



# COOKING

## WITH

# migrantOUR

Utrecht

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DE VOORKAMER

## Recipes from Around the World, Stories from Our City

This recipe booklet is more than just a collection of dishes—it is a journey through cultures, histories, and personal stories. Each recipe comes from an intercultural companion of **Migrantour Utrecht**, a project that invites you to explore the city through the eyes of those who have made it their new home.

From the warmth of Egyptian Molokhia to the fragrant herbs of Iranian Kuku Sabzi, the sweetness of German pastries to the vibrant zest of Senegalese Poulet Mafé, these recipes celebrate the richness that migration brings to our communities.

As you cook and taste these dishes, we invite you to join us on a Migrantour walk—an experience that brings these flavors, traditions, and stories to life. Let's discover the world in Utrecht, one meal and one step at a time.

With warmth,

**The Migrantour Utrecht Team**

**بالهناء والشفاء**

('Bil-hanā' wa ash-shifā)

"With happiness and health."

**Bon appétit!**

**Buon appetito!**

**¡Buen provecho!**

**Eet smakelijk!**

**Selamat makan!**

**Ẹ jẹ kẹ ẹ gbádùn**

"Enjoy your meal."

**Enjoy!**

**Guten Appetit!**

**نوش جان**

(Nush-e jan)

"May it nourish your soul."

**Bom appetite!**

**Приятного аппетита!**

(Priyatnogo appetita!)



- A generous mix of fresh herbs – cilantro, dill, chives, and parsley (sabzi in Farsi)
- Few eggs
- Chopped walnuts
- A handful of zereshk (dried barberries)
- Drizzle of oil



**Step 1:** Finely chop the herbs and set them aside.

**Step 2:** Next, crack a few eggs into a bowl and whisk them thoroughly until smooth.

**Step 3:** Combine the herbs with the eggs, folding them together until the mixture is evenly blended. For added texture and a burst of flavor, mix in chopped walnuts and a handful of zereshk (dried barberries).

**Step 4:** Heat a pan over medium heat and add a drizzle of oil. Once the pan is hot, pour in the mixture and spread it evenly. Allow it to cook until the edges are crispy and golden. Carefully flip the kuku to cook the other side until it's fully set and aromatic.

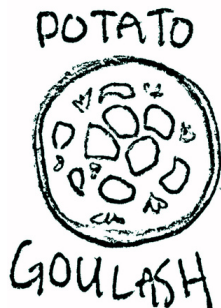
**Step 5:** And there you have it—crispy, herbaceous Kuku Sabzi. It's perfect as an appetizer, side dish, or even a light main course. Every bite carries a taste of tradition, simplicity, and celebration. Enjoy it warm with a side of yogurt or bread. Bon appetit!



**IRAN**

Kuku Sabzi is one of the simplest yet most flavorful dishes in Persian cuisine. It holds a special place in Persian celebrations and traditions, often gracing the table during Nowruz (the Persian New Year) alongside sabzi polo (herbed rice) and fish, or as a comforting dish served during Yalda night, the longest night of the year. Its vibrant colors and fragrant aroma never fail to remind me of home and the warmth of family gatherings.

- 1 kg potatoes (medium-starchy)
- 3 onions
- 2 tbsp rapeseed oil
- 2 tbsp sweet paprika powder
- ½ tbsp vinegar
- Caraway, marjoram, pepper, salt to taste
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 tbsp tomato paste
- Approx. 1 liter vegetable broth



**Step 1:** Wash and peel the potatoes. Cut the potatoes into large cubes.

**Step 2:** Peel and finely chop the onions. Sauté the onions in oil in a large pot.

**Step 3:** Sprinkle paprika powder over the sautéed onions, stir, and deglaze with vinegar.

**Step 4:** Add the potato cubes and stir well. Pour in vegetable broth until the potatoes are covered.

**Step 5:** Add caraway, marjoram, bay leaf, and salt. Stir and let it simmer.

**Step 6:** Once the potatoes are soft, take a few pieces and some liquid into a bowl. Mash them with a potato masher or fork until smooth. Optionally, add plant-based cream. Stir the mashed potatoes into the goulash for a creamy sauce, season with salt and pepper, and let it simmer briefly.



**AUSTRIA**

There is hardly a dish in Viennese cuisine that has been as distorted over time as the signature dish of the "poor man's kitchen": Viennese potato goulash. On May 9, 1873—Black Friday in Austrian economic history—just days after the opening of the World's Fair and a period of economic euphoria, a dramatic collapse ensued, plunging many families into hardship. Numerous newly rich individuals became poor again, and the poor became even poorer. Every penny had to be counted, and frugality became the order of the day in the kitchen. My grandmother used to make this dish. Nowadays, whenever I need comforting food or invite friends over, I make this dish – it immediately makes me think of my loving grandmother who best expressed her love with food.

- 3 medium garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon peeled and finely chopped fresh ginger
- Pinch of kosher salt, plus more to taste
- Pinch of black pepper
- 1 pound bone-in chicken thighs, skin removed
- 1 pound chicken drumsticks, skin removed
- 3 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 small yellow onion, chopped
- 1 (6-ounce) can tomato paste
- ¼ cup fish sauce (such as Red Boat)



- 7 cups water
- 1 cup unsweetened creamy peanut butter (such as Smucker's Natural Creamy Peanut Butter), well stirred
- 8 ounces green cabbage, cored and cut into 2-inch wedges
- 3 medium carrots, cut into 2-inch-long pieces
- 2 medium Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled and cut into 1 ½ -inch pieces
- 1 medium-size sweet potato, peeled and cut into 1 ½ -inch pieces
- Sliced fresh Scotch bonnet chiles, to taste (optional)
- Cooked white rice, for serving

**Step 1:** Stir together garlic, ginger, salt, and black pepper in a large bowl. Add chicken; press garlic mixture into chicken pieces. Cover with plastic wrap; refrigerate at least 3 hours or up to 12 hours.

**Step 2:** Heat oil in a large Dutch oven over medium-high until oil shimmers. Add onion; cook, stirring often, until onion starts to become translucent, about 3 minutes. Stir in tomato paste and fish sauce. Cook, stirring constantly, until combined and tomato paste caramelizes and turns a few shades darker, 6 to 8 minutes. Add 7 cups water, scraping up any browned bits from bottom of Dutch oven. Add chicken and any remaining garlic mixture in bowl to Dutch oven. Bring to a boil over high. Reduce heat to medium-low.

**Step 3:** Place peanut butter in a medium-size heatproof bowl; stir in 1 1/2 cups liquid from Dutch oven, 1/4 cup at a time, until peanut butter is thinned out and mixture is creamy. Add to mixture in Dutch oven; bring to a vigorous simmer over medium-low. Simmer, undisturbed, 20 minutes.

**Step 4:** Stir cabbage and carrots into mixture in Dutch oven; return to a vigorous simmer over medium-low. Simmer, undisturbed, 10 minutes.

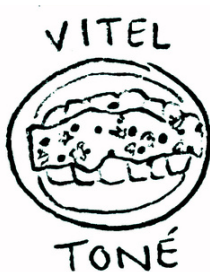
**Step 5:** Stir potato and sweet potato pieces into mixture in Dutch oven; return to a vigorous simmer over medium-low. Simmer, undisturbed, until chicken and vegetables are tender and oil has separated from thickened sauce, 30 to 35 minutes. Remove from heat; stir in Scotch bonnet chiles, if using, and season with salt to taste. Serve over rice.



Mafé is one of my favorite foods from my country. I'm usually excited when I'm about to eat it. The smell is unique to me. I can't even describe how much I like Mafé hahaha XD

For the tuna sauce:

- 200 g canned tuna, drained
- 4 anchovy fillets
- 2 tbsp capers, plus extra for garnish
- 2 hard-boiled eggs, yolks only
- 150 ml (2/3 cup) mayonnaise
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 50 ml (3 tbsp) olive oil
- 100 ml (1/2 cup) veal stock or cooking liquid



For the veal:

- 1 kg veal rump or eye of round
- 1 large carrot, peeled
- 1 large onion, peeled and halved
- 2 celery stalks
- 2 bay leaves
- Salt and pepper, to taste

**Step 1:** Place the veal, carrot, onion, celery, bay leaves, and a generous pinch of salt in a large pot. Cover with water, bring to a boil, and then simmer gently for about 90 minutes, or until tender. Allow the veal to cool in the cooking liquid before slicing it thinly.

**Step 2:** For the sauce, blend the tuna, anchovies, capers, egg yolks, mayonnaise, lemon juice, olive oil, and veal stock until smooth. Adjust the seasoning with salt and pepper to taste.

**Step 3:** Arrange the veal slices on a serving platter, overlapping them slightly. Spoon the tuna sauce generously over the meat.

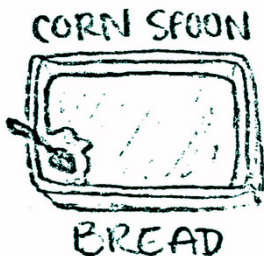
**Step 4:** Sprinkle with extra capers and serve chilled.



**ARGENTINA**

Vitel toné is a dish that instantly transports me to my childhood, spent in my grandmother's garden during Buenos Aires' hot summer days at Christmas and New Year. Though vitel toné is a holiday favorite in Argentina, its origins trace back to Italy, where it is known as vitello tonnato. Italian immigrants introduced this recipe to Argentina, and it quickly became a cherished part of our summer celebrations. For me, vitel toné is the taste of family gatherings – a dish that will always remind me of home.

- 2 eggs, slightly beaten
- 250 g canned corn
- 250 ml yoghurt
- 125 g butter, melted
- 80 g white flour (2.8 ounces)
- 90 g yellow cornmeal (same as for polenta)
- 60 g white sugar
- 17 g baking powder
- 3 g salt



**Step 1:** Combine all ingredients in a baking dish and stir well.

**Step 2:** Bake at 175C for 35 minutes. Check the centre with a fork towards the end of the cooking time – the fork will come out clean if it's completely baked.

My grandmother Emily Kreitzer was a school teacher and lived in rural Ohio in the US with my grandfather Alfred, a farmer. She was a wonderful cook and I loved spending time in the kitchen with her as her assistant. She baked this specific dish on the major US holidays of Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas. I continue that tradition myself by making it on Thanksgiving wherever I am in the world. Many of the Thanksgiving foods originally come from North America—like cranberries, corn and turkey. I'm lucky that these ingredients are becoming more easily accessible in the Netherlands.



**UNITED STATES/  
PORTUGAL**

The US Thanksgiving is basically a harvest-time feast held at the end of November each year. But the holiday has a very problematic colonial mythology that a growing number of people are trying to change, recognising the violence that settler colonialism brought upon both indigenous and enslaved people in what became the US. I'm really glad that people are becoming more aware! I hope to soon be able to share more about this important yet very difficult history with my Netherlands-born son so that he can understand more about his US heritage.



- 1 onion
- 2 chicken stock blocks (Bouillon) – This can also be 2 vegetables stock blocks instead.
- ¼ teaspoon of Black pepper
- 1 teaspoon of Salt
- ½ teaspoon of Cumin
- 1 teaspoon of Sugar
- 8-10 cloves of garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon of brown dried coriander powder (Koriander Gemalen)
- (Minced Molokhia (Frozen) – This recipe is adjusted to one 1 pack

**Step 1:** Peel the onion. Go with a knife from the top through it until you reach the center. Rotate it and go with the knife again through it until you reach the center. Do not cut the onion into pieces. It should remain intact. The idea is to allow the flavor out while it's being boiled.

**Step 2:** In a high pot, put 2 mugs of water, and set stove top to highest temp. Put the onion in the water.

**Step 3:** Add 2 chicken stock blocks, ¼ tsp of Black pepper, 1 tsp of Salt, ½ tsp of Cumin, 1 tsp of Sugar. Boil together for 7 minutes.

**Step 4:** Add the frozen Molokhia block to the boiling stock and set the temp to medium. Scratch the block with a big spoon to help disperse the Molokhia into the water. At this point, you do not want the water to boil, so stir the water with the Molokhia every now and then.

**Step 5:** Once the frozen block is completely dispersed and the Molokhia is mixed homogeneously with the water, switch off the heat once it starts showing signs of boiling. If the Molokhia boils, it will separate from water, and you do not want that. Do not cover the pot completely with its lid after this.

**Step 6:** In a small pot, put butter or ghee (use a full teaspoon) and a little bit of oil. Once the butter or ghee melts and heats up, add the minced garlic to it. Add 1 teaspoon of brown coriander powder to the garlic. Keep stirring until the garlic reaches a golden color (do not leave them to burn).

**Step 7:** Immediately, pour the garlic on top of the Molokhia and stir them together well. Bel Hana we El shefa or Eet Smakelijk!



We eat Molokhia with white rice (cooked with Vermicili usually), but you can also get pita bread, cut it into medium-sized pieces, and make them as a cone to scoop the molokhia with. Some would also just have it as a soup. It's typically served with chicken but can also go with beef or without any meat also.

# NASI GORENG



- 200g chicken thigh, thinly sliced
- 2 tsp kecap manis (sweet dark soy sauce)
- 2 tbsp light soy sauce
- 2 tbsp cooking oil
- 1 onion, sliced
- 1 long red chilli, finely chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- ½ tsp shrimp paste
- 4 cups cooked rice
- 1 chicken stock cube (optional)
- 4 Asian-style crispy fried eggs
- 1 cucumber, sliced
- 1 tomato, sliced to serve
- ¼ cup fried shallots
- sambal to serve

**Step 1:** In a small bowl, combine the chicken and 1 tsp of kecap manis. Make a sauce by combining the 2 extra tablespoons of the kecap manis with the soy sauce.

**Step 2:** Heat the vegetable oil in a wok over high heat. Add the onion and chilli and stir-fry for 30 seconds. Then add in the garlic and stir-fry for another few seconds. Push all the aromatics to the side and add the chicken into the centre of the wok. Spread the chicken out and allow it to cook on one side. Then stir-fry for another 3 minutes or until the chicken is just cooked. Move the ingredients to the side again and add the extra teaspoon of oil.

**Step 3:** Add the shrimp paste and move it around in the oil to dissolve it a little before stir-frying and mixing it through the remaining ingredients. Add the rice and the soy sauce mixture and stir-fry until well combined. Crumble in the stock cube and mix until combined.

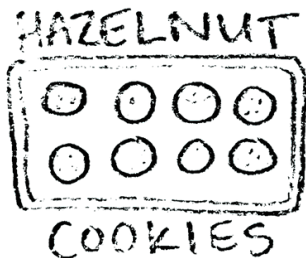
**Step 4:** Remove from heat and divide among serving bowls.

**Step 5:** Top the rice with a crispy egg and serve with cucumber, tomato and sprinkle over the fried shallots. Serve with sambal.



Nasi goreng is one of my favourite Indonesian delicacies. The style is a mix of sweet, spicy and packed with savoury epicness. This is my version of nasi goreng, topped with a crispy fried egg, kerupuk, and I promise you won't regret it.

- 60 g blanched hazelnuts
- 115 g unsalted butter
- 100 g sugar
- 200 g all-purpose flour
- pinch of salt salt



**Step 1:** Preheat the oven to 190°C. Place the hazelnuts on a baking tray and toast them until golden and fragrant, for about 10 to 15 minutes. Remove from the oven and allow to cool completely. Reduce the oven temperature to 175°C. Pulse the hazelnuts in a food processor until just finely ground (taking care not to grind them into a paste)

**Step 2:** In the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, cream the butter and sugar together until light and fluffy, about 2 to 3 minutes. Add the flour, ground hazelnuts, and salt, and beat until a dough forms. If necessary, drizzle in 1 to 2 tablespoons of water, one tablespoon at a time, to help the dough come together. The dough can be wrapped tightly in cling film and refrigerated for up to 1 day or frozen for up to 3 months (thaw in the refrigerator before using).

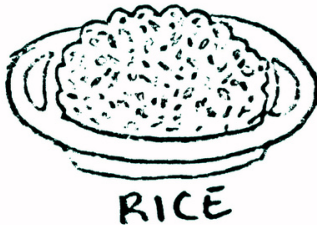
**Step 3:** Roll the dough into 2.5 cm balls and place them on baking trays lined with baking parchment, spacing them 5 cm apart. Press the balls with the tines of a fork to flatten slightly. Bake until the edges are golden, rotating the trays halfway through, about 12 to 15 minutes. Transfer the trays to a wire rack and allow the biscuits to cool completely. The biscuits can be stored in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 3 days.



**GERMANY/  
IRILAND**

These hazelnut cookies are the ones that my great auntie and great uncle made every year at the beginning of December. In Germany every family has different cookies they make and that you bring to friend's homes as presents in a big tin. I was surprised to learn that in the Netherlands everyone eats only one type of cookie: Pepernoten!

# JOLLOF



- Rice
- Tomatoes
- Peppers
- Onions
- Tomato paste
- Tin tomatoes
- Teaspoon of oil
- Curry

- Thyme
- Pepper
- Salt
- Stock Seasoning
- Chicken Broth
- Corn
- Baked Beans
- Carrots

**Step 1:** Wash the rice.

**Step 2:** Add the rice to boiling water. (2 cups of water for a cup of rice).

**Step 3:** Add slices of tomatoes, pepper, onions, tomato paste, tin tomatoes, teaspoon of oil, spices e.g. curry, thyme, pepper. Also add stock seasoning, broth (chicken) and salt.

**Step 4:** Cook till the water is dry.

**Step 5:** Add boiled corn, baked beans, carrots, vegetables.

**Step 6:** Now is ready to Serve. Enjoy!



**NIGERIA**

Jollof Rice is a delicacy popular in many countries in West Africa. As I remember my childhood, I smile because while growing up in Lagos, Nigeria, there was always Jollof rice at every special occasion or celebration. The "orange" colour derived from the tomatoes and other vegetables and spices is absolutely inviting, the sound of music accompanying the festivities still rings in my ears, and as I write this, I can smell the aroma of my Mother's delicious Jollof rice, I remember the taste, it is pure heaven and with each spoon that I took into my mouth, I always said "hmmmmm", a habit I still do till today if the Jollof rice is indeed delicious. Jollof rice is one of my favourite foods because it reminds me of the good times and amazing memories shared with family, neighbours, and friends.

For the filling:

- 200-250g of mushrooms of your choice – champignons, chanterelles, oyster mushrooms or any other, back home we'd often go mushroom picking to a forest and then use our harvest, but you should always be careful with which mushrooms you pick :)
- 400g of potatoes
- A bit of olive or sunflower oil
- 100-150g of onion (one small onion head) or 50-100g of green onion (depending on your preference)
- A generous pinch of salt
- A generous pinch of black pepper



For the dough:

- 200ml of water
- 500g of flour
- 1 large egg
- A generous pinch of salt

For serving (optional):

- Butter
- Sour cream
- Fresh dill

**Step 1:** Wash and peel the potatoes, put them to boil until soft and fully cooked (about 20-30 minutes, depending on the size).

**Step 2:** Heat up the water for the dough, it should be warm but not hot. Sift the flour if you have extra time on your hands, that way the dough will be more fluffy.

**Step 3:** Pour the water into a large mixing bowl, crack and whisk the egg into the water, add a pinch of salt. Add the sifted flour in batches, each time mixing the dough, first with a spoon and, when it becomes too thick, continue kneading with your hands. You may need a little more or a little less flour. Look out for the right consistency: the dough should be smooth and not sticky. Knead for 7-8 minutes.

**Note:** for a vegan version of the recipe, you can add a bit of olive oil into the dough instead of the egg, as well as adjust the water/flour proportion to reach the right consistency.

**Step 4:** Gather the dough into a ball and put it in a plastic bag so that it can “rest” and the gluten can swell. This will make the dough elastic and pliable.

**Step 5:** Now it's time to make the filling. Wash the onion (or green onions) and chop it finely. Wash, dry, and finely dice the mushrooms. Heat up a bit of oil in a frying pan. Fry the onion until slightly golden and aromatic, add the mushrooms and fry, stirring occasionally, for 10-15 minutes.

**Step 6:** Mash the boiled potatoes, mix in the onions and mushrooms, a pinch of salt and some black pepper.

**Step 7:** After the dough has rested for about half an hour, roll it out into a thin layer and cut out circles with a glass (you will find the right size once you start forming the dumplings).

**Step 8:** Place the filling in the middle of each circle. Pinch the edges to form dumplings. Each household/region has its own traditional way of shaping vareniki. So find your own style :)

**Step 9:** Boil vareniki in salted water for 3-5 minutes, until the dough is fully cooked. Serve with butter, sour cream and, optionally, fresh dill. Enjoy!



This dish is important to me not only because it tastes like home. It also brings people together. Making vareniki (or pierogi, as they are known in Poland) is a meditative and bonding activity, which has brought me together with friends from Eastern Europe over the past years. One of them is, unfortunately, not around anymore. But every time I make vareniki, I think of her and how much she loved this dish. For this reason, I'd like to dedicate this little recipe to my dear friend Ada.

### Classic Bagna Caoda

- Garlic (about 6 heads): 570 g
- Extra virgin olive oil: 600 g
- Salted red anchovies from Spain: 300 g
- Red wine: 125 g

### Bagna Caoda with Milk

- Garlic (6 heads): 570 g
- Extra virgin olive oil: 150 g
- Whole milk: 350 g
- Salted red anchovies from Spain: 300 g

### To Accompany

- Bell peppers
- Beets
- Onions
- Fresh scallions
- Barbera wine
- Potatoes
- Gobbo di Nizza cardoons



### Preparation of Classic Bagna Caoda

**Step 1:** Peel the garlic heads, remove the skins, and cut each clove in half to remove the germ. Slice the cloves thinly.

**Step 2:** Place the salted anchovies in a bowl of cold water and let them soak for 2-3 hours, changing the water frequently to remove the salt. Handle the anchovies gently to avoid breaking them. Once softened, drain the anchovies, split them open, remove the innards and central bone, and rinse them under running water. Dry the fillets on a paper towel.

**Step 3:** Lay the cleaned fillets on a tray lined with paper towels. Wash them gently in red wine and pat dry again.

**Step 4:** In a pan, heat 100 g of olive oil over very low heat. Add the garlic slices and cook gently, ensuring they do not brown.

**Step 5:** Add the anchovies to the pan and stir delicately. Cover with the remaining olive oil and cook over low heat for about 30 minutes, ensuring the mixture doesn't fry.

### \*Preparation of Bagna Caoda with Milk

Follow step 1 and 2 above. Place the garlic slices in a saucepan with fresh milk, bring to a boil, and simmer over low heat for 15-20 minutes until softened. Heat half a cup of olive oil in a pan, add the anchovies, and cook over low heat, stirring until they dissolve into a paste. Add the garlic cooked in milk to the pan, stir to combine, and add the remaining oil. Simmer for 20-30 minutes over low heat until creamy, ensuring the oil does not fry.

### Preparing the Vegetables

- Roast the onions whole (with their skins), then cut them into wedges.
- Boil the potatoes until tender but firm enough to slice into wedges.
- Roast the beets and peppers, then cut them into slices.

Serve Bagna Caoda, whether classic or with milk, warm in the traditional "fujot" (a small pot with a flame underneath) alongside the prepared vegetables.



ITALY

Bagna Caoda, which translates to "Warm Sauce" in Piedmontese, is a traditional dish from the Piedmont region in Italy, where I come from. It is indeed a warm sauce in which you dip usually vegetables, and it is served in the fujot, special terracotta or copper pot with a small flame underneath to keep the sauce warm. For me, when I think about this dish, I think of my grandmother. I think about her wearing her kitchen apron and stirring the Bagna Caoda on the stove. She has always been an incredible cook, using food to convey love and care. In our family, this dish is traditionally prepared during the "giorni della merla" (the "Days of the Blackbird"), considered the coldest days of winter in Piedmont—January 29th, 30th, and 31st. On one of those days, my grandmother invites the family over and welcomes us with a table full of food and some homemade decorations that we can bring home. According to folklore, these days predict the arrival of spring. If the weather is mild during the giorni della merla, it means winter will persist for a long time. Conversely, if these days are very cold, winter will end soon, and spring will arrive earlier.

- Tahini
- Lemon juice
- Chickpeas – drained and rinsed (reserve the aquafaba)
- Aquafaba or cold water – for desired texture

# HUMMUS



**Step 1:** Start by mixing tahini and lemon juice in a food processor. Let it run for one to two minutes until it forms a paste.

**Step 2:** Next, add the chickpeas in two or more batches. Process the first batch for about a minute before adding the remaining chickpeas.

**Step 3:** When the mixture looks close to done, add a splash of cold water or aquafaba (the liquid from canned chickpeas) while the processor is still running. This will give you fluffy, creamy, whipped hummus.

The secret to the best hummus is all about the order in which you blend your ingredients!



SYRIA

# CHRISTMAS



# COOKIES

## For the Dough:

- 250 g flour (type 405)
- 100 g sugar
- ½ packet vanilla sugar
- a bit of lemon zest
- 1 pinch of salt
- 1 egg yolk (size M)
- ½ egg (size M)
- 175 g butter

## Additionally:

- Some flour for dusting the work surface and cookie cutters
- 1 egg yolk for brushing
- 3 tbsp powdered sugar
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- 2 tbsp colorful sugar sprinkles

**Step 1:** Prepare two baking trays lined with parchment paper for the butter cookies. For the dough, mix the flour, sugar, vanilla sugar, lemon zest, and salt in a bowl. Add the egg yolk, half an egg, and butter (cut into small pieces). Knead everything into a smooth dough. Flatten the dough, wrap it in plastic wrap, and refrigerate for 60 minutes.

**Step 2:** Roll out the dough on a floured surface to a thickness of about 3mm. Dip the cookie cutters in flour before cutting out shapes. Ensure the dough stays cold while cutting for easy removal of cookies from the cutters. Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 200°C (top and bottom heat) or 180°C (fan-forced).

**Step 3:** Place the cookies with some space between them on the baking tray and brush them lightly with egg yolk. (Alternatively, you can bake the cookies without egg yolk and decorate them later with icing and sprinkles.) Bake the cookies in the preheated oven for 8–10 minutes until golden brown. After baking, place them on a cooling rack to cool completely.

**Step 4:** For cookies decorated with icing, mix the powdered sugar and lemon juice until smooth. Spread the icing on the cookies and sprinkle with colorful sugar sprinkles. Let them dry and enjoy.

This recipe is for Christmas cookies that I grew up making with my mother and grandmother. During the winter, we would spend days decorating them together, filling the house with warmth, laughter, and the sweet aroma of baking. While we made many different types of cookies, these were always my favorite. Especially the way my grandmother made them. She would pair two flower-shaped cookies, spread jam between them, and drizzle them with lemon icing. Absolutely delicious! Sometimes, we'd even bake them before school, starting our mornings with the comforting smell of freshly baked treats. On Christmas Eve, my mom would ask my brother and me to deliver little bags of cookies to all our neighbors. I loved this tradition, and to this day, we still continue it.



GERMANY/  
ENGLAND

I hope that when you taste these cookies, you'll experience a little of the coziness and love that made our holidays so special to me.

# AJIACO



## SANTA FERENÑO

- 500 g waxy potatoes, peeled and cut into slices.
- 500 g floury potatoes, peeled and cubed.
- 500 g baby potatoes (or small waxy potatoes), unpeeled and cut in half.
- 2 ears of corn, cut into thirds.
- 1 medium leek, finely chopped.
- 1 medium white onion, finely chopped.
- 2 garlic cloves, minced.
- 2 chicken breasts (or thighs for a richer flavor).
- 2 liters chicken stock (or water with chicken bouillon cubes).
- 2 teaspoons dried guascas (available at Latin American stores or substitute with dried oregano or thyme).
- Salt and pepper to taste.
- Optional garnish: capers, heavy cream, fresh cilantro, and sliced avocado.

**Step 1:** Prepare the broth: In a large pot, heat the chicken stock. Add the chicken breasts, corn pieces, leek, onion, garlic, salt, and pepper. Let it simmer over medium heat until the chicken is cooked through (about 20–25 minutes).

**Step 2:** Shred the chicken: Remove the chicken breasts from the pot and shred them into bite-sized pieces. Set aside.

**Step 3:** Cook the potatoes: Add the waxy and floury potatoes to the pot. Let them cook for about 25–30 minutes, stirring occasionally to help the floury potatoes break down and thicken the soup.

**Step 4:** Add baby potatoes and guascas: Add the whole baby potatoes and guascas (or oregano/thyme) to the pot. Cook for another 10–15 minutes until the baby potatoes are tender.

**Step 5:** Serve: Return the shredded chicken to the pot and let everything warm through. Adjust the seasoning with salt and pepper if needed.

**Step 6:** Garnish and enjoy: Serve hot with capers, a drizzle of heavy cream, chopped cilantro, and slices of avocado on the side. Pair with white rice and plantain chips.

**Tip:** For a more authentic taste, prioritize guascas, which give the dish its distinctive herbal flavor.



COLOMBIA

The second Christmas we spent in the Netherlands, I asked my daughter what dish she missed the most. Without hesitation, she answered, “Ajiaco.” It was the same dish she had chosen for her 15th birthday and farewell lunch with our family back in Bogotá. More than a year into our life in the lowlands, I hadn’t yet tried to recreate it. But that Christmas Eve, I decided to embark on a quest to bring a taste of home to our table. Finding the ingredients—especially the guascas—proved challenging, but I eventually sourced them from a Latin American shop. Armed with three varieties of potatoes, I hoped for the best. My daughter was skeptical, unsure if I could capture the flavors she so dearly missed. Yet, the moment she took her first bite, she burst into tears. The familiar smell and taste transported us back to Bogotá’s chilly, misty days. Ajiaco, for us, is more than just a meal; it’s a warm embrace from home and a reminder of our roots.