, it’s only the beginning. The opportunities that their new skills have opened up for our Afghanistan Reads! graduates are difficult to quantify in their profound significance, but one of them that we are always conscious of is that a literate mother raises literate children. On International Literacy Day, we celebrate every mother who learned how to read as an adult, an always challenging journey even under the best of circumstances, and we think with joy of all the generations that will come after her.

Happy International Literacy Day, and happy cooking.



**Narmin Ismail-Teja**  
*Chair, Board of Directors*



**Lauryn Oates**  
*Executive Director*



# Mastawa

## Ingredients:

Ground lamb	2 lbs./900g
Peas	2 cups/440 g
Rice	1 cup/220 g
Onions	2 medium size
Salt	2 tsp
Oil	1 cup/0.25 liter
Water	2 Liter
Tomato	2 medium size
Spice and chili	To taste

**Prepared by: Maria**

Location: De Payan village, Worsaj, District, Takhar Province



## Directions:

1. Add oil to pressure cooker and turn on the gas to make the oil slightly hot. Add the grated meat to oil and fry it, stirring.
2. Add the shredded onion to the cooker and fry it until its color turns golden.
3. Add the shredded tomato to cooker and fry it.
4. Add water and boil it for 3-5 minutes.
5. Add rice, salt, chili and spice, then close the cooker. Put it on medium heat for 20 min.

# Qorma-e Gosht (Lamb Stew)

## Ingredients:

Oil	220 ml
Onion	2 medium size
Tomato	4 medium size
Ground veal	1 lbs. /450g
Chickpeas	1 lbs./450g
Lemon	To taste
Garlic	1 clove
Water	3 cups
Salt	1 tbsp. or as per taste

**Prepared by: Gulnesa**

Location: Virove village, Worsaj district, Takhar Province



## Directions:

1. Soak dried chickpeas in water for two hours (unless using canned)
2. Add oil to pressure cooker until heated.
3. Add the meat to oil and fry for 5-10 minutes.
4. Add the ground meat and fry it until its color turns golden.
5. Add diced tomato as well and stir into the mixture.
6. While tomato is frying, add the garlic, salt and lemon, and let them all cook together.
7. Add the chickpeas, and close the lid of the cooker, and heat it for half an hour.

**Note:** This dish could be served as a main course or with Palaw (rice dish).  
Serves approx. 5 people.

# Mung Lentil Palaw (Mash Palaw)

## Ingredients:

Oil	1 cup/220 ml
Onions	2 medium size
Ground veal (or substitute with any ground meat)	500g
Mung beans or lentils	330 g
Water	2 liters for boiling the rice and mung beans and cooking meat
Salt	To taste
Saffron, cumin and palaw spices	To taste

**Prepared by: Mah Jahan**

Location: Deh Payan Village, Worsaj district, Takhar Province



## Directions:

1. Fry the chopped onions in the pressure cooker.
2. Add the meat and let it sauté with the onions for 5 minutes. Add one cup water (or as needed) and the salt, put the lid and cook it for 20 minutes or until meat tenderize.
3. When the meat is fully cooked, put it aside.
4. Boil the mung lentils for 10 to 15 minutes in a separate big pot. Let it cook up to 90%.
5. Add the rice to the lentils and let it boil for 5 minutes or less.
6. After 5 minutes, drain the rice and lentils.
7. Add half of the mung beans and rice back to the pot and spread the cooked meat over it. Add the dissolved saffron on top of the meat. Add the rest of the rice and mung beans, and spices over the top, cover the lid with a piece of cloth and steam the ingredients on low heat for 15 minutes.
8. Serve the food onto a serving platter. Spread the meat and colored rice with saffron over the rice and mung beans to present and serve it.

**Serves approximately 5 people.**

# Ashlama

## Ingredients:

Boneless veal	1 kg
Flour	2 kg
Sheep fat	1 gr
White onions	4 medium size
Garlic	1 clove
Tomatoes	4 medium size
Black pepper and salt	As needed
Yeast	1 tsp.

**Prepared by:** Bibi Hawa

Location: Dasht-e Khanaqa Village, Worsaj District, Takhar Province

**About:** Ashlama is very filling food and usually cooked in the Northern part of Afghanistan to fortify horse riders participating in Buzkashi competitions.



## Directions:

1. Finely chop the boneless veal with the knife (don't mince it with the mincer). Add the chopped meat, water and sheep fat in a pot and boil it. Take away the fat from the pot as soon as the water boils.
2. Chop the fat, onion, garlic and tomato and add them to the tenderized meat.
3. Add salt and black pepper to the pot and gently stir in to the meat.
4. In a separate bowl, mix flour, yeast and salt together. Gradually (while mixing) add in water until the dough forms a ball. Set the dough aside to rest for half an hour.
5. Take a portion of the dough (about the size of a small apple) and roll it into a smooth ball. Spread some flour onto a clean, dry surface and flatten the ball with a rolling pin into a round or rectangle shape.
6. Put the  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup mixture of meat on the flattened dough, cover it with the same size of flattened dough and put it in the oven until baked, about 20 minutes at 400 F.
7. Check regularly to avoid burning the Ashlama.

**Serves 5 people.**

# Pumpkin Pudding

## Ingredients:

Pumpkin	1 medium sized
Milk	1 Liter
Salt	1 tsp.
Sugar	2 tbs.
Water	0.25 liter

**Prepared by: Shaida Gul**

Location : Worsaj District, Takhar Province



## Directions:

1. Set a large pot of water to boil.
2. Peel and chop the pumpkin into cubes.
3. When the water is boiling, add the pumpkin cubes to the pot and boil for 5 minutes, or until softened.
4. Strain the water from the pumpkin and puree the cooked pumpkin.
5. Add the milk to the pumpkin, and blend together.
6. Add the salt and sugar and boil over the stove top for a half hour, stirring frequently.
7. Allow to cool slightly, and then serve into bowls.

**Serves 5-6 people.**



# Haleem

## Ingredients:

White wheat	440g
Rice	220g
Chicken breast	800g
Oil	0.250 Liters
Sugar	105 g
Ground dry cardamom	1 tsp.
Ground cinnamon	1 tsp.
Salt	1 tsp.
Water	2 Liters

**Prepared by: Saffia**

Location: Deh Payan Village, Worsaj district, Takhar Province



## Directions:

1. Soak the rice in water for 12 hours.
2. Boil the chicken in water until tenderized, then shred it.
3. Boil the wheat in 1 liter of water, then blend it along with the soaked rice in a blender.
4. Add the mixture into a pot over medium-high heat. Once heated, turn down to medium heat.
5. Slowly add the remaining water and salt to the pot until the ingredients look like a soft dough mixture.
6. Add the shredded chicken into the pot and heat under medium heat for 10 minutes.
7. Fry the Haleem mixture in the oil, then serve on a serving platter. Spread the sugar and cinnamon over before serving.

**Serves 5-6 people.**

## Sos Abba (Turmeric sauce)

### Ingredients:

Oil	175 ml
Flour	300g
Water	1 Liter
Black pepper	½ tsp.
Turmeric powder	½ tsp.

**Prepared by: Khanom**

Location: Deh Payan Village, Worsaj District, Takhar Province



### Directions:

- 1.Heat the oil in a pot on medium heat.
- 2.Add flour to the hot oil and fry it. Keep stirring constantly, while frying, to avoid burning the flour.
- 3.Add water, turmeric powder and black pepper to the flour and let it cook for ½ hour.
- 4.The dish is ready to serve. May be served as a sauce spooned over rice or over meat.

**Serves 3 people.**

# Takhari Rice Pudding

## Ingredients:

Milk	½ liter
Rice (thin)	450 g
Water	1 liter
Salt	1 tsp.
Sugar	200 g
Butter, oil or ghee	20 g

**Prepared by: Wasila**

Location: Worsaj District, Takhar Province



## Directions:

1. Wash the rice, add it in pre-boiled water with the milk, and boil it for 15-20 minutes, stirring occasionally.
2. Add salt and let it cook.
3. Serve the rice on a serving platter or in a large bowl.
4. Last, add heated butter and spread sugar over the butter on the top of the rice. Optionally: top with cinnamon, cardamom, and/or pistachio, to taste.

**Serves 5 people.**

# Dolma-e Barg-e Karam (Cabbage rolls)

## Ingredients:

Onion	4 medium size
Oil	0.25 Liter
Ground veal	500 g
Fresh ginger, grated	2 tsp.
Rice (thin)	½ cup
Black pepper	1 tsp.
Salt	1 tsp.
Tomatoes	4 medium size
Cabbage	1 large cabbage*
Water	As needed

\* You may also use vine leaves, green peppers, turnips, eggplant or potatoes, as substitutes for cabbage.

**Prepared by: Shaida Gul**

Location: Worsaj District, Takhar Province



## Directions:

1. Add the diced onions to the oil and allow to sauté until golden.
2. Add the ground veal, stir and fry until fully cooked.
3. Add one chopped tomato, black pepper, salt and ginger.
4. In a separate pot, add the rice to boiling water and cook until soft. Then mix the rice with the cooked ground veal. Set it aside.
5. Separate the cabbage leaves carefully, cutting off the thick parts of the leaves, wash them and boil the leaves until soft but not wilting. Set aside.
6. Place approximately 1 tablespoon of filling in the center of each cabbage leaf and roll up to fully cover the filling.
7. Grease the pot with oil and place the cabbage rolls in the pot. You can place a few of them on top of each other if needed.
8. To make the sauce, chop the remaining onions and fry until golden.
9. Chop the remaining tomatoes, and add to the onions. When the oil rises above the tomatoes, add salt and water as needed. Place the lid on the pot, and allow to simmer over low heat.
10. When you are ready to serve, arrange the cabbage rolls on a serving platter and garnish them with the sauce. Note: Handle the rolls gently to avoid them falling apart.

**Serves 4 people**

## Borani Kadoo (Pumpkin Dish)

### Ingredients for 4 people:

Pumpkin	0.75 kg
Curd	400 g
Vegetable oil	220 g
Tomato	3 medium size
Salt and Paper	As per taste
Garlic	3 cloves

**Prepared by: Sabera**

Location: Deh Payan Village, Worsaj District, Takhar Province



### Directions:

1. Peel the pumpkin and chop into cubes.
2. Fry the pumpkin cubes in a frying pan until softened, with a little oil. Sprinkle with water if needed to further soften.
3. In another pan, heat the oil and add tomatoes, garlic, salt and pepper and let them sauté.
4. Add the fried pumpkin cubes to the pan with tomatoes and garlic. Allow the pumpkin to simmer with the rest of the ingredients for 5 minutes.
5. Mix the yogurt and garlic in a separate bowl.
6. Arrange the pumpkin on a serving platter, and spread the yogurt mixture over it. Garnish with fresh chopped cilantro