

The background of the entire page is a teal color. Overlaid on this is a large, dark teal silhouette of the island of Ireland. The interior of the Ireland map is densely packed with numerous white and colored icons of various fruits and vegetables. These include apples, pears, oranges, lemons, limes, carrots, pumpkins, eggplants, mushrooms, onions, garlic, corn, and various types of beans and peas. Some icons are solid colors (like red tomatoes, green broccoli, and yellow lemons), while others are white outlines. The icons are scattered throughout the map, with some appearing in the surrounding teal space as well.

tess

Seirbhís Tacaíochta
Oideachais Tusla
Tusla Education Support Service

FOOD WITHOUT BORDERS

HOME COOKING FROM
ORDINARY PEOPLE WITH
EXTRAORDINARY STORIES

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MEASUREMENTS

MEASUREMENT & TEMPERATURE CONVERSIONS

Weight

Metric	Imperial
5 g	¼ oz
15 g	½ oz (1 dstspn)
25 g	1 oz
50 g	2 oz
85 g	3 oz
110 g	4 oz (¼ lb)
140 g	5 oz
180 g	6 oz
200 g	7 oz
225 g	8 oz (½ lb)
250 g	9 oz
280 g	10 oz
300 g	11 oz
340 g	12 oz
375 g	13 oz
400 g	14 oz
425 g	15 oz
450 g	16 oz (1 lb)
657 g	24 oz (1.5 lb)
900 g	32 oz (2 lb)

Volume

Household measures	Metric	Imperial
½ tsp	2.5 ml	
1 tsp	5 ml	
½ tbsp	7.5 ml	
1 tbsp	15 ml	
½ cup (8 tbsp)	120 ml	4 fl oz
1 cup (16 tbsp)	240 ml	8 fl oz
2 cups	480 ml	16 fl oz

Oven temperature

Description	°C	°F	Gas mark
Extremely low	120	250	Half
Very low	140	275	1
Low	150	300	2
Very moderate	160	325	3
Moderate	180	350	4
Moderately hot	190	375	5
Fairly hot	200	400	6
Hot	220	425	7
Very hot	230	450	8
Very very hot	240	475	9

INTRODUCTION

THE LANDSCAPE OF THE IRISH EDUCATION SYSTEM HAS EVOLVED SINCE MY OWN SCHOOLDAYS IN RURAL WEXFORD. THEN, THERE WAS LITTLE RECOGNITION PLACED ON THE POTENTIAL OF PARENTS TO PARTNER WITH TEACHERS IN THEIR CHILD'S EDUCATION, OR AWARENESS OF THE POSITIVE IMPACT THAT THIS COULD HAVE.

Today, though, it is wonderful to see that Irish schools have come full circle, with the Teaching Council identifying 'working with parents' as a core element of teacher education programmes. The vision and fortitude of the late Dr Concepta Conaty played a significant part in bringing about this seismic shift. As principal of Sacred Heart JNS, Killinarden, Tallaght, Dr Conaty pioneered the involvement of parents in their children's education and the development of the Home, School, Community Liaison (HSCL) scheme. HSCL coordinators are committed to bringing parents closer to their child's school, while also using the parents' knowledge and experience to benefit all.

The changing demographic of families in Ireland has resulted in a far richer cultural mix in our classrooms and in the parents engaging with HSCL coordinators. Intercultural education creates understanding and awareness of diversity, fosters mutual respect and creates a collaborative and welcoming school environment. For many families who have made Ireland their home, the HSCL scheme is a key and trusted support to their integration in the school community and in the wider community.

We all know how food can bring people together connecting communities, cultures and experiences. It is with this in mind that the Food Without Borders cookbook was created. The HSCL scheme provides a number of activities for parents to support and promote partnership between the home and school and by doing so improve educational outcomes for children and young people. Included here are cookery classes provided in schools. Cookery classes are a great way for other nationalities to meet and talk to Irish parents, improve their English language skills,

make new friendships and create an environment in which cultural diversity can be both enjoyed and embraced.

Food Without Borders is a wonderful example of intercultural collaboration. It was produced by Tusla Education Support Service (TESS) and Tusla Communications colleagues, in partnership with parents who have engaged with HSCL coordinators, DEIS schools and the Department of Education. HSCL coordinators reached out to pupils' parents from across the globe, who have settled in Ireland, asking them to share their journey here, as well as one of their national recipes. The call was answered, resulting in an A-Z of delicious recipes

We hope that the beautiful recipes inside are savoured by children and parents in schools around the country, and that it connects them to the personal stories and culture of the book's contributors. That's what you call real food for thought!

I wish to thank the wonderful parents who contributed to this book and the dedicated HSCL coordinators who supported them, Tusla, and our Department of Education colleagues who worked with us to bring about this publication and of course, the late Dr Concepta Conaty, to whom this book is dedicated.



MARIA TOBIN,

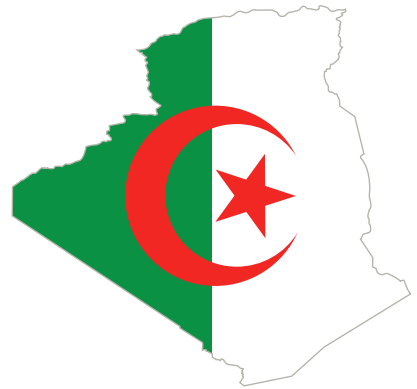
National Manager,
Tusla Education Support Service.





ALGERIA

**ZINEB
ZEMOURI**



PIRATES, PATRIOTS AND BUTTERED SCONES

Zineb Zemouri has been on a bit of a learning curve ever since she left her home in Algeria to come to Ireland in 2006. Zineb followed in the wake of her husband who joined a friend here to work in sales.

“When I first arrived in Dublin it was June, and I was shocked at how cold it was because Algeria is so warm. Now, I am used to Irish weather, and I know it is normal to have sunshine and rain in one day,” says Zineb, who is mum to two boys and two girls, ranging in age from 7-15 years old.

Zineb comes from Algiers, where the ancient citadel of the Casbah (a UNESCO World Heritage Site), overlooks the city and its 4.5 million population.



I THINK IRISH PEOPLE ARE THE BEST IN EUROPE TO WELCOME FOREIGN PEOPLE”

Algiers was home to the famous Barbary pirates, who raided Baltimore, Co. Cork, in 1631, capturing 107 villagers who were then enslaved in Algeria. Following the raid, the remaining villagers moved to Skibbereen, and Baltimore was practically deserted for generations.

So, you never know, maybe there’s a bit of ‘Irish’ in the DNA of Zineb, who has settled in Dublin, where her children attend school in Harold’s Cross.

The weather may not be comparable to the high temperatures found in southern Algeria’s desert region, but the Emerald Isle does have its bonuses.

“The scenery in Ireland is amazing,” she says. “I think Irish people are the best in Europe to welcome foreign people.”

According to Zineb, Algeria is known as ‘The Country of One-and-a-Half Million Martyrs’, the most famous being revolutionary leader Larbi Ben M’hidi, who fought for Algerian independence from France, which held it as a colony.

“Algeria is culturally diverse; you can find different traditions all around the country,” says Zineb. “For example, a wedding in Algiers is different to a wedding in the west or in the south”.

Traditions from food to clothing differ across regions. “When you wear the ‘Karako’ (an embroidered jacket) you know that it is from the capital, and you know that the ‘Fergani’ (a woman’s robe) is from the east of Algeria,” she adds.

For Zineb, it is the family gatherings on special occasions that she misses most from Algeria, where ‘rai’, a mix of Western and Bedouin music, or perhaps the more classical andaloussi, might be played.

Zineb says she enjoys a scone with Irish butter, but whether that beats Algerian Deglet Nour dates, she doesn’t say. For her recipe, Zineb chose Tagine Zitoun, a type of casserole that is sure to tickle your taste buds.



TAGINE ZITOUN



SERVES
2 People



PREP TIME
15 minutes



COOKING TIME
30 minutes



INGREDIENTS

- 4 chicken pieces
- 3 carrots
- 200g pitted olives
- 1 onion
- ¼ cup of oil
- 1 tsp black pepper
- 1 tsp ginger powder
- 1 tsp turmeric
- 1 cinnamon
- 1 tsp salt

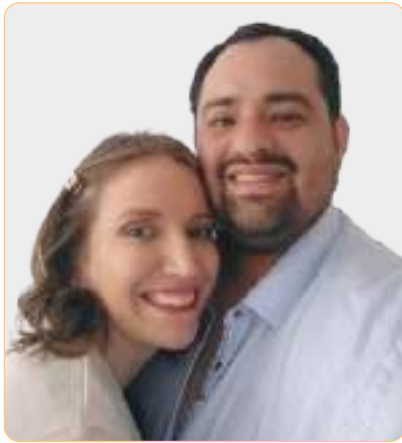
INSTRUCTIONS

In a large saucepan, put some sunflower oil and the chicken and fry it a little bit. Then add the onion (cut into very small pieces) and let it fry with the chicken. Next, add the carrots, cut into small circles.

Add all the spices and salt and let it fry slowly for 10 minutes, turning the chicken as it cooks. Then add one-and-a-half cups of hot water and the olives, put the lid on and leave for 10 minutes.

When the chicken is well-cooked, the carrots have softened, and most of the water is absorbed, it is ready to serve. To finish, garnish with some parsley.





BOLIVIA



**WILLIAM SAUCEDO and
LAURA XIMENA JUSTINIANO**

DEVILISH DANCES IN A BOLIVIAN PARADISE

Most of us in Ireland would count ourselves lucky to live close to the sea or rolling hills. When you live right smack on the edge of the Amazon rainforest and the Andes Mountains, well, there's a lot to be said for it...

That's the location of Santa Cruz De La Sierra (the Holy Cross of the Hills), in Bolivia, which has a population of more than 3.3 million. Many of them descendants from the native Chané society as well as a mix of Spanish and native people called Mestizo.

Founded in 1561 by Spanish explorer Ñuflo de Chavez, Santa Cruz may be Bolivia's largest city but it still has a small-town feeling, with its colonial buildings and squares where locals lounge on benches and watch the world go by while camba tunes (eastern lowlands music) play in the background.

The nearby Guembe Biopark, with its pools and lagoons and huge aviary, gives a real taste of nature, as does the Amboro National Park, which has stunning waterfalls and is home to more than 800 species of birds. Both are probably well-known haunts of William Saucedo and his family.

William and his wife, Laura Ximena Justiniano, who have four children (three girls and one boy), came to Letterkenny, in Co. Donegal, on December 28, 2022, looking for a safer place with better education opportunities and a better way of life for their family.

The weather couldn't be more different either. "It's really, really sunny, hot and humid," says William of his hometown, where there is a tropical savanna climate and an average annual temperature of around 25°C.

"Our hometown is the most important city of the country because it is the motor of the economy," says William of Santa Cruz. The city has large oil and gas industry as well as being a major centre for agricultural production – everything from beef and dairy to sugarcane and soyabeans.

But Santa Cruz isn't all big industry, it's also bustling markets like the one in Los Pozos, where stalls overflow with every fruit imaginable and where Crucenos (the name given to Santa Cruz residents) love to bargain hunt and get great value on fresh food and clothing.

And the colourful atmosphere doesn't end there. It thrives in the dances and music – 'the folklorico' – where dancers don bright costumes and take part in street parades, performing 'devil dances' like Diablada, or Morenada, where the women wear extravagant costumes.

But it's not all traditional dance and music because forklift truck racing is hugely popular, too!

"I am proud of the hospitality of the people from Santa Cruz de la Sierra, the food and all the traditions that we have," says William, who, despite building a new life for himself and his family, still yearns for his relatives back in Bolivia.

"I miss my family, my parents, my sister, and my brother but what I miss most about my homeland is my oldest daughter," he says. "We chose this recipe because it is a traditional recipe that a Cruceno eats."



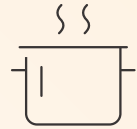
HOT CORN CAKE



SERVES
8 People



PREP TIME
15 minutes



COOKING TIME
75-90 minutes



INGREDIENTS

- 1kg of corn kernels
- 1kg of mozzarella cheese
- 5 eggs
- 3 tbsp of salt
- 5 tbsp of sugar
- 3 tbsp of butter
- 200g of cornflour
- 500ml fresh cream
- 1 cup (250ml) of milk

INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat the oven to 150°C. Put half of the pure corn in a blender with the 5 eggs and the 250ml cup of milk and blend for 30 seconds. Place in a plastic or metal bowl, then blend the other half of the corn with fresh cream for 30 seconds. Then add this to the bowl.

Place the butter into a cup and melt it in the microwave. Add this to the bowl together with cornflour and start mixing with a wooden spoon. Add in 250g of mozzarella, then add the sugar, the salt and mix.

Fill a rectangular oven-safe glass dish with the corn mix. Only fill about halfway to the rim of the dish. Sprinkle some more of the mozzarella cheese on top, then cover with the remaining corn mix and top with the remainder of the cheese. Place the dish in the oven at 150°C for 30 minutes. Then, increase the oven temperature to 180°C and cook for a further 20 minutes. Allow to cool for about 45 minutes.



CHINA

**XUE
ZHU-WENG**



WENG AND THE HOT SPRINGS OF FUZHOU

Ancient and modern sit side by side in Xue Zhu-Weng's hometown of Fuzhou City, in China's Fujian Province, where the Mindu Folklore Park is located in the city's new district of Minhou County.

Mindu is a theme park that celebrates the area's ancient farming culture, focusing on daily life, food production, culture and education in the form of art, pottery, and song. And if you ever visit and need to ease any aches and pains from your day in the park, then Fuzhou's hot springs will certainly do the trick.

"It is a historic and cultural city with over two thousand years of history," says Weng, adding that its mountains, temples, tombs, gardens, towers, and bridges, make it a popular place to visit for tourists.

Located on China's southeast coast, Fuzhou looks out on Taiwan across the 180km Taiwan Strait, where some of the small islands there (Kinmen and Matsu) also form part of Fujian Province.

Fujian, which was the starting point of the famous maritime Silk Road trading route, is mostly mountainous and is described as being 'eight parts mountain, one part water and one part farmland'.

One of its most visited peaks, Mount Wuyi, is a popular tourist attraction that overlooks rocky, rolling hills and clear waters. Also pulling in the tourists is Gulangyu (meaning 'Drum Wave Rock' for the sound of the water as it hits the shore) Island, a UNESCO World Heritage site famous for its western colonial architecture.

"It is very hot in Fuzhou," says Weng, who speaks Cantonese and Mandarin in her homeland. "The summers are long, very hot and humid, the winters are short, mild and dry."

That said, torrential rain and the Monsoon season arrive in May and typhoons are known to visit in summer and autumn. Never a dull moment then!



**I CHOSE THIS BECAUSE IT IS A
VERY COMMON DISH. IT IS ALSO
A VERY EASY RECIPE.**

Weng traded all that in for a job opportunity in Ireland, when she moved here 22 years ago, and has set up home in Ballina, Co. Mayo.

Now living as a family of four, Weng confesses to missing old friends and relatives.

"I miss the good food and my friends. I talk to my friends and family online, but it is not the same," says Weng, who also hankers after Fuzhou's most famous dish of Ramen noodles and yum broth.

But it's not noodles and broth Weng has chosen as a recipe. Instead, you will learn how to cook an authentic fried rice.

"I chose this because it is a very common dish. It is also a very easy recipe," says Weng.

Easy is fine by us, but it really does taste great, and that's what matters most!



EGG FRIED RICE



SERVES
4-6 People



PREP TIME
10 minutes



COOKING TIME
20 minutes



INGREDIENTS

- Rice (pre-cooked)
- Salt
- tbsp soy sauce
- tbsp sesame oil
- 2 eggs
- Carrots
- White onion
- Spring onions
- Peppers
- Chicken (Optional)
- Prawns (Optional)



INSTRUCTIONS

Heat 2 tablespoons of olive oil in a pan on a medium heat. Add white onions and fry for a few minutes. At this point in the recipe you could add in chicken or prawns (if having a meat option).

Add the rest of the vegetables (carrots, peppers and spring onion) and a small amount of sesame oil.

Whisk 2 eggs and add them to the pan. Add a tablespoon of soy sauce. Add rice and combine. It is ready to serve.





DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

**DIANE
KASEREKA**



OUT OF AFRICA WITH A TASTE OF THE CONGO

Kinshasa lies on the south bank of the Congo River. The city, originally named Leopoldville, was established as a trading post by Henry Morton Stanley in 1881. It flourished as the first navigable port on the Congo River above Livingstone Falls, with its series of rapids that stretch for 300km.

Hippos, otters, and manatees inhabit the waters, while its shores and surrounding countryside comprises forest and farmed land. The chief crops are cassava, sugarcane, oil palms, plantains, corn (maize), peanuts (groundnuts), and beans.

You might be thinking unspoiled wilderness, where the sounds of the jungle drown out the leisurely dip of canoe paddles cutting through green-brown waters overhung by vines and rich rainforest. That might be the case in parts, but things have moved on a bit since the days of Stanley and Livingstone.

Once a site of fishing and trading villages situated along the Congo River, Kinshasa is now one of the world's fastest growing megacities with a population of over 15 million.

More than half of the city's inhabitants, known as Kinois, are under 22 years of age, with only a small proportion of the population being over 50. One of its most famous sons is actually our own David Norris, the scholar and politician who ran to be President of Ireland in 2011.

One of the city's daughters is Diane Kasereka, who came to Ireland from Kinshasa in 2002.

"I came here with a friend to find and to build a new life for myself. I eventually met my husband, and we started our family," says Diane, who now has a family of four and lives in Dublin 13.

Diane, who speaks French, Lingala and English, says that her Christian faith, which she associates with her native city, is very important to her, as are the cultures of her homeland.

"I like the music of singer-songwriter L'Or Mbongo. One of my favourites is her song, 'Ye Wana', it is very soothing. She is a wonderful singer. Go and listen to her!" urges Diane.

One thing that seems guaranteed in Kinshasa is Vitamin D because it's sunny almost all year round. April is the hottest month with an average maximum temperature of 31°C, while July is the coolest with an average top temperature of 28°C.

Unsurprisingly for someone now living in Ireland, Diane says she misses the delicious food and the constant sunny days of her life in Kinshasa.

"Everything we eat in Congo is organic, vegetables, meat, and fish," says Diane, who has chosen Fumbwa, Congolese Wild Spinach Stew, to cook as her recipe.

"Fumbwa, or Mfumbwa, is traditionally made with Fumbwa leaves. It is a popular variety of greens. Like cassava leaves, it grows wild. Here, I use spinach. At home we use palm oil, but vegetable oil can be used instead.

"This is Congolese comfort food. The smoked catfish in the recipe can be found in African greengrocers (one of which is in Moore Street, in Dublin). Alternatively, smoked mackerel can also be used," says Diana.



FUMBWA (CONGOLESE WILD SPINACH STEW)



SERVES
4 People



PREP TIME
20-30 minutes



COOKING TIME
40-50 minutes



INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 cup water
- 11 ounces (300g) baby spinach, finely chopped/ Fumbwa leaves
- 3 spring onions
- 2 cloves garlic
- 2 ripe tomatoes
- 1 chicken stock cube
- 1 cup smoked catfish (or smoked mackerel), soaked and rinsed, then chopped
- 3 tbsp red palm oil/vegetable oil
- 1 cup ground peanuts, or 4 heaped tablespoons of peanut butter

INSTRUCTIONS

Bring the water to a simmer in a large pot and add the spinach/fumbwa leaves. Allow leaves to reduce down.

Add the garlic, tomatoes, and spring onions. Add the chicken stock cube into the pot and mix well.

Make sure all bones and skin have been removed from the smoked fish, then add to the pot. Allow to simmer for 10 minutes.

Add 3-4 tablespoons of red palm oil/vegetable oil into the pot.

Add the ground peanuts or peanut butter and allow to melt over a gentle heat.

Stir it and allow to simmer for 10 minutes until ready to serve.



EGYPT

RADWA
MOSTAFA

MUMMIES THE WORD FOR RADWA

Going from the teeming 22 million population sprawl of Cairo and the hot sands of Egypt to the damp air and green fields of Ireland, it's safe to say that Radwa Mostafa and her family have made a bit of a leap from the Land of the Pharaohs.

Radwa, who is married and has two children, aged 10 years and nine months, came here in August 2019 to join her husband.

"He is a telecommunication engineer who moved to Ireland for a job promotion, so I had to join him," says Radwa, who holds a degree in Business Administration, and a post-graduate diploma in Human Resource Management.



AS MUSLIMS, WE HAVE RAMADAN AND EID, BUT THE KEYNOTE IS THAT EVERY OCCASION HAS SOME UNIQUE FOOD THAT CAN BE MADE.

"I grew up in Cairo with my father, my mother and four brothers. I was the third child of the family," she says.

The country's sprawling capital lies on the Nile River, and is home to the huge Egyptian Museum, where a trove of antiquities, including royal mummies and gilded King Tutankhamun artifacts, pull in tourists from across the world.

Nearby, Giza's iconic pyramids and Great Sphinx, which date back to the 26th century BC, look out on a city that has, more than most, weathered the sands of time.

The lure of Egyptology aside, Radwa misses her family, friends, the weather (sunny and hot apart from the winter nights), the food, and the vibrancy of life.

Egypt, with its population of more than 110 million, contains 27 governorates. "Each one has its own style, food differences, special instruments and even different dances," says Radwa.

And we're not just talking about belly-dancing here. Egyptians also enjoy Sai'di, Sufi and Nubian Dancing to name a few, from different regions. And when it comes to musical instruments there are plenty to choose from - lyres, lutes, drums, cymbals, pipes, trumpets, even castanets - to get that trad party started.

So, there's a lot of traditions, but for Radwa the ones she experiences are related to her religion.

"As Muslims, we have Ramadan and Eid, but the keynote is that every occasion has some unique food that can be made because Egypt has a very big cuisine full of unique herbs, recipes and flavours."

For her recipe, Radwa has chosen to cook Koshari.

"We used to make this very famous and delicious dish, even for foreign people who visit Egypt. It is a vegetarian recipe, so it would be easy and can be flavoured to any preferences," she says.



KOSHARI



SERVES
6 People



PREP TIME
45 minutes



COOKING TIME
25 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS

Place a pan over a medium heat with some oil. When hot, add finely chopped onion, stirring until it turns yellow. Add the filini pasta and stir until they all change their colour to light brown. Next, add the brown lentils; then add the rice and the chicken stock cube and hot water. Be sure the water covers the mixture by one inch. Add a pinch of salt, cumin and black pepper. Bring to a boil then reduce to a very gentle simmer. Put the lid on and cook the rice for 10 minutes, then turn off the heat, but leave the pan covered.

Cook macaroni pasta in separate salted hot water and one spoon of oil.

Cook chickpeas until soft, or use tinned chickpeas.

Tomato sauce:

In a saucepan, heat 2 tablespoons of oil with a small piece of butter and then stir in finely chopped garlic cloves. Add the vinegar, passata sauce, pinch of salt and black pepper and stir. Turn the heat down and allow the mixture to boil until it thickens.

To assemble the dish:

Plate the rice mixture and the boiled macaroni. Add a generous amount of tomato sauce and the chickpeas. You can also add some crispy onion and chili flakes as preferred. The dish can be served an egg in some butter.

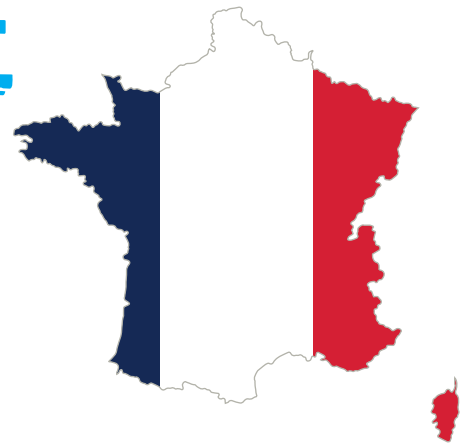
INGREDIENTS

- 3 tbsp of vegetable oil
- 1 cup of brown lentils (soaked for one hour before cooking)
- ½ cup of Egyptian rice/Arborio or any short-grained rice
- ¼ cup of filini pasta
- ¼ cup of macaroni pasta
- 1 medium onion
- 3 big cloves of garlic
- 1 tbsp of salt
- 1 tsp of cumin
- 1 tsp of black pepper
- ½ tsp chilli flakes
- 2 cups of hot water
- 1 cube of chicken stock
- 3 tbsp white vinegar
- ¼ cup of chickpeas
- One jar of passata sauce





FRANCE

SOPHIA
HADEF

HOME COOKING STRAIGHT FROM PARIS

Mention Paris and images of Notre Dame Cathedral and the Eiffel Tower spring to mind. Or maybe the towering Arc de Triomphe, or the Louvre, housing some of the world's finest art, including the image of one particular lady with an enigmatic smile.

Paris is Edith Piaf and La Vie En Rose, it is sunsets on the Seine, it is people-watching over coffee and croissants, it is hot summers...

The 'City of Light' has a magic dust all of its own that makes going there a unique experience. It's not just the buildings, or the history, or the culture, it's that deliciously intangible thing the French call 'art de vivre' – the art of living – a way of seeing the world and enjoying its most simple pleasures, whether through culture, food, shopping, museums or food... all experienced in a convivial atmosphere.

What's not to love about all that? So, it must take a hell of a place to make someone leave all that behind.

"We came to Ireland for me to be able to pursue my studies and I decided to stay for work. I fell in love with Galway and always thought it was the perfect place to raise my daughter," says Sophia Hadeef, who moved there in 2019.

"What I love about Galway is the peaceful atmosphere. It is a very clean city; the views are gorgeous and its people are the nicest."

Sophia is clearly enjoying life in Ireland, raising her daughter Leila, but her native capital can still pull on her heartstrings.

"What I miss the most about Paris is the vibrant and eclectic scenery. In Paris, you can rarely get bored and as I grew up in the city centre, I do miss that big city life sometimes," she says.

"The tradition I associate with Paris is that we tend to have an 'aperitif' an hour or two before dinner. Around 7pm or 8pm, we love having l'apero and drink some wine or juice and eat some nice plateaux de charcuterie."

And when they're not drinking and nibbling, there's always culture for Parisiennes like Sophia to get their teeth into.

"In France, literature and music are a delicate art. Some of the best feminist writers are French, like Simone de Beauvoir, Annie Ernaux and many more. We also have music legends like Serge Gainsbourg, known for his very Parisian songs."



WHAT I LOVE ABOUT GALWAY IS THE PEACEFUL ATMOSPHERE. IT IS A VERY CLEAN CITY; THE VIEWS ARE GORGEOUS AND ITS PEOPLE ARE THE NICEST.

So if you want a taste of Paris without the expense of going there, Sophia has just the thing with this recipe.

"We love food, and good quality ingredients. I choose to cook a tuna bread because it is a meal that we cook often for children in France. Kids love it and it is very easy to make!"



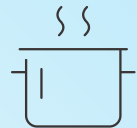
PAIN AU THON (TUNA BREAD/CAKE)



SERVES
4 People



PREP TIME
10 minutes



COOKING TIME
10 minutes



INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup of flour
- 1 glass of milk
- 1 cup of grated cheese or parmesan
- 1 cup of cheddar pieces
- 1 cup of tuna
- 1 tsp of salt



INSTRUCTIONS

Mix all ingredients together and add a little bit of olive oil if the mix is too dry. Next, pour the mix into a mould. Put it in the oven for about 10 minutes at 190°C. Then, let it cool for 10 minutes and bon appetit!





GERMANY

**JACQUELINE
FRANCIS**



FROM WOULD-BE SHEPHERD IN EAST GERMANY TO A NEW LIFE IN TULLOW

When the Berlin Wall ‘fell’ on November 9, 1989, crowds of Germans began dismantling the barrier that for almost 30 years had sliced their country into East and West. But as the wall was broken down and a new life opened for the people of Communist East Germany, the dreams of one young East German girl were dashed with every block that was smashed to rubble.

Jacqueline Francis was born in the town of Eisenach in the Thuringen region of East Germany.

Overlooked by the imposing white walls of Wartburg Castle, which was built in the Middle Ages, Eisenach has a population of about 42,000 people and is the birthplace of composer Johann Sebastian Bach. The town is also famous as the location where Reformer, Martin Luther translated his New Testament of the Bible into German.

Before the Berlin Wall came down, Jacqueline lived with her family, as part of a cooperative in the community where her grandpa was the local butcher.

For the people of Eisenach, self-sufficiency was the order of the day – it was a lifestyle that many in the West now aspire to.

“We produced everything we needed. We reared chickens and rabbits and grew all our own vegetables and fruit. My mother would preserve the fruit in jars in the cellar to use over the winter,” she says.

“Once-a-year we would have a street festival in the town when everyone would come together to eat wild pig on a spit. In the winter, we would tie our sledges to the back of a horse and trap and fly through the forest.”

When Jacqueline turned 14 years old, her ambition was to work with animals, sheep specifically.

“I really wanted to be a shepherd. I spent all my summers and weekends with a friend of the family that took care of the sheep in our cooperative. My dreams were dashed when the wall came down and our sheep were divided among individual farms.”

Such are the vagaries of life.

Says Jacqueline: “I went on instead to study care of the elderly, met the father of my eldest son and became pregnant. He wanted to move to Ireland, so I chose to travel with him. I knew little about Ireland at the time. In 2000, I moved with him to Wexford. I moved from there to Dublin and then settled in Tullow, Co. Carlow, nine years ago.”

For Jacqueline, Ireland may be home, but her old country of East Germany still holds a precious place in her heart.

“When I think about Germany, I remember the hot summers at the outdoor swimming pool and the camps we went to for two weeks.

I chose this recipe to share because it’s affordable, quick and easy to make, and of course DELICIOUS!”



STUFFED PEPPERS



SERVES
4-6 People



PREP TIME
30 minutes



COOKING TIME
30 minutes



INGREDIENTS

- 6 peppers
- 400g minced Beef
- 50g butter
- 1 clove garlic
- 1 onion
- 1 egg
- 100g rice - cooked
- Salt and pepper

For the sauce:

- 400g tomatoes (tin will do)
- 50g butter
- 1 tbsp flour
- Salt and pepper



INSTRUCTIONS

Wash the peppers, cut off the top lid and carefully remove the stalks and seeds. Peel and finely chop the onions. Boil the tomatoes, sieve, and add salt and pepper

Fry the onions in the pan with oil or butter. Add the minced meat and sauté briefly. Season with the crushed garlic clove, salt and pepper. Add the egg and the cooked rice to the pan and mix well. Fill the peppers with the rice/ meat mixture.

Preheat oven to 200°C. Place the stuffed peppers in a cooking dish and add the sauce. Bake the dish for 20-25 mins.

Serve with some rice or potatoes on the side.





HUNGARY

**AGNES
BAKONYI**



A HOME FROM HOME IN WATERFORD CITY

Nestled in the corner of Lake Balaton, in Hungary's Transurbia region, is the pretty little town of Keszthely (population 19,000). The lake's hilly north shore is a wine-growing area, and among those winemakers is the family of Agnes Bakonyi.

The lake offers plenty of options to pass the time. "If winter is cold enough, you can ice skate and in the summer, you can swim or go sailing," says Agnes.

Agnes now lives in Waterford City with her nine-year-old daughter Emma, but her journey from the splendour of Lake Balaton has not been without its ups and downs.

"I finished college aged 24 with the dream of finding a good job and maybe starting my own family but despite working very hard for two years in Budapest I could barely manage to keep myself on the surface," she says.

In 2006, Agnes decided to try her luck in Ireland. "With my parents help, I bought a one-week return ticket to Ireland. I told myself if I can get a job I will stay. I found a waitress job in Dublin on the second day and with one suitcase moved into my cousin's house with six other Hungarians.



**I STILL COOK HUNGARIAN FOOD
AND I SPEAK HUNGARIAN WITH
MY DAUGHTER.**

"It was very hard at the beginning. Everything worked so differently than in Hungary but soon I fell in love with the Irish people. Everyone was so helpful; I made enough money to pay my bills and have a great life. I realised this is the place I belong.

"Slowly I built myself up, I did a banking course during the day and worked as a waitress during the night. By 2009, I was working in an investment bank," she says.

Then in 2013, Agnes's life took a whole new twist with the arrival of her baby, Emma.

"I was a single mum. I was happy and nervous, and I never imagined how hard this whole thing would be by myself," she says.

"We had to move to Waterford because I couldn't afford to pay rent in Dublin anymore. I had no family or no friends around. It was the hardest time of my life."

But Agnes battled on.

"With a lot of work and no sleep, I managed to stand on my feet again. Now Waterford is our home. We have lots of friends and a beautiful apartment. I am truly thankful every single day to be in this country. I am not homesick anymore because this is my home now."

Agnes misses her family in Hungary... as well as a glass of good wine, but she cherishes her native heritage.

"I still cook Hungarian food and I speak Hungarian with my daughter. My dish reminds me of the harvest at the vineyard - the place I learned hard work and to respect nature.

"Family and friends were invited to help with the harvest and my mum always cooked goulash in a huge pot. The smell of autumn, the fresh air, the tiredness and the hunger added some extra flavour to that dish for sure."



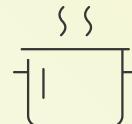
GOULASH



SERVES
4 People



PREP TIME
30 minutes



COOKING TIME
1 hour 30 minutes



INGREDIENTS

- 4 tbs cooking oil
- 4 onions, diced
- 3 garlic cloves
- 1 red pepper deseeded and diced
- 1 tomato, diced
- 2 tbsp tomato puree
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp pepper
- 1 tsp sugar
- 1 tsp caraway seeds
- 700g chopped stewing beef
- 1 tsp dried paprika
- 100ml water



INSTRUCTIONS

On a medium heat, cook the onions until soft and add in garlic. Add the diced tomato, peppers, puree and spices. Next, add in the beef and cook until brown on all sides.

Reduce the temperature, add 100ml of water, then cover and simmer for an hour-and-a-half, stirring halfway. Serve with pasta, rice or with the traditional Hungarian nokedli (dumplings).



IRAQ

**SHAHED
HASAN**



FLEEING THE TERROR OF ISLAMIC STATE FOR A NEW LIFE IN ROSCOMMON

Mosul is an ancient city in Iraq, first mentioned by the military leader Xenophon in his expeditionary logs in 401 BC. Located 400km north of Baghdad, it encloses the ancient city of Nineveh, one of the oldest and most significant cities in antiquity, which was settled as early as 6,000 BC, so we're talking really, really old.

Unfortunately, if you mention Mosul these days, the image of shell-pocked buildings spring to mind, and suffering... lots and lots of suffering.

In 2008, Iraqi forces fought to liberate the city from Islamic State control. It was a battle that brought death and destruction on a terrible scale and forced people from the land they loved.

"Mosul was very unstable after the war with Islamic State and the war affected our family greatly," says Shahed Hasan. "We lost many friends. My husband lost his job, and we wanted a new life and a better future for our two young sons."

Shahed and her family had lived near the university, in the centre of Mosul – also known as 'The Prophet's City'. She loved everything about it... things like the Two Springs Festival, held in April, when Kurds, Arabs, Yazidis, and Christians gather to celebrate; where the strings of the Al Oud would blend with the beat of the dancers doing the Gobi at weddings.

Then there was the food... iconic dishes like Koba and Kebabs, and the fish dish Masgouf.

"Before ISIS, I had never left Mosul - it is where I grew up, worked, found my husband and started a family. When ISIS arrived, we had to flee to Erbil for three years, which was difficult."

Over the years, Mosul's residents had suffered greatly, everything from bombings and airstrikes to kidnappings and executions had been inflicted upon them, but even beyond the death and destruction in the city itself, life elsewhere as a displaced family was tough.

Eventually, Shahed and her family decided to leave their ancient homeland and set up a new life abroad.

"We came to Ireland after Mosul had been freed from ISIS control. My husband (Mosab Jasim) was born in Dublin when his father was studying for a PHD in Agriculture in UCD, so he held an Irish passport," she adds.

Mosab Jasim left for Ireland in March 2018. Shahed gave up her job as a teacher and followed him to Boyle, Co. Roscommon, in September 2019 with their two sons, Mustafa Jassam and Shahm Jassam.

The move has brought them all to safety, but love for her homeland still pulls at Shahed's heartstrings.

"I miss my three sisters, my brother and my parents. I miss the Friday dinners we used to have as a family!

"I chose Dolma as my recipe because every Friday in Mosul all families gather together to eat it. There are many dishes at Friday lunches, but Dolma is the main one. It also reminds me of home."



DOLMA



SERVES
5-6 People



PREP TIME
30 minutes



COOKING TIME
90 minutes



INSTRUCTIONS

Rinse the rice well to get rid of excess starch, then soak it for 20 minutes. Peel onions, setting aside the outer layers. Cut aubergine and scoop out the filling and do the same with the zucchini (courgette).

Next, dice the inner onion, zucchini, garlic cloves and one tomato. Mix this in a bowl with the rice, 3tbsp of tomato paste, 4tsp of salt and the black pepper. Add a couple of squeezes of lemon juice. This is the dolma mix.

Sear the rib steaks on both sides then put them in the bottom of the pot with the aubergine filling.

The mixture is used to fill and stuff the onion peels, zucchinis, one tomato and the aubergine. The rest of the mixture is wrapped in grape leaf rolls. For the grape leaves, place a spoon of filling in the bottom half of the leaf, fold in sides and roll the filled portion of the leaf, like a sausage until sealed.

Put all the stuffed vegetables into the pot carefully. Mix hot water with 1 tbsp of tomato paste, 1 tsp of salt and a squeeze of lemon juice to cover all the contents on the pot.

Put a lid on the pot and then turn your hob to medium heat and cook for one hour. For the final 30 minutes reduce to a low heat.

INGREDIENTS

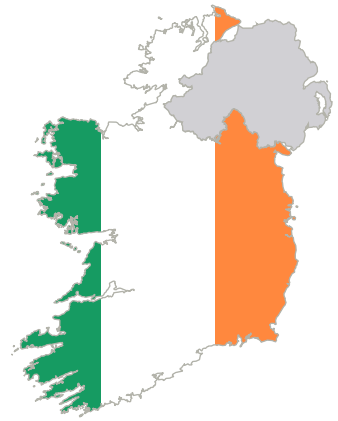
- 2 cups of white rice.
- 225g of grape leaves (vine leaves).
- 2 tsp black pepper
- 4 tsp salt
- 500g beef mince
- 4 rib steaks (500g)
- 3-4 onions
- 2 tomatoes
- 2 peppers
- 2 zucchini (courgette)
- 1 aubergine
- 3 garlic cloves
- 4 tbsp tomato paste
- 1 lemon





IRELAND

**BRIGID
STOKES**



A TRAVELLER'S TALES OF LIFE ON AND OFF THE ROAD

'Astall, the bure is watching you.'

What you are reading is Cant, the language once widely used by the Irish Traveller community, and it means, 'Stop what you are doing the women are watching you.' It's one example of the language that Traveller Brigid Stokes provides.

Some scholars suggest that Cant is an ancient language dating to the Old Irish period or even to Roman times. Sadly, its use has diminished greatly over the years, but it is one example alongside the storytelling, singing and music that can be found of Traveller culture.

Brigid and her husband, Thomas, have four children. She grew up in Ballymun, Dublin, but is now settled, living in a house in Navan, Co. Meath.

The Cant terms for Travellers are Mincéirs and/or Pavees, while some Travellers also use the term Mincéirí.

Scholars generally agree that Irish Travellers are an indigenous ethnic group first officially recorded in the 12th Century. In fact, Travellers' ethnic minority status was recognised in 2017 by the Irish government, a move which came after years of campaigning.

In the past, Travellers moved around on flat carts and set up bender tents (made from green covers with hazel branches for wattles) as their sleeping and living quarters. Later, those with the means to do so lived in horse-drawn wagons.

Travellers now live in several types of accommodation, including official halting sites, unofficial halting sites, group housing schemes, local authority housing, private rented accommodation, and, like Brigid and her family, in their own private property.

"Caravans can be cold in winter but nowadays the Traveller community put in stoves, and they can be used all year round," says Brigid.

"You would find loads of mink blankets in a Travellers home, used during winter. Many siblings would sleep in the same bed until the age 14 or 15 and at this age you would get your own bed."

Growing up, Brigid recalls how the caravan doors would always be open and neighbours could pop in at any time, so it was important to keep the caravan tidy.

"The traditions I associate with my culture are tin-making, storytelling and baking bread. The tin-making was big in the Travelling community as this is how they made their money."

The tinsmith (also known as a 'tinker' or 'tincéir') would make pots, pans, jugs, and cups out of tin, mainly with the use of small anvils and hammers and rivets. The skill was passed down from father to son for generations and died out when the mass production of plastic took over.

"The best thing about Traveller life is family and the sense of community among the Travellers," says Brigid. "The most difficult thing about Traveller life is not being accepted into the wider community in this day and age."

"Life as a Traveller can be difficult. There are a lot of barriers in our way. It is very challenging to apply for jobs when you are a Traveller. Trying to book a venue for a special occasion and not being successful because we are Travellers," she adds.

Brigid says that every Traveller home knows the Traveller tradition of bacon and cabbage, which is why she has chosen it as her recipe.



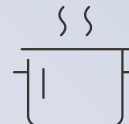
BACON AND CABBAGE WITH POTATOES AND TURNIP



SERVES
4-5 People



PREP TIME
10 minutes



COOKING TIME
90 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS

Bacon and Cabbage

Put the bacon in cold water overnight to remove excess salt. The following day, boil a large pot of water, place the bacon in the pot and bring back to the boil.

Remove any fat deposits from the top with a spoon, cover, and simmer for 1.5 hours. The general rule is 20 minutes per half kilo.

Cut the cabbage in half. Remove the stalk and slice to your preferred thickness. Rinse the cabbage in cold water.

Remove the bacon from the pot and allow it to rest for 15 minutes. Add the cabbage to the boiling bacon water and cook for 10 minutes.

Mashed Potato

Bring a large saucepan of water to the boil. Add the potatoes and boil for about 15 mins or until tender. Transfer to a colander and drain well. Return to the pan and set over a very low heat for 2 minutes to dry completely.

Heat the milk and butter in a small pan, then pour over the potatoes. Remove from the heat, and mash the potatoes. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Turnip

Carefully slice the turnip into cubes ensuring the skin is fully removed. Place in a pot and cover with cold water. Season the water with salt.

Bring the water to a boil, then lower the heat and simmer for 40-50 minutes until the turnip is fork tender. Drain the water and return the turnip to the pot. Use a potato masher to break it up. Add 2 tablespoons of butter. Season with salt and white pepper.

INGREDIENTS

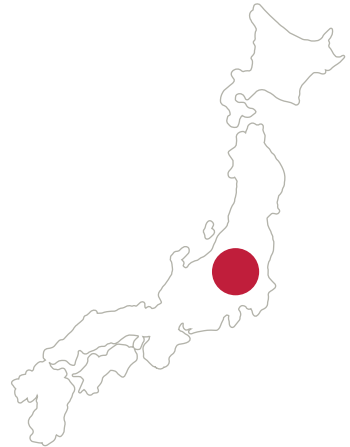
- 900-1350g collar of bacon
- Head of green cabbage
- 1.5kg of floury potatoes
- Whole Turnip
- 125ml skimmed or low-fat milk
- Butter
- Salt
- White pepper





JAPAN

**MOMOKO
KAGEYAMA**



FOOD FROM THE BASE OF JAPAN'S SACRED MOUNTAIN

Momoko and her husband Shigetaka came to Ireland in August 2021, having moved from their hometown of Shizuoka, located near Tokyo. Shizuoka is overlooked by the snow-capped, volcanic cone of Mount Fuji which is Japan's sacred mountain, and a major tourist destination, with hiking trails that take trekkers to the stunning Shiraito and Otodome falls, where the waters flows like 'white silk'.

A little further south, the Izu Peninsula is another magnet that draws in those eager to explore its beaches and walks. Here one can view Buddhist and Shinto shrines, such as the Kinomiya Shrine, which sits beside a huge camphor tree believed to be around 2,000 years old. Legend has it if you walk around the tree, you'll live one year longer!

And if shrines and hiking routes aren't your thing there's always the opportunity to soak in the onsen (hot spring) resorts dotted around the area.

Momoko would know all about those because these are what she misses most about her homeland.

Now living in Galway, Momoko and Shigetaka came to Ireland in August 2021 for a job opportunity. The couple have two girls, Mizuki and Yuka.

Shizuoka has beautiful ocean and mountain views that give anything Bord Fáilte can offer a real run for its money. In a way, it's also a mecca for petrol heads because it's where motorcycle companies Yamaha and Suzuki have their headquarters.

Momoko says that Shizuoka enjoys hot summers, with temperatures of around 30°C and winters of around 5°C. Humid and rainy summers make way for winters that are dry and sunny – and that means ideal conditions for Japan's Lantern Festival, which takes place in February. The Obon Festival is an annual holiday that commemorates deceased ancestors by people lighting colourful lanterns to guide the spirits.

As beautiful as that may sound, it can't really compete with that all-singing, all-dancing display put on by Nature itself, called the Blossom Festival (hamami), when Japan's cherry trees (sakura) burst into a short-lived but stunning bloom. The cherry blossom symbolises birth and death, beauty and violence in Japan, all of which resonate with the short but often colourful lives of the country's legendary samurai warriors.

The spirit of Nature runs deep in Japan. In the Japanese language, the country is called Nihon (Nippon). Both Nihon and Japan originate from the same words and mean 'where the sun rises'.

So, Momoko's homeland is rich with beauty and with symbolism, and that's before we even get to the food, and her choice for the cookbook.

"I chose this dish because sushi is one of the most popular recipes in my country and it is easy to arrange, I hope you enjoy and can cook it yourself," Momoko says.



CHIRASHI-SUSHI AND SUSHI ROLL



SERVES
3-4 People



PREP TIME
15 minutes



COOKING TIME
45 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS

Strain/wash the uncooked rice 4 times to remove the starch. Place in 600ml water in a deep, covered pot. Bring to a boil. Once boiling, reduce heat to medium, close the lid and cook for 3 minutes. Then reduce the heat to low and cook for 10-12 minutes until the water has evaporated. Remove the pot from the stove and wait for 10 minutes.

Cut mushrooms and carrots into small pieces and place in a pan with the water (200ml), sugar (30g), soy sauce (40ml) and mirin (30ml). Simmer until the liquid is absorbed.

Break 3 eggs into a bowl, add 15ml mirin and pinch of salt and mix well. Heat 5ml of oil in a frying pan over medium heat and add the eggs in a thin layer. Lower the heat and cook until the surface is set, then turn and cook the other side. Remove from the pan and cut into thin strips.

Cut cucumber, mangetout, smoked salmon and crabmeat into small pieces. Place the cooked rice in a large bowl and add a seasoning mixture of 60ml rice vinegar, 40g sugar, and 5g salt. Add a small amount of liquid from the carrots and shiitake mushrooms to the bowl. Mix well with the rice.

Separate the rice for the hand-rolled sushi, place the remaining sushi rice in a platter and arrange the cut vegetables, seafood and eggs on top in a colourful arrangement. Chirashi-sushi is now complete.

Place the nori and sushi rice on the sushi-mat, place the cut avocado, any seafood that could not be placed on the chirashi-sushi, and the baby leaf in the centre and roll from the edges. At this point, dip your fingers in water while rolling to ensure that the nori sticks together nicely. When you have finished rolling, cut the sushi roll into bite-size pieces to complete the sushi roll.

INGREDIENTS

- 450g sushi rice
- ½ cut carrot
- 4 pieces shiitake mushroom
- ½ pack mangetout
- 3 baby cucumbers
- 3 eggs
- ½ avocado
- ½ lemon
- ½ smoked salmon
- 3 crab meat
- 1 pack cocktail prawns
- 1/4 pack mixed salad leaves
- 3-4 nori sheets
- Soy sauce
- Mirin
- Salt
- Rice vinegar
- Sugar
- Sushi mat (to roll maki-sushi)
- Dashi seasoning (if you can find it)





KENYA

**JOAN DE LA
REY SWARDT**



WALKING ON THE WILD SIDE OF LIFE

Mountain highlands, the Great Rift Valley, the Maasai Mara Reserve When it comes to places of natural beauty and adventure, it's hard to top Kenya. Home to the most exotic of beasts that include the 'big five' game animals - lion, buffalo, rhinoceros, leopard and elephant - Kenya has a "smorgasbord of wildlife" that is recognised and appreciated across the world.

Swiss/German Serge de la Rey Swardt and his Kenyan wife Joan would know all about that. Joan is from the west of the country, near the border with Uganda and close to Lake Victoria. They met and married there and moved to Ireland in 2019.

The change in scene then to Ireland must have been quite shocking. Wildlife and landscape aside, with 42 tribes (each speaking its own language) and a population of more than 53 million - over 10 times that of here - it's a real case of chalk and cheese. However, Serge and Joan chose to move to these shores for two reasons: they both spoke English (Joan also speaks Swahili, as well as Luhya from her father's side and Kalenjin from her mother's side) and they wanted to live in a country that had a tradition of the Catholic faith. It was just a little unfortunate that they came just in time for the Covid-19 pandemic!

Irish people like to think of themselves as a friendly bunch, but one of the many things Joan misses about her homeland is the sense of neighbourliness that is central to African culture.

"People are free to call to any home at any time and everyone is available for a chat," says Joan, speaking from the family home in Carlow.

She points out that isolation is rare in her culture and that a sense of connection is very strong in communities and in families too. "Nursing homes and homes for the elderly don't really exist because older people stay with their families

until it is no longer possible. There is great respect for the elders in Kenyan culture. The motto of the Kenyan people is 'Harambee', which means 'let us all pull together'," she adds.

Music and storytelling play a central part in Joan's Luhya heritage. Musical instruments include drums, jingles, flutes, and accordions. The Luhya are famous for their energetic isukuti dance, which involves rapid squatting and rising accompanied by rhythmic drumbeats.

Kenya is also famous for its world-class middle- and long-distance runners. It is an area that bonds Kenya and Ireland, thanks to Irishman Brother Colm O'Connell, who for 47 years has coached scores of world record holders and Olympic medallists while teaching in St Patrick's High School in Iten, Kenya.

Rice is a staple in many food cultures and for her recipe, Joan chose the pilau and kachumbari recipes because pilau is easily adapted to include any type of meat.

According to Joan, the spices in the dish reflect Kenya's trading past. Kenya's railway system was constructed when it was a British colony and many of the workers used to build it were brought there from India. As a result, many Kenyan dishes are influenced by Indian cuisine.

"Kachumbari is present at nearly every meal and the Swahili word 'kachumbari' originated from the Indian word 'cachumber'. Food shows us how much cultures influence each other!"



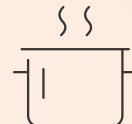
PILAU AND KACHUMBARI



SERVES
8-10 People



PREP TIME
30 minutes



COOKING TIME
50 minutes



INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup of rice (Basmati)
- Meat, 500g or more (beef, lamb, chicken or goat)
- 1 onion
- Dhania (coriander leaves)
- Pilau spice (from African or Asian shops)
- Beef stock
- Garlic
- Ginger (thumb-sized piece)
- Turmeric
- Clarified butter
- Salt & Pepper

INSTRUCTIONS

Soak the rice for 15 minutes and rinse off the starch. While it is soaking, cut meat into pieces and place in a pot with a cup of water. Cut the ginger into small pieces and add to the pot together with garlic, then simmer until the meat is browned.

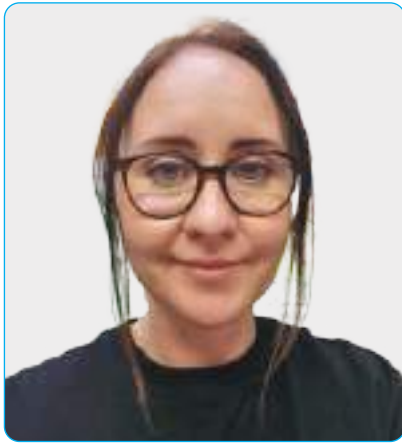
In another pot, add one tablespoon of clarified butter and heat. Add sliced onion, turning until golden brown. Add Pilau spice and turmeric (for colour) and stir until the fragrance is released. Then add the meat, fry on low heat until golden brown.

Next, add two cups of water. Pour the drained rice on top of meat (but don't mix them). Cover the pot (preferably with foil) and simmer on a low heat for about 20-25 minutes. When the rice is cooked, stir and mix with the meat, turn off the heat and let it rest for another 10 minutes.

Kachumbari

Kachumbari is a tomato salad that accompanies many Kenyan dishes. Chopped tomatoes, chopped onions and dhania (coriander leaves) are mixed together. Add salt, oil and vinegar to taste.





LATVIA

**OKSANA
JAKUSKA**



A LIFE OF FOREST FORAGING AND PLAYING WITH FIRE

If ever you want someone to be on your Tidy Towns committee, Latvian Oksana Jakuska is your only woman...

"My hometown got awards for being the cleanest and most attractive place in Latvia," says Oksana. "I am very proud of my town for keeping the streets of Aizkraukle (population 10,000) tidy. It is a beautiful small town in the Vidzeme region on the banks of the River Daugava.

"There are many lakes in the district and beautiful natural scenery in Latvia. Latvian people love going fishing during summer and even during winter time. The winter can be very cold, and all the lakes and rivers get frozen," she adds.

Oksana came to Ireland 17 years ago, for a summer holiday to learn English and for work experience.

"I lived in Co. Kerry, which I believe is the most beautiful part of Ireland," she says. "I worked in a seafood restaurant in the village called Portmagee - this is the fishermen's village which is famous for taking tourists to Skellig Michael."

As beautiful as the Kerry coastline is, the pull of her homeland, whose own coast is washed by the Baltic Sea, is strong for Oksana.

"I miss the forest walks. From childhood, Latvian people are raised like little scouts who know what berries and mushrooms are edible in the forest. The forests are beautiful and rich with plenty of edible stuff and Latvian people are real experts at it."

And you'll find more than berries in those areas because there's plenty of wildlife, too - everything from wolves, wild boars, moose, deer, beavers to foxes, lynxes, bison, and even brown bears! So, if you go into the Latvian woods today, you're in for a big surprise!

According to Oksana, who now lives in Bonnybrook, in Dublin, Latvians are very industrious folk.

"[They] always have their little gardens with organic fruits and vegetables that they grow during the summer. If you go there then, Latvian families most probably will treat you with homegrown cucumbers, tomatoes, carrots, beetroots, apples, plums, and potatoes."

Summer temperatures can be in the low twenties; for the rest of the year the weather is mostly mild, with temperatures dropping to -6°C in winter. During those summer months comes Latvia's most famous traditional festival, Jani un Ligo Day, which is a celebration of the summer solstice.

"People gather together and sing songs, dance, and eat traditional food. At around midnight, people burn big fires. Leaping through the Janu fire is said to bring good luck and health through the coming year," says Oksana.

When they're not leaping through flames for fun, Latvians like nothing better than a bit of a song and dance... well, more than a bit because the Latvian Song and Dance Festival is one of the largest choral and dancing events in the world and a big part of the nation's culture and social life.

So, Latvia really is the all-singing and all-dancing country - just wait until you get a taste of their food.



POTATO PANCAKES



SERVES
4-6 People



PREP TIME
15 minutes



COOKING TIME
15 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS

Finely grate the potatoes into a large bowl. Squeeze the grated potatoes, draining away any excess liquid. Once liquid has been removed, mix in the egg, flour, salt and pepper with the potatoes. Combine well.

Heat 2 tablespoons of oil in a large frying pan. Drop a heaped tablespoon of the potato mix onto the pan and flatten. Repeat for three more potato cakes. Fry the potato cakes, turning once until golden brown. Serve with sour cream, scallions or lingonberry jam (cranberry sauce could be used instead).

INGREDIENTS

- 7 medium potatoes (around 600g)
- 1 large egg
- 5 tbsp flour
- Salt and Pepper





MAURITIUS

MEET BISSESEUR



MEET'S WONDER BOWL FROM PARADISE ISLAND

Living on a tropical island paradise which is also a playground of the rich and famous may sound like the dream life; however, if you're the cleaner, and not the occupant of the luxury hotel room, it's not all it's cracked up to be.

Mauritius, once the home of the dodo, is a tropical gem of teeming reefs, sapphire-blue lagoons and lush vegetation. Situated in the Indian Ocean, off the east coast of Africa, it is just 65km long and 45km wide, but that small size hasn't stopped it becoming a mecca for tourists from around the world.

There are just two seasons, with temperatures going from a low of 17°C in winter to highs of 41°C in the summer.

Picture-postcard scenery is all very well, but it doesn't put food on the table, which is why Meet Bisseyseur, her husband Soodursun and children Devan (11) and Twinkle (two) bid farewell to Mauritius and travelled to Ireland — a damper, colder but equally beautiful island.

For most people, moving to a new country is a big challenge, not least when it comes to mastering the (English) language. However, this was not the case for Meet who moved to Ireland with her family in 2009 and who speaks many other languages, including Creole, Bhojpuri, Hindi and French.

Supporting their family back in Mauritius was important to Meet and Soodursun; being able to send money home incentivised the move, as well as improving their own living standards. Soodursun also hoped that if the move was successful, it would inspire the rest of his extensive family to move here for a better life.

Mauritius, with a population of 1.2 million people, is a very multicultural society, where Hindu, Christian and Muslim faiths co-exist, and where Tamil and Telegu are spoken among a plethora of other languages.

Meet, who is a Hindu and is living in Newbridge, Co. Kildare, celebrates many religious festivals as part of her faith, the main ones being Maha Shivratri, Ram Navmi, Ganesh Chaturti, Durga Puja, Diwali and Holi. Unlike Irish festivals, though, no alcohol is permitted, and only vegetarian food can be consumed.

Tradition means a lot to Meet. Instruments like the sitar, dhol, ravan and harmonium are very popular and are taught to Mauritians from a young age. Embroidery is another skill that Mauritian women learn to master. Traditional dances like the Sega or Bhojpuri are very popular also.

Moving from Mauritius to Ireland was a big change. Meet misses the white sandy beaches and the plentiful supply of seafood and tropical fruits, especially the coconut.

She has picked a recipe called the Mauritian Wonder Bowl to showcase her native country's unique ethnicity. But that's not the only reason; the fact is it's delicious, healthy and affordable, and all the ingredients can be bought in the market.



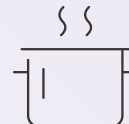
MAURITIAN WONDER BOWL



SERVES
4 People



PREP TIME
30 minutes



COOKING TIME
30 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS

Prepare your boiled rice as per your favourite method. Fry your eggs (4) as per your preference and set aside for later.

The Sauce

In a medium pot, heat up some oil on medium-high heat then cook the sliced chicken, seasoned with some salt and pepper, oyster sauce, dark soy sauce for about 5 minutes. Take the chicken out and set aside.

In the same pot, add the sliced carrots, baby corn, mushroom, bell pepper, chopped garlic and cook for about 1 or 2 minutes.

Put the fried chicken back into the pot followed by the oyster sauce and dark soy sauce, salt, pepper, Aginamoto and mix well. Next, add in the chopped Pak choi and 2 cups of water and mix everything well, then cover the pot for a few minutes.

Once the sauce starts to simmer rapidly, take the lid off and pour in the corn/tapioca starch mixture while continually stirring. The sauce is ready when the mixture has combined well, and the sauce has thickened.

To assemble the dish

In a medium bowl, place your fried egg at the bottom, place your rice on top until the bowl is full. Press down on the rice gently to flatten it.

Now put a plate on top of the bowl so that one hand is holding the bowl at the bottom and your other hand is pressing the plate against the bowl. Carefully, but also rapidly flip it so the bowl is now upside down on the plate and ta-da!!

Sprinkle some chopped spring onion and coriander on the top. It's ready to serve.

INGREDIENTS

- 300g chicken thigh sliced
- 400g Pak choi chopped
- 200g mushroom sliced
- 100g baby corn sliced
- 100g carrot sliced in half moon
- 2 cloves of garlic, chopped
- 1 bell pepper, chopped
- 1 onion chopped
- 3 spring onions, chopped (optional)
- 1 small bunch coriander, chopped (optional)
- 4 eggs
- 4 tbsp oyster sauce
- 1 tbsp dark soy sauce
- 4 servings of boiled basmati rice
- 2 tbsp corn/tapioca starch mix well with 2 tbsp cold water
- Salt and pepper to your taste
- 2 tbsp olive oil for stir fry
- 1 tsp salt 'Aginamoto' (an umami seasoning which can be found in Asian food stores)





NAMIBIA

**GERT
VAN ZYL**



OUT OF AN OASIS AND INTO NEW ROSS

If you're ever interested in getting away from it all and enjoy a bit of solitude, Namibia looks like the place to go. Located in south-west Africa, the country is about 12 times bigger than Ireland but with half the population, at 2.5million, making it one of the least densely populated countries in the world.

Namibia shares land borders with Zambia and Angola to the north, Botswana to the east and South Africa to the south. It's western border is the Atlantic Ocean.

It's a very young country, having only gained independence from South Africa on 21st March 1990, following the Namibian War of Independence.

An "oasis in the desert" is how Gert van Zyl describes it. "I was most fond of the serenity and the beauty," says Gert, who lived in the capital, Windhoek, which is in the very centre of Namibia.

"The country is mostly arid, while my home town enjoys relatively cooler weather, regulated by the Atlantic to the West and the Oranje River to the South," he says.

It must be quite a change then to come from the driest country in sub-Saharan Africa and land on these wet, windy shores – and Gert has the global pandemic to thank for the big move.

"Ironically, the lockdown caused us to relocate from Namibia. As priorities of companies changed, I found myself in a position to work in Western Europe, based out of Ireland," he says. "After a long wait on visas and packing up our belongings, we moved 12,000km north on the 28th of January 2021."

Gert and his family of seven now live in New Ross, in Co. Wexford, but his hometown is

Oranjemund, on the northern bank of the Oranje River at the border to South Africa. Famous for diamonds, it has some, if not all of the largest alluvial diamond deposits on the planet.

"African beadwork is a massive part of the region's cultural identity, while woodcarving of ornaments, as well as things like plates, spoons, lamps et cetera are all common practice, especially for tourist areas," says Gert, who speaks Afrikaans as well as English.

Naturally, his Namibian culture is close to his heart, as is the unique food.

"I miss Biltong (air-cured meat immersed in vinegar and spices), Droëwors (a traditional Southern African snack food, based on the traditional, coriander-seed spiced boerewors' sausage). I also miss sun-dried clothing. Yes, you can get all of those here, but it's just not the same!"

According to Gert, despite the diversity of the tribes in Namibia and their differing cultures, the one common theme throughout the country is 'community', often demonstrated by sharing big meals, with many family and friends attending.

"This is why a Braai (BBQ) or a potjie (my chosen recipe) is so popular," says Gert.

"Besides being tasty and filling, and a joy to make and eat, this recipe is of sentimental value for me. This was the first dish my grandmother taught me to make; hence its importance," he says.



POTJIE



SERVES
4-5 People



PREP TIME
10-15 minutes



COOKING TIME
2 hours 25 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS

Heat the oil in a large cast-iron pot over a small fire (or on a high heat on the hob). Add meat and fry it until browned (the higher the heat, the more flavour is developed at this stage).

Add around 2 litres of water and the potatoes, carrots, corn and green beans. Lower the heat once at a boil so that the pot bubbles slowly. Cover and let simmer

After an hour, add shallots to the pot. Cover and simmer for another hour.

As soon as the vegetables are almost soft, top up the water to cover everything and place the cauliflower and broccoli on top. Add the soup mix (pre-mixed with 100ml of water).

The dish should be ready 10 minutes after you've added the soup.

Serve with rice or mieliepap (also known as maize meal).

INGREDIENTS

- 1kg carrots – peeled and cut into 2-inch chunks.
- 1kg baby potatoes – whole and washed
- 300g shallots – peeled and whole
- 220g green beans – ends cut off and cut into 1-inch pieces
- 260g baby corn (whole)
- 1.5kg stewing beef – any cut will do
- 1 packet of thick country vegetable soup mix
- 1 cauliflower head
- 1 broccoli head
- 50ml sunflower oil
- 2 litres water





ONDO STATE NIGERIA

**EDIZEMI
ONILENLA**



GREAT FOOD FROM THE SUNSHINE STATE

“We have sunshine all year round, and I love the organic nature of our food, most especially seafood. I love the communal life and especially during Christmas everyone comes home. That’s when you get to see your entire family, uncles, aunties, cousins et cetera.”

So says Edizemi Onilenla, who hails from Ondo State – ‘The Sunshine State’ in southwestern Nigeria. With a population of more than 218 million, Nigeria is the most populous country on the African continent.

Now living in Dublin, social worker Edizemi is employed with Tusla’s out-of-hours crisis intervention service. But when she’s not doing that, she’s busy making mouth-watering meals and snacks from her homeland.

Edizemi is a woman on a mission to bring the tastes of Nigeria to the shelves of Irish stores with her own Mama Shee brand of Nigerian food (the ‘Shee’ bit comes from a shortened version of Edizemi’s middle name, Seun – pronounced She-un).

Her homeland of Ondo State has a population of about four million people. The boulder-like Idanre Hills overlook a land where cocoa, petroleum, mining, agriculture, and forestry are all produced. But crafts are just as abundant as industry in these parts.

“We are traditionally among the most skilled and productive crafts people of Africa, with trades such as blacksmithing, weaving, glassmaking, wood-carving, and cotton spinning,” says Edizemi, whose native languages are Ijaw and Yoruba.

With temperatures ranging from 19°C to 33°C, and everything from scenic hiking paths, floating villages and a long stretch of beach on the Atlantic, Ondo State doesn’t appear to be a place that will bore you.

Or if that doesn’t inspire you, there’s always a visit to the evergreen forest of Igbo Olodumare, a place where demons and spirits are said to have once roamed but which now is an ideal spot for camping, picnics and bird watching.

Nigeria is a country rich in culture, music, arts, and dance. It is also a country with different ethnic groups with their own ways of life.

“Our three main cultural groups are the Yoruba, Igbos and the Hausas. The Yorubas occupy the southwestern region of the country the Igbos are in the eastern region, while we have the Hausa in the north,” says Edizemi.

“The batá dance among the Yorubas is the most popular traditional dance of the southwestern people, while the atilogwu dance among the Igbos and the koroso dance among the Hausas are also popular. All the tribes have their own traditional clothing for all different occasions,” she adds.

You’ll need plenty of energy to keep up with the foot-stomping batá dance, and Edizemi has just the recipe to keep you going.



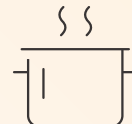
EGUSI SOUP WITH POUNDED YAM



SERVES
4 People



PREP TIME
30 minutes



COOKING TIME
103 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS

Egusi soup and pounded yam is a traditional dish of the Ondo people, from the southern part of Nigeria, where pounded yam made from yam tuber is a firm favourite. Pounded yam could go with another type of soup, such as okra, but we are going with egusi soup with a spinach garnish as it is so popular.

Method

First, boil the meat for about 45 minutes. Roughly blend the pepper, then place in a pot and add the boiled meat and dry fish in a pot. Allow to cook on a medium heat for 10 minutes. Add the seasonings. Blend the melon seeds (Egusi) and crayfish together. Combine the blended Egusi with half of the onions and mix thoroughly until it thickens.

Sprinkle some water and add the Egusi in morsels to the meat and fish, allowing it to cook for another 10 minutes on low heat. Season the soup to taste. Add palm oil to the soup and allow to boil for another 5 minutes. Finally, add the washed spinach and cook for 3 minutes, and it is ready to go.

Pounded Yam

Iyan, also called pounded yam, is similar to mashed potatoes. It is made from boiled yam tubers and then pounded into a smooth consistency. Traditionally, Ondo people use a pestle and mortar to pound yam; however, with advances in technology pounded yam now comes in powder form, and can easily be made by adding hot water. Some people are of the opinion that fresh pounded yam is the best kind. There are some blenders that could do the job, too.

INGREDIENTS

- 3 pieces stock fish, such as dried, salted cod
- 1 medium dry fish, such as red snapper, mackerel or dried anchovies
- 300ml palm oil
- 1 medium onion
- 2 scotch bonnet peppers
- 500g Egusi (melon seeds)
- 2.5kg Any meat of your choice, goat meat, beef, or lamb
- 2 spoons vegetable seasoning
- Ground crayfish
- Water
- A bag of spinach to garnish
- 1 tuber of yam for pounded yam.





PAKISTAN

**SALMA
MOEED**



WANT A GOOD NIGHT OUT? GO TO LAHORE!

Whether it's the golden domes of the Sunheri Mosque, the Tomb of the Mughal Emperor Jahangir, with its beautiful inlaid marble walls, or the enormous towers of the Alamagiri Gate, the city of Lahore, in Pakistan's Punjab Region, is rich with history and stunning buildings.

In fact, when it comes to culture overall, Lahore is spoiled for choice. Salma Moeed, a native of the city who now lives in Dublin with her family of five, would certainly agree with that sentiment.

"Lahore is sometimes known as the cultural capital of Pakistan or the Heart of Pakistan. Aside from being known for its food, it is also well known for its fashion; in fact, most of the fashion industry of Pakistan is based there," she says.

"When you go out in the evening, everything is always open: all the restaurants and shops open all night... Lahore is called the Light City because everything is open at night. It is famous for its food."

And at the end of March every year, those lights get even brighter when 'Mela Chiraghan' – The Festival of Lamps – takes place.

One of the largest traditional events in Punjab, the three-day festival is full of holy rituals, food, Qawwali music (a type of Sufi singing), folk dances and pure fun as thousands of devotees enjoy the carnival atmosphere.

Lahore is Pakistan's second-largest city and has a population of almost 14 million. "To go anywhere in the city, it's about a one- or two-hour drive," says Selma.

The Lahore woman, whose native language is Urdu, makes no bones about why she thinks her hometown is simply the best.

"They have the best food in Lahore. They are very friendly people – very welcoming. I love my city," says Selma, who came to Ireland in 2013. "My husband was living here. He was working as a taxi driver, and I came with him when we were married."

But the pull of her homeland is still strong after her years in Ireland.

"I miss so many things," she says. "The food, the weather. You can go outside whenever you want, and it's always nice and warm and dry. It is only very wet in July and August," Selma says.

"I chose this recipe because it is easy to do in one pot. A lot of our foods need a lot of preparation and can take a long time to make. People spend the whole day preparing some of the food that we love. This is a quick and easy recipe to try. Serve it with fresh Naan bread," she adds.



WHEN YOU GO OUT IN THE EVENING, EVERYTHING IS ALWAYS OPEN: ALL THE RESTAURANTS AND SHOPS OPEN ALL NIGHT... LAHORE IS CALLED THE LIGHT CITY BECAUSE EVERYTHING IS OPEN AT NIGHT. IT IS FAMOUS FOR ITS FOOD.



LAMB KORMA



SERVES
4 People



PREP TIME
20 minutes



COOKING TIME
30-40 minutes



INGREDIENTS

- 2 red onions
- 2 tbsp of sunflower oil
- 1kg of lamb chops
- 2 tbsp of garlic paste
- 2 tbsp ginger paste
- 7 cloves
- 1 tbsp of chili powder
- ½ tbsp of salt
- ½ tsp of turmeric
- 3 tbsp of Greek yoghurt
- 1 cup water
- 5 green chillies
- Coriander to garnish



INSTRUCTIONS

Chop onions and fry in oil until lightly browned. Add the garlic and ginger paste and fry for another minute, then add the lamb chops and fry until browned all over (about 5-10 minutes).

Now add your chilli, cloves, salt and turmeric and stir them in well. Finally, add your whole green chillies and the yoghurt. Simmer gently until the oil separates (about 30 minutes).

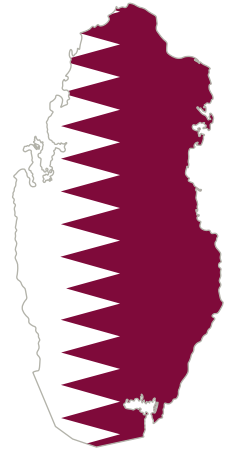
Best served with fresh naan bread. Enjoy!





QATAR

**ASJAD
OSMAN**



THERE ARE RICH PICKINGS IN THIS ARAB STATE

Qatar is small... very small. In fact, Ireland is six times bigger than the desert peninsula, which extends into the Persian Gulf. Overseeing this domain, which is a semi-constitutional monarchy, is Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani, Emir of Qatar.

Little it may be, but Qatar generates BIG revenues, thanks to its extensive oil, gas and petrochemical reserves, which make it one of the wealthiest countries in the world.

Its capital, Doha, is home to 2.5 million people, and with temperatures hitting a sizzling 45°C in summer it's probably not the most comfortable place to be. Locals keep the heat at bay by wearing the ghutra, a loose headdress in white, or red and white cloth, held on with a black rope known as the agal. Asjad Osman would testify to that heat. The mother of seven moved from there with her husband and family to Dublin in 2015.

"There is a different routine there compared to living in Ireland," she says. "There are more social events and more outdoor activities. I particularly enjoyed drinking tea in the garden whilst chatting with neighbours. But the summer is too hot. From June to September, it is better to live in Ireland."

However, it wasn't the weather that brought Asjad to these shores, but work.

"My husband secured a job here in Ireland as a consultant radiologist. That is why we left. We chose Ireland because it has a better standard of living than many other countries." Asjad and her husband bought a house in Dublin 15, an area that she has settled into well.

"I love Dublin 15 because it is very multicultural and my children have found a lot of Muslim, Chinese and Irish friends to play with," she says.

"Qatar is an extremely wealthy country because it has the third highest gas reserves in the world

(after Russia and Iran)," says Asjad, who adds that there are many people living there who enjoy a very high quality of life.

All that revenue has meant that the country has some pretty striking architecture. One place in particular that offers an eyeful is the Villaggio Mall. A replica of the Italian city of Venice, it comes complete with canals and gondolas inside a shopping mall, so you can get a taste of La Dolce Vita while buying those designer jeans. The oil and gas industry attracts workers from around the world, including Ireland, and as a result the strict Islamic laws associated with some Arab countries are less rigid.

"Qatar is not as strict as Saudi Arabia, but not as open as the Emirates. The majority of the population in Qatar are Muslim, and there are synagogues and Christian churches in Doha, so people can express their religious freedoms," says Asjad. But there's more to Qatar than oil and gas, there's a rich history, too, with buildings that evoke tales of the Arabian Nights and of scorched desert – buildings like Al Zubarah Fort, a well-known archaeological site, which recently received UNESCO World Heritage status.

The majesty of the desert, with its rolling sun-drenched dunes, is an image that is sure to pull on the heartstrings, and Asjad uses the food she places on the family table in Dublin to keep those memories close. Asjad chose this recipe as it is popular in many Arab countries, particularly during Ramadan, and, most importantly, because her children love it!



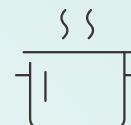
LEGEMAT (ARABIC DUMPLINGS)



SERVES
40 Dumplings



PREP TIME
10 minutes



COOKING TIME
20 minutes



INGREDIENTS

- 230g flour
- 25g milk powder
- 40g brown sugar
- 1 tbsp yeast
- 1 egg
- 35g cornflour
- 10g vanilla powder
- 25g custard powder
- Pinch of salt
- 1 cup of warm water
- Oil for deep frying

Optional to add to cooked dumplings:

- Hal (a spice) or cinnamon
- Zaafron (spice to colour)
- Syrup
- Coconut shavings.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Mix the yeast with the sugar and 1 cup of warm water. Leave this for 10 minutes to allow the yeast to work.
2. Add the flour, milk powder, cornflour, vanilla powder, salt and egg in a bowl.
3. Mix all these ingredients together for several minutes. You can use a cake mixer if needed. The consistency should be between a cake-mix and pancake mix (not too liquidy or too dry).
4. Heat a cup and a half of oil for deep-frying in a pan. Keep the oil on a hot heat. Roll the mix in a small ball and then deep fry for 1-2 minutes until they are a light brown.
5. You can then add a syrup of your choice.



ROMANIA

**GEORGIANA
PARESCU**



LEAVING THE WILDS OF THE CARPATHIANS FOR A NEW LIFE IN CARLOW

'Dor' is a distinctive type of Romanian folk music, which describes the longing a person feels for their home country. One suspects it is probably something that Georgiana Parescu has hummed more than once since she came to Ireland in 2018 in search of better opportunities for her son.

After hearing from friends who had already moved here, how good the education system was, Georgiana gave up her work and the life she knew, and moved far away from her family so that her son could have a brighter future.

She bid farewell to her home province of Oltenia, and to the Carpathian Mountains, where brown bears, wolves, lynx, and wildcats roam among the spruce and deciduous forests, and above which golden eagles soar, searching for prey.

Located beside its more famous neighbouring province of Transylvania (home to Vlad the Impaler, who inspired Bram Stoker's Dracula), Oltenia (whose biggest city is Craiova) lies between the Danube and the Olt River.

The area contains significant quantities of oil, gas and lignite deposits, and the region plays a major role in power distribution with a chain of electric plants along the Olt and Lotru rivers and two hydroelectric plants on the Danube.

When there's not the forested hills to think about, there's the weather, with its distinct seasons.

"In winter, temperatures can drop to -20°C and in summer, they can reach 40°C.

"Ireland seems to be mild and very wet!" says Georgiana, who lives in Co. Carlow. But Georgiana points out that Irish and Romanian cultures have more in common than you might think.

"Romania is a rural country too and traditions of storytelling and folk music are strong there. In winter, people gather to tell long, elaborate tales and the countryside is rich in folklore."

Tales of vampires, dragons and werewolves are common... plenty of fodder to make for sleepless nights as you listen to the wind howl through the forested slopes of the Carpathians.

And the rich culture extends beyond storytelling to traditional folk arts such as wood carving, ceramics, household decorations, dance, richly varied folk music, weaving and embroidery of costumes.

In fact, one piece of colourful embroidery, the 'ie' is an embroidered blouse that has been copied by French designers.

For her recipe, Georgiana has chosen Sarmalute, which is the most widely cooked, traditional dish in Romania. The recipe is hundreds of years old, influenced by Turkish and Balkan cuisine because Romania was once part of the Ottoman Empire.

"It's a winter dish, always made at Christmas, Easter, on our national day (1st December), for weddings or New Year," says Georgiana.



ROMANIAN SARMALUTE



SERVES
6 people



PREP TIME
1 hour



COOKING TIME
2 hours 30 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS

Brown the mince and then place in a bowl. Rinse the rice in water several times to remove the starch.

Heat the sunflower oil or pork fat in a frying pan on a medium heat. Dice the smoked pork belly and add to the pan. Add half the onion and fry until golden, stirring occasionally.

Remove from the pan and allow to cool a little, then put it into the bowl with the minced meat. Add the other half of the onion to the pan and fry until golden. Then add the drained rice and stir fry for one minute. Tip this mixture into the bowl.

Season to taste with salt, pepper, thyme and dill. Mix all the ingredients well.

If using vine leaves, remove them from the jar and lay them flat. If using cabbage leaves, blanch the larger leaves in boiling, salted water for two minutes, then chill them in a bowl of ice water - then lay them flat.

Place a tablespoon of the mixture on each vine or cabbage leaf and roll up tightly. Put the rolls into a casserole dish (cast-iron is best).

Tuck some bay leaves around the parcels and sprinkle with a few peppercorns. Add the tomatoes and enough water to cover all the parcels.

Simmer on a medium heat for 1.5-2 hours. The dish can be placed in the oven for a further 30 minutes to reduce the sauce even more.

INGREDIENTS

For the filling:

- 1.5kg minced meat (2/3 pork, 1/3 beef)
- 150g white rice
- 6 medium onions (red are milder)
- 200g smoked pork belly
- 30ml sunflower oil (or 1 tbsp pork fat)
- A little water
- Salt, freshly ground pepper
- Freshly chopped thyme and dill to taste

For the Sarmalute parcels:

- Vine leaves (or cabbage leaves)
- Bay leaves and peppercorns
- 1.5kg chopped tomatoes
- A little water





SYRIA

**FARES
AL AQRAA**



FARES'S PAST WAS FILLED WITH LOVE AND JOY, THEN THE WAR CAME.

"I miss the old times when I never needed to worry about communication with people or applying for anything. I miss my own little house; it was small and old, yet it was mine. I miss holidays back home which were full of fun, but what I miss the most are my parents and extended family, the big family gatherings and the frequent visitors."

It's impossible to read those words and not feel a pang of sympathy. They come from 39-year-old Fares Al Aqraa, who came to Roscommon from Syria in December 2020 with his wife Badriya and children. The couple have three sons, Yasser, Taysir and Ammar, and daughter Hadeel.

Syria is on the east coast of the Mediterranean Sea, bounded by Turkey to the north, Lebanon, Israel and Palestine to the west, Iraq to the east and Jordan to the south. The climate on the coast is mild, with rainy winters and hot, sunny summers; in the vast inland areas it is arid, subtropical, with moderately cold winters and scorching, sunny summers.

According to Fares, Syria is about double the size of Ireland. For a relatively small country, it has made big headlines – unfortunately for all the wrong reasons.

Fares says that unrest in Syria began in March 2011 as part of the Arab Spring protests, eventually escalating to armed conflict. By 2013, the country was divided between government, rebel, ISIS and Kurdish forces – and Fares's hometown of Idlib was right in the middle of the conflict.

Idlib, known for its olive trees and olive oil that is unique for its taste, was one such casualty.

"Fighting has left my entire hometown flattened; we were displaced and ended up in an overcrowded and underfunded camp in Lebanon. Luckily, in 2020, we were resettled in Ireland as a part of Irish Refugee Protection Programme," he adds.

Warfare has scarred the people of Syria and the country itself, which is one of the oldest civilisations, stretching back thousands of years. Entwined with that history is the tradition of showing hospitality and generosity to guests and relatives.

"It is very important for us; bonds with extended family are deeply valued and the most important thing is that we always sit together every day to have a talk or a meal as we used to do in Syria."

Fares has carried that tradition of hospitality to Ireland and keeps it alive through his cooking.

"This recipe reminds me of Syria and the wonderful times when my family and I used to gather together, full of love and joy."



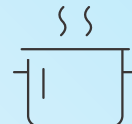
FRIED KIBBEH BALLS



SERVES
50 Kibbehs



PREP TIME
20 minutes



COOKING TIME
2 hours

INSTRUCTIONS

Soak the bulgur wheat in enough water to cover, and set aside. To make the filling, sauté the chopped onions in vegetable oil on medium low heat until golden.

Add the mince to the onions and cook the meat on medium to high heat. Add the salt and spices and use the back of your wooden spoon to break up the meat. When cooked, turn off the heat and add pine nuts. Taste to make any adjustments then cover and set aside.

Drain the wheat and add to a large bowl. Take out the kilo of meat. Using a food processor, add the meat and bulgur wheat in batches of equal amounts. You will notice the consistency begins to clump together and roll in the bowl of the processor.

Roughly chop 1 onion to go in the food processor along with the salt and spices. Blitz well. When you have combined all the meat and bulgur wheat in a bowl, add the blitzed onion spice mix, then bring everything together, preferably with your hands. If it is too dry, add a bit of water, you don't want it too loose, sticky, or crumbly but it should hold together nicely.

Take some Kibbeh casing and roll into golf ball sizes, indent the middle then hollow out the inside with your index finger turning as you do so until you have a half shell. Add a spoon of filling and close up the casing. Compress well with your hands and shape into classic Kibbeh morsels.

Line up the Kibbeh on the tray until you finish the filling. Once finished, chill for an hour. Heat 4 cups of oil and bring the oil temperature to 180°C, so it has a gentle bubble. Fry the Kibbeh in small batches to avoid overcrowding. Remove after 5 minutes, when they are golden brown in colour, using a slotted spoon to drain the oil. Serve with yoghurt dip.

INGREDIENTS

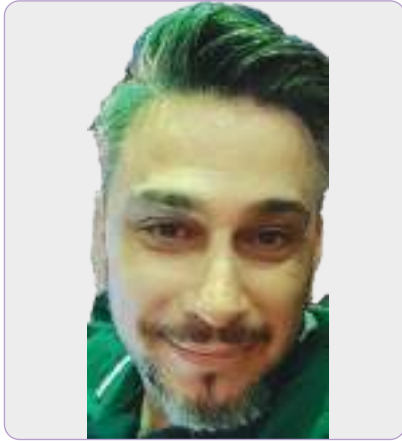
For the Kibbeh filling:

- 700g minced lamb meat
- 3 onions chopped
- 1 tbsp salt
- ½ tsp black pepper
- ½ tsp crushed red pepper (chili flakes)
- 1 tsp cumin
- 100g pine nuts

For the Kibbeh casing:

- 1kg fine mixed (white & brown) bulgur wheat
- 1kg diced meat (lamb or beef)
- 1 onion
- 1 tbsp salt
- ½ tsp black pepper
- ½ tsp crushed red pepper (chili flakes)
- 1 tsp cumin
- ½ tsp dried mint
- Sunflower or vegetable oil





TURKEY

**IBRAHIM
KURTA**



IBRAHIM'S TURKISH DELIGHTS ON THE MEDITERRANEAN

Ibrahim Kurta really is a cut above the rest. Now living in Naas, Co. Kildare, and running his own barber shop, called Paddy The Turk, Ibrahim hails from the west of Turkey, near the city of Aydin in the Aegean region. It is an area that is known for tourism, but it is also famous for producing some of the best fruits and nuts in the world.

"Walnuts are a key crop, and nuts and oil are much sought after, and all this produce is organic, grown the same way for millennia," he says, pointing out that every region has its own food and different dishes to enjoy.

The figs, strawberries, watermelon, olives, and oranges grown there are of exceptional quality, Ibrahim assures us, as are the dried fruits.

And if there are any fruit pickers out there who find themselves a little sore after a day in the fields, then there's always Aydin's mineral springs and spas to dip into and ease those aches and pains.

The Turkish Mediterranean offers a variety of ancient cultures for tourists to explore when they're not basting themselves on sandy beaches or nearby islands.

"In summer, the temperature can be 50°C, so many people get up early, at 3am or 4am, to go for a walk or to work and finish early, at midday. They can stay out of the afternoon heat and go out again in the evening."

Although he says he loves living here, there are many things he misses about his homeland, whose nearest Aegean neighbours are Greece and Bulgaria.

Says Ibrahim: "In Turkey, life continues after work in the evenings; people go out, they eat in restaurants, they go to the beach, it's a very social way to live. Here, everything closes at 6pm."

The music, dancing and storytelling differ from region to region, according to Ibrahim. In the Aegean, the traditional music – 'ege' – is lively and rhythmic, while the music in other areas is slower, and more emotional.

Aside from all that culture, Ibrahim, of course, misses his two brothers, his sister and his extended family and sees them as often as he can.

To help bring him closer to home he has chosen to cook Manti – just like he did when he was a young conscript soldier, posted to central Turkey, far from where he grew up.



MANTI



SERVES
6 People



PREP TIME
1 hour



COOKING TIME
10 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS

Combine the flour, egg, salt and enough lukewarm water to bring everything together in a soft dough. Knead for 5-10 minutes by hand or for 5 minutes in a food processor. Cover the bowl with a damp cloth and leave for 30 minutes.

In a medium bowl, combine the minced beef, chopped onion and parsley, salt and pepper.

Take out the dough and roll it out to a thickness of 2mm approximately; it doesn't have to be very thin because it has to hold the filling. Using a sharp knife or a pizza cutter, cut the dough into strips, then into squares of about 4cm.

Make the dumplings by putting a teaspoon of filling on each. Fold the square in two and seal the opposite corners, then press the other corners together, creating a little bundle.

Put each dumpling on parchment paper, sprinkling a little flour on it to prevent sticking. These dumplings can be stored or cooked immediately.

Bring 2 litres of water to the boil, then add the dumplings. Cook for 10 minutes until soft.

To make the yoghurt sauce, mix the yoghurt, garlic and salt.

To make the butter sauce, melt the butter in a pan on a medium heat and add the olive oil. Stir in the dried mint and red pepper flakes, removing from the heat after 20 seconds.

To serve, put the dumplings on a dish and drizzle with the garlic yoghurt sauce. Then pour over some of the butter sauce, just before serving. Sprinkle with sumac.

INGREDIENTS

For the dough:

- 125g wholewheat flour
- 1 egg
- 1 tsp salt
- Lukewarm water

For the filling:

- 200g minced beef
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- Bunch of parsley, finely chopped
- Half tsp salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 tsp pepper paste

For the yoghurt sauce:

- 220ml plain yoghurt
- 2 cloves of garlic, crushed
- Pinch of salt

For the butter sauce:

- 2 tbsp butter
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tsp red pepper flakes
- 1 tsp dried mint

Sumac to serve (a spice made from berries that has a lemon-lime tartness)



UKRAINE

**ANASTASIA
SHCHERBAKOVA**



FLEEING TO THE WELCOMING ARMS OF IRELAND

Anastasia Shcherbakova's world turned upside down when, on February 24, 2022, she awoke to explosions outside the window. Just 30km from the Russian border, her home in Kharkiv was in the centre of hostilities from the start of the war.

That first day of her new life was a baptism of fire for the 45-year-old.

"In the first hours of shelling, we were confused and did not leave, and then it was scary to go out into the street — everything around us exploded and burned. A month later, we relocated to a small town in the Poltava region."

But over time, it also became dangerous there. They decided to move once more, this time to Poland. "While we were driving, I got a call from friends already in Ireland, telling us how much the Irish love children and its favourable atmosphere for children with autism. My daughter has autism, so it was decided to go to Ireland."

Together with her daughter Lydia (five) and her mum Nina (68), Anastasia arrived here on August 26, 2022, leaving behind a city that is engraved in her heart to begin a new life in Cardonagh, Co. Donegal.

"I love everything in my city, from the quiet streets, immersed in trees and flowers, to busy avenues with shining shop windows, and from large squares to cosy squares". Kharkiv also has stunning parks with play areas for children at almost every step.

"Many people come just to walk in Kharkiv's parks. Theatres and concert halls are always full of people; there are skating rinks, rollerdromes, and motocross. There are an unimaginable number of restaurants and coffee shops also," she adds.

The traditions of Anastasia's homeland are more difficult to identify.

"In 1919, Ukraine became part of the USSR, and our traditions were eradicated for many years," she says. "In 1991, when the union collapsed, people had the opportunity to return to old traditions. It's good that the old people at least remembered these and were able to pass them on."

Christmas and Easter are celebrated at different dates in Ukraine, and they also enjoy the festival of Maslenitsa at the end of winter.

"All week, people fry pancakes and treat each other, and on Sunday there are folk festivities, with sleigh rides, songs and dancing." The festivities end with the burning of a huge straw effigy, she says.

Ukraine is known for its embroidery, with each region of the country having its own unique patterns. The regions also enjoy folk dancing; although Anastasia recommends training before participating, as many of the dances are famous for their energy and pace.

"The most famous folk dance is hopak; you need to be in very good physical shape to dance it. There are legends that this is not a dance at all, but a warm-up exercise for Ukrainian Cossacks in bygone days!" she says.

Anastasia chose Vareniki for her recipe. "This recipe, from my favourite chef Vladimir Yaroslavsky, combines all that is best and delicious in dumplings – cottage cheese and cherries."



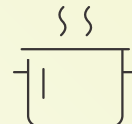
CHOUX DUMPLINGS WITH CHERRY JUICE



SERVES
4-5 People



PREP TIME
10 minutes



COOKING TIME
40-50 minutes



INGREDIENTS

To make the dough:

- 160g cherry juice (400g frozen cherries yielded 160g juice)
- 175g flour
- 25g sugar
- 20g butter
- Salt

To make the filling:

- 300g cottage cheese
- 2 egg yolks
- 20g butter
- 50g sugar

For the cherry sauce:

- Leftover cherries
- 50g sugar
- 20g oil

INSTRUCTIONS

Mix juice, sugar and butter in a saucepan, and bring to a boil. Add 100g of flour, remove from heat and knead hot dough. Let it cool down a little and add the remaining 75g of flour. Let the dough rest for 20 minutes under a towel.

While the dough is resting, let's make the filling. Put all the ingredients for the filling in a bowl (the butter should be soft). Mix everything until smooth, then place in a pan and heat to a boil.

Roll out the dough thinly and cut out circles, put the filling inside and fold the circle into a semicircle, closing the edges.

Boil the finished dumplings in boiling, salted water for 2-3 minutes. Serve hot with cherry sauce. Bon appetit!





VENEZUELA

**CAROLINA
O'SHEA**



FROM THE GARDEN CITY AND ITS DANCING DEVILS TO THE GARDEN COUNTY OF IRELAND

Love is a powerful thing; it can pull you from the picturesque city of Maracay (also known as 'the Garden City') in Venezuela's Aragua State and drop you in 'the Garden County' of Wicklow. You only have to ask Carolina O'Shea for proof of that.

Carolina is married to Milo and has one child, 14-year-old Danny. Love blossomed for the couple when they met during his travels in Venezuela. They later lived in Argentina before moving to the Emerald Isle. Although living here for 18 years, the lure of her homeland is still strong for Carolina.

"I miss my family, salsa dancing and the lovely, balmy weather; the vibrant and celebratory Latin culture, the mosaic of colour and sound; the music and dance," she says.

Carolina references the Cumaco, a traditional dance performed to the sound of drums which is very popular amongst the Afro-Caribbean communities along the Aragua coastline.

"The Joropo Aragüeño is a musical genre, characterised by the playing of traditional harps, maracas and folk singing, not unlike Irish sean nós," she says.

Venezuela is rich with cultural diversity and traditions derived from indigenous tribes; Spanish and African immigrants, as well as other customs brought by people from Colombia, Portugal, Syria and the Lebanon.

If you like arts and crafts, then Venezuela is the place for you! Not only is it known for its beautifully decorated pottery, it is also celebrated for its leather products and the manufacture of handcrafted musical instruments.

Carolina says that feast days are an important part of Venezuelan life.

"On June 24, el Día de San Juan celebrates the patron saint of most indigenous areas, who is honored with folkloric dances. During the rest of the year, people meet up to enjoy salsa and merengue music, dancing to the beat of bands such as the Antaños del Estadio Orchestra.

"At Christmas, Aguinaldos (similar to carol singing), Parrandas (dances) and Patinatas (rollerblading) are organised after masses. The party of the Dancing Devils (Diablos Danzantes) is a very popular celebration at Corpus Christi and is a typical celebration in Aragua" she adds.

The recipe Carolina chose is special to her because the Arepa is the foundation of the Venezuelan diet.

Crispy on the exterior, with a fluffy centre, Arepas are a simple Venezuelan delicacy and are incredibly versatile.

Says Carolina: "They can be eaten for breakfast, lunch or dinner. Arepas are delicious and easy to make, with just four simple pantry ingredients. They are made from cornmeal, which is a wholegrain. This means that they are high in fibre and nutrients. They are naturally gluten-free and their mild flavor makes them a complementary side to any meal.

"Traditionally, Arepas are filled with meat and cheese, but there are many combinations that are plant-based and vegetarian and vegan-friendly," she adds.



AREPAS CON PERICO



SERVES
6 People



PREP TIME
15 minutes



COOKING TIME
48 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS

Heat the frying pan at medium heat and add 1 tablespoon of olive oil. Then add the chopped onions, salt and pepper to taste and cook with the lid on for 10 minutes stirring occasionally.

Next, add the chopped tomatoes and cook with the lid on for a further 10 minutes stirring occasionally. Then, remove the lid and cook for a further 5 minutes so that all the liquids evaporate. Add the eggs and stir well until the eggs are fully cooked.

To make the arepas, mix the pre-cooked white cornmeal and salt in a bowl. Add the olive oil to the warm water, then add the warm water mix to the cornmeal. Mix well with a spoon until the cornmeal absorbs all the liquid, then knead the dough with your hands for a minute or two to remove any lumps. Leave the dough to rest while preparing the frying pan.

Heat the frying pan/skillet at medium heat and add 1 tablespoon of olive oil. Divide dough into 6 pieces, roll into a ball in the palm of hands. Flatten the dough to form a disc about 1/2 inch thick.

Place the arepas in the frying pan and cover. Cook the arepas in batches of three. Cook each batch for 10 minutes. Turn the arepas around every 2-3 minutes. Keep the lid on while cooking to ensure the arepas are crispy outside and tender inside.

When done (after 10 minutes), use a knife to cut the arepas down the centre but leave the back ends attached and stuff with filling. Before stuffing the arepa, it's common to smear butter inside. This is optional.

INGREDIENTS

For the filling:

- 5 plum tomatoes chopped
- 3 red or white onions chopped
- 3 eggs
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- Salt & pepper to taste
- 1 avocado
- White Greek cheese
- Butter (optional)

For the dough:

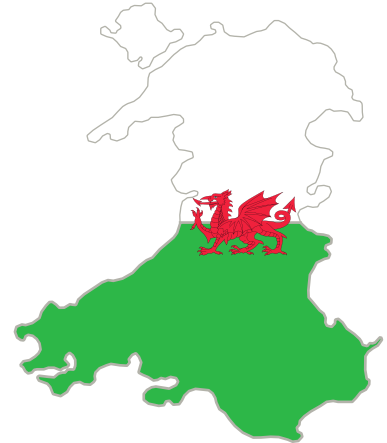
- 260g precooked white cornmeal
- 600ml warm water
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tbsp olive oil for the dough plus 1 tbsp olive oil for greasing the frying pan





WALES

**RACHAEL
KELLEHER**



A HOME FROM HOME ACROSS THE IRISH SEA

On a clear day you can see the Preseli Hills from Wicklow, which is good news for Rachael Kelleher – a Welsh woman, who hails from Pembrokeshire but who moved here in 2011.

Rachael, who started a family which now consists of three, can always go there from her Galway base if she is feeling homesick.

Stones from Preseli are believed to have been transported 180 miles to Stonehenge, and new research shows that people from Rachael's West Wales homeland may have even helped build the world-famous heritage site.

Less proven is the belief that St Patrick was born in the region, but it's another link that connects her to Ireland – as is the weather, which is just like Ireland's...wet!



THE THING I MISS MOST ABOUT MY HOMELAND ARE MY PARENTS AND SISTER

And here's another factoid that ties Wales to the Emerald Isle - Rachael's hometown built the original Millennium Falcon from Star Wars, while another 'Falcon' was built in Donegal when The Last Jedi was filmed here in 2017. And while we're at it, Ireland's Skellig Michael was used as Luke Skywalker's sanctuary in Star Wars Episodes VII and VIII. Rachael clearly feels 'The Force'!

'Star ships' weren't the only aerial phenomena in Pembrokeshire. Rachael says her native region was also the largest base in Britain for flying boats during the 1940s.

But it's not just famous places that make somewhere special, it's the miles of scenic Pembrokeshire coastline and beaches, it's the charming small towns and villages full of character, it's the myths around dragons and Celtic heroes, the coal and slate mines (going back to Roman times), the wooden Love Spoons.

It's the folk dancing, the music and those Welsh choirs, it's a snake-hipped Tom Jones and the Green, Green Grass of Home, it's Welsh rugby, it's daffodils, it's leeks and Laverbread, and it's Conwy mussels.

All those details may seem insignificant to some people, but they are the threads that form the fabric of Rachael's heritage... the weft and warp of who she is and, sometimes, they are things that create that dull ache inside her when she thinks of home.

None of them, though, come close to the most important part of Wales that is absent:

"The things I miss most about my homeland are my parents and sister," she says. "I chose this recipe of Cawl because I ate it as a child, and it is a comfort food."



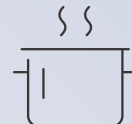
CAWL



SERVES
6 People



PREP TIME
20 minutes



COOKING TIME
2 hours

INSTRUCTIONS

Roll the diced lamb in seasoned flour, then place inside a large pot containing the heated oil, and cook for 3-4 minutes, stirring all the time, until the lamb is golden-brown.

Lower the heat, then pour in 2 litres of water, before adding the diced potatoes, carrots, swede, and parsnips. Season to taste with salt and pepper, place a lid on the pot and simmer for 2 hours, or until the meat is tender and the vegetables are cooked. With 20 minutes to go before the end of the cooking time, add the chopped leeks. Replace the lid and continue to cook.

Check and adjust the seasoning, then scatter chopped parsley over the cawl. Delicious with crusty bread and Caerphilly cheese.

Better if made the day before serving. Just skim off any fat and reheat gently until piping hot.

INGREDIENTS

- 600g lamb steaks, diced (or lamb neck fillets) you can also use beef or ham hock
- 1 tbsp flour, mixed with a pinch of salt & pepper
- 2 tbsp rapeseed oil
- 4 large carrots, peeled & diced
- 4 large potatoes, scrubbed and diced
- Half a swede, peeled & diced
- 3 leeks, trimmed, sliced & rinsed thoroughly (greens and whites)
- 2 parsnips, peeled & diced
- Salt and pepper, to season
- Fresh parsley, chopped (to garnish)
- Caerphilly cheese (to serve) or other
- Crusty bread (to serve)





MEXICO

**DIANA
BRESLIN**



MARIACHIS, TAMALES AND DAYS OF THE DEAD

You might have thought the typical Irish forecast of ‘sunny with scattered showers, cloudy in parts and occasional hail’ was bad, but clearly it has nothing on Monterrey (The City of the Mountains) in Mexico.

“There’s a saying that goes, ‘if you don’t like the weather in Monterrey come back in five minutes’, as temperatures can go from -5°C to 27°C degrees the same day!” So says Diana K. Breslin, who moved to Ireland from Mexico 10 years ago and now lives in Letterkenny, Co. Donegal.

“I moved to Ireland with my husband and son, as my father-in-law was having health issues. We had the opportunity to spend good times with my husband’s father and create memories with him,” says Diana, whose native language is Spanish.

“In addition to that we thought it would be a great opportunity to start our family in a country like Ireland.”

Monterrey is the largest city in Mexico’s north-eastern state of Nuevo Leon, with a population of around 6.4 million. It’s a centre of industry, with metallurgy plants, breweries, and glass factories. It’s also known for producing construction materials, textiles and now Tesla, which is set to open a gigafactory in the state.

Diana says that although her home city may not always be fortunate with its climate, Monterrey is lucky to have citizens who are hardy in soul, and who’ll make it into work whatever the weather.

“We are known for being hard workers, I am proudest of our culture of working hard and the ability to endure any weather or circumstances to keep going.” But it’s certainly not a case of being all work and no play in Monterrey.

There are always Mariachi bands, with their guitars, trumpets and energetic vocals to get pulses racing – not that you need to actually have a pulse to enjoy yourself in Mexico – you only have to witness the Day of the Dead for that.

Día de los Muertos (the Day of the Dead) is celebrated on November 2.

Says Diana: “Many households put up an altar to the loved ones who passed away. It is decorated with colourful paper, candles, pictures and their favourite foods and drinks. Families also clean up the graveyards.

“We remember the people who have passed and the knowledge they shared. Día de los Muertos is a day to celebrate the life of our loved ones and spend family time,” she adds. Diana says that she misses many things about her homeland – “my family, the food, the weather – believe it or not! But I am fortunate to visit as often as possible”.

For the cookbook, she has chosen to share her family’s recipe for tamales. “[It’s] an authentic traditional dish that has its origin in the pre-Hispanic era, the ingredients are masa de maize filled with meat and salsa wrapped in a corn husk.

“For the filling of these tamales, I am sharing an adaptation of my grandmother Esperanza’s recipe for pork in red chilli sauce – asado de puerco, a typical north-eastern dish, which was the favourite of the regulars at my grandmother’s restaurant.”



TAMALES



SERVES
16 tamales



PREP TIME
25 minutes



COOKING TIME
3 hours 10 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS

First, season and boil the meat for 10 minutes then reduce heat and slow cook for one hour. Then, shred the meat.

Place the dried chillies in a pot with boiling water and let them soak for 5 minutes. Then put in the blender with a pinch of black pepper and salt.

Pour the dried chilli mix onto the shredded meat and leave to cook on a low heat for 20 minutes. Then set aside the meat and make the tamales.

Put the maize flour, baking powder and salt in a large bowl and add warm water, mixing consistently for around 3 minutes. Then, slowly add the oil and mix further until you obtain a soft mix consistency of the masa. Then, fill the corn husks with a layer of the masa and a portion of the asado de puerco (pork stew) and wrap, keeping the tip and the bottom of the husk.

Place all the tamales in a large steaming pot and cover, allowing the Tamales to cook for around 1.5 hours on a medium heat. Once cooked, let them rest for 10 minutes, and they will be ready to serve.

Finally gather your family and sit in for a treat!

INGREDIENTS

For the Asado de Puerco:

- 1kg of pork leg meat
- 100g dried chillies
- Garlic
- Salt
- Cumin
- Black pepper
- Mexican bay leaves

For the Tamal Masa (dough):

- 1kg of maize flour
- 8 cups of water
- Olive oil as needed
- 1 tbsp of baking powder
- Salt to taste





YEMEN

**HASSAN
BAAQEIL**



SAMPLE SOME FOOD FROM THE LAND OF NOAH

Sometimes people cook out of the love of it, on other occasions it is due to necessity, as Hassan Baaqeil knows only too well.

"In my culture, generally, the ladies do all the cooking. When my wife became ill, I stepped in and it was a real learning experience for me as I never cooked before, but I love that I am helping my wife and family," he says.



I MADE THIS DISH WHILE FASTING AS I AM OF ISLAMIC FAITH. THE RELIGIOUS RITUALS ARE VERY DIFFERENT IN IRELAND AND THAT IS WHAT I MISS THE MOST

Hassan, who has two children, Aboodi and Iana, is from Yemen's capital, Sanaa (population 2.5 million), one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world. According to Yemeni legend, it was founded by Shem, one of the three sons of Noah.

The country's modern origins stem from 1934, when it was split into two parts, the Yemen Arab Republic (North Yemen), and the south-eastern British-controlled territory, which subsequently became the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (South Yemen).

Despite tense relations between both over the years, the two united as the Republic of Yemen in 1990. Desire for political and economic reform, however, led to an uprising in 2011.

"I moved from Yemen as a young man to Saudi Arabia to allow me to pursue a career as a computer engineer. I lived there for many years, spending some time in the United States also," says Hassan, who came with his wife to Ireland in 2020.

"We chose Ireland due to its cool climate and the fact that Irish people hold similar values to Yemeni people. The people work hard and love their families. Art and music are a big deal in Yemen, and we love our heritage dearly.

"The one aspect of Yemen that makes me very proud is how kind the Yemeni people are. I miss our culture the most," he adds.

Hassan's homeland is filled with culture and contains a staggering number of landmarks dating back thousands of years. In fact, UNESCO has awarded World Heritage status to many sites there, including the historic town of Zabid, the old city of Sana'a and the old walled city of Shibam.

That last one has been dubbed the 'Manhattan of the Desert' due to its supersized buildings. Shibam's 16th-century mud skyscrapers soar high above the desert floor, some reaching seven storeys high.

"I chose this recipe because it is an easy dish to make, and it has given my family great sustenance over the last few months while my wife recovers from illness."

"I made this dish while fasting as I am of Islamic faith. The religious rituals are very different in Ireland and that is what I miss the most about home," says Hassan, who lives in Blackrock, Co. Cork.



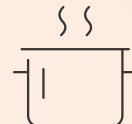
SHAKSHUKA



SERVES
4 People



PREP TIME
10 minutes



COOKING TIME
15 minutes



INGREDIENTS

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- ½ an onion
- 1 green pepper
- 3 tomatoes
- 6 eggs
- 100g of cheddar cheese Or 100g of Feta cheese
- Salt
- Black pepper
- Parsley
- Oregano

INSTRUCTIONS

Shakshuka is an easy, healthy breakfast (or any time of day) recipe in Yemen and other parts of the Middle East and North Africa. It's a simple combination of simmering tomatoes, onions, garlic, spices and gently poached eggs. It's nourishing, filling and one recipe I guarantee you'll make time and again. This is the Yemen version of Shakshuka and is known locally as a Yemeni omelet.

Heat the oil in a frying pan that has a lid, and then soften the chopped onions and green pepper for 5 minutes. Stir in the chopped tomatoes, salt & black pepper, then simmer for 8-10 minutes until thick. This mix can be frozen for another day and kept in the freezer for up to a month.

Using a spoon, whisk your eggs until fully beaten. Add some salt and slowly drizzle the eggs into the hot pan. Cook for 3 minutes, or until the eggs are done to your liking. Spread the cheese over the top of the dish. Scatter with parsley and oregano and serve with crusty bread.





ZIMBABWE

**ZOLA
SIBANDA**



ZOLA, ZULUS AND THE SPIRIT OF 'UBUNTU'

Bulawayo... the name alone is intoxicatingly exotic, and the place – Zimbabwe's second-largest city after the capital Harare – lives up to that promise, according to Tombizotwa Sibanda.

Located in Southern Africa, Zimbabwe (population in 2021: 16 million) borders Zambia, Mozambique, South Africa and Botswana.

A beautiful landlocked country, when you're not gawping at wildlife that ranges from rhino and giraffe to zebra and lions, you'll be gawping at landscape, which includes that thundering, monumental wall of water, the Victoria Falls.

Tombizotwa, or Zola, as is she is known, works as a social worker with Tusla, but her heart is firmly in her homeland, where she grew up in a family of five.

"I miss my family, the food, the smell of the earth when the rains hit the hard sun-baked soil and dust! I miss the beautiful landscape and the ever-blue sky! I miss the heat! I miss the people, 'the lingo' on the city streets. I miss the informal banter of the taxi drivers and the neighbour/umakhelwane as people greet each other or discuss daily issues as they go about their business," says Zola.

"I miss watching the sunset and the sound of the day ending and the evening routines in the farmlands and the smell of the smoke from the fires! I miss everything!"

Zola is from the Ndebele people, who can be traced back to Shaka Zulu, founder of Southern Africa's Zulu nation. The Shona and Ndebele tribes are the two biggest ethnicities; however other tribes include the Tonga, Chewa, Venda and Shangaan.

Zimbabwe is said to have 16 languages. Zola's native tongue is IsiNdebele, which alongside English and Shona are the most common spoken.

"What brought me to Ireland in 2002 was the need and want of a peaceful and better life for myself and family," she says. "Like many countries in the world, Zimbabwe has had a lot of challenges and difficulties and seeing this we wanted better for ourselves. I am very proud of my hometown, for its people, its warmth, the hospitality of the people of Bulawayo - what we call 'ubuntu' that community oneness and care for the other."

Subsistence and commercial farming are common, says Zola; while property, land and cattle are also very important as they symbolise wealth and inheritance for families.

The city is rich with traditions, including a deep respect for elders and ancestors. There is also a huge Christian following, as well as other faiths such as Islam.

Zola says that traditional dances, music and costumes differ from tribe to tribe. Drums are played at wedding ceremonies and gatherings to honour ancestors and to pray for the rains or a good harvest.

Perhaps Zola can provide a drumbeat that will help STOP the rain here!



ISISTSHWALA / SADZA



SERVES
4 People



PREP TIME
30 minutes



COOKING TIME
55 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS

Place maize meal in a pot with the 3 cups of water. Place on the hob at a low temperature and stir continuously until it becomes a thick paste - try not to let lumps form so the consistency is smooth. Slowly add boiled water (stop when you reach the consistency that you prefer) and allow to simmer, with the lid on until it reaches boiling point.

Reduce to a simmer for a further 15 minutes until you feel that the porridge is ready. Then stir in more maize meal to your desired thickness. Leave to cool and then serve with vegetables and stew of your choice.

The quantity of ingredients used will depend on how much stew you want.

Rub the meat in the mix and then brown in a pan. Once browned, boil the meat for about 40 minutes, gradually adding water until tender. Meantime, fry the chopped tomatoes, onions, peppers and garlic in a pan. When cooked, blend them to a soup-like consistency and add to the meat. Simmer for 15 minutes.

The stew is now ready to serve.

Wash the rice and then place in a pot and cover with water (two cups of water for every cup of rice) and cook slowly over a low heat until the rice is tender. If you want your rice to be spiced, I added turmeric, mild curry, paprika, pink salt - one small teaspoon for each.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups of Maize meal
- 3 cups of water (you can add to taste)
- 1.5 cups of long-grain white rice
- 2 cups water
- 2 onions
- 3 different peppers
- 6 tomatoes
- 3 carrots
- 1kg beef and 1kg oxtail OR 6 chicken drumsticks
- 5 garlic cloves

For the meat rub:

- 1 tsp black pepper
- 1 tsp salt
- Olive oil
- 1 tsp curry
- 1 tsp paprika



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Written and compiled by:
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