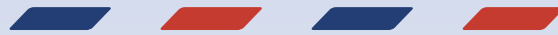


## AUSH (AFGHAN NOODLE SOUP)



*On a bitterly cold day in Washington DC, I visited the home of Homayon Karimy, a wonderful Afghan cook, who taught me to make Aush, a soup I had only tasted in other people's homes. This beautiful noodle soup is topped with a rich meat sauce and a lemony yogurt sauce, meant to replicate the tartness of homemade yogurt in that part of the world. I've adapted Karimy's family recipe and love making this soup in big batches. Don't be intimidated by its length; while it has many steps, it's not hard to make and it results in an explosion of flavors and textures. Karimy uses a dried wheat noodle which he cooks right in the soup – a traditional way of preparing this – but I boil the noodles separately because I want to taste the difference in texture between the noodles and the vegetables. It also makes a cozy brunch: hold the meat sauce, and top with a fried egg.*

Serves 8

### Ingredients:

- ¼ cup olive oil or ghee
- 1 large yellow onion, chopped (about 1½ cups)
- 1-2 jalapeno peppers, sliced (depending on your heat preference)
- 2 tablespoons minced garlic
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh ginger
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 6 celery stalks, chopped (about 1½ cups)
- 2 carrots, peeled and finely diced (about 1½ cups)
- 1 turnip, peeled and finely diced, optional (about 1 cup)
- 1 tablespoon ground turmeric
- 1 tablespoon ground coriander
- 2 teaspoons Kashmiri chile powder
- 1 teaspoon sumac
- 1 14-ounce can diced tomatoes, undrained (or 2 cups diced fresh tomatoes)
- 1 12-ounce package of enriched flour noodles, made for Aash, broken in three (Karimy uses Sadaf, which is available online. He says that Japanese udon noodles and fettuccine are acceptable substitutes.)
- 8 cups boiling water, plus more if necessary
- 1 cup plain whole-milk yogurt
- Juice of 1-2 lemons (about ¼ cup)
- 1 cup packed baby spinach leaves (or chopped fresh spinach)
- ½ cup chopped cilantro
- ¼ cup torn fresh mint
- ¼ cup chopped fresh dill
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- Meat Sauce, for serving (recipe follows)
- Yogurt Sauce, for serving (recipe follows)

1. Equipment: Large soup pot, large pot

2. In a large pot, warm the oil or ghee over medium-high heat. Add the onions and a pinch of salt and sauté until softened, 5 minutes, then turn heat to medium and add the jalapenos, and saute for about a minute. Add garlic, ginger, and a pinch of salt, and saute until softened, 3 minutes. Add the tomato paste, stir, and mix vigorously until the paste darkens in color and coats all of the aromatics evenly, about 1 minute.
3. Add celery, carrots, turnips, turmeric, coriander, chile powder, sumac, and 2 teaspoons salt, and give it a good stir until nicely combined, about 1 minute. Stir in tomatoes, then boiling water. Bring soup to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer until vegetables are tender but not mushy, about 10 minutes. Remove from heat.
4. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil over high heat. Break the noodles into three pieces, add to the boiling water, and cook until a bit more tender than al dente, about 6 minutes. Stir into the soup.
5. Stir in yogurt, lemon juice, spinach, cilantro, dill, and mint. Stir, taste and add salt if necessary. When ready to serve, pour soup into a large serving bowl and cover with about 2½ cups meat sauce, then 1½ cups of yogurt sauce. Serve the soup alongside bowls of the remaining meat sauce and yogurt sauce.

***Note:** If you want to add the noodles directly to the soup, as Karimy does: After stirring in boiling water in Step 4, add noodles, and if necessary, add more water to submerge all of the ingredients. Bring to a boil, stirring frequently so that noodles do not stick, then reduce to medium and simmer, stirring occasionally, until noodles are soft, about 10 minutes. Remove from heat, and proceed to Step 5.*

## MEAT SAUCE

*This recipe makes more than you'll may for the Aush, but I love making a big batch to freeze for pasta, dumplings, or even taco filling.*

Makes 5-6 cups

### Ingredients:

- ¼ cup ghee or olive oil
- 2 small yellow onions, chopped (about 2 cups)
- 2 tablespoons minced garlic
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh ginger
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 1 pound ground lamb
- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 teaspoon Kashmiri chili powder
- 1 teaspoon ground turmeric
- 1½ teaspoon sumac (optional)
- 1 14-ounce can diced tomatoes, undrained (or 2 cups diced fresh tomatoes)
- 2 teaspoons ground coriander
- ¼ cup chopped cilantro
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper

1. Equipment: Large pot
2. In a large pot, heat ghee or olive oil over medium-high heat. Add the onion,  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon salt, and a few grinds of black pepper and saute until onions are glassy, about 5 minutes. Lower heat to medium, add the garlic and ginger, and sauté for just a minute. Add the tomato paste and stir vigorously for about 1 minute, taking care not to burn it. Add lamb and beef, breaking up ground meat with a wooden spoon. Stir until fat starts to release from the meat, about 1 minute. Then add chili powder, turmeric, sumac (if using), 1 teaspoon salt and a few grindings of black pepper, and saute until meat loses its rawness, about 5 minutes. Add tomatoes, bring to a simmer, and cook, stirring occasionally, until tomatoes are broken up, about 8 minutes. Garnish with cilantro.

## YOGURT SAUCE

*Traditional yogurt that's made at home in Afghanistan and India and many nearby countries, tends to be more sour than the commercial yogurt you can buy. That's why Karimy's family adds lemon. I love to stir in finely grated garlic and lemon zest. Letting this chill for at least an hour is crucial, and the flavor just gets better the next day.*

Makes 3 cups

### Ingredients:

- 3 cups plain whole-milk yogurt
- Zest of 1 lemon
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon garlic paste (grate finely or grind in a mortar and pestle)
- 1 tablespoon dried mint (or  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup chopped fresh mint)
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon kosher salt

1. In a medium bowl, mix yogurt, lemon zest, lemon juice, garlic, mint, and salt.
2. Taste and adjust seasonings.
3. Chill for at least an hour before serving.