

Georgian Cooking Workshop with Bennett Clifford
Thursday, September 17, 2020 - 7:00-8:30pm

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RECIPES:

1. CHAKHOKHBILI (Chicken and tomato stew- Kakheti region)

• **Ingredients**

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Whole fryer chicken (~3-4lbs)○ Khmeli suneli* [<i>see Ingredient Note, page 4</i>] (2-3tbsp)○ Salt/pepper to taste○ Onion (1 large)○ Long hot, serrano, jalapeno or bell peppers (2-3)○ Neutral oil (sunflower seed oil preferred) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Garlic cloves (8-10)○ Dry white wine (0.25 cup)○ Tomato paste (1tbsp)○ Crushed tomatoes (1 large can)○ Bay leaves (2-3)○ Red pepper flakes to taste○ Fresh cilantro (1 cup packed)○ Fresh tarragon (0.25 cup packed) |
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• **Recipe**

- Break down chicken into individual pieces. Toss with khmeli suneli, salt, and pepper, and marinate for at least one hour.
- Dice onions and hot peppers. Finely chop the garlic.
- Set a heavy-bottomed, large skillet on medium-high heat and drizzle enough neutral oil to cover the bottom of the pan. When oil shimmers, sauté chicken pieces on both sides until browned. Remove chicken pieces from skillet and set aside on a plate.
- Add diced onions and peppers to skillet and sauté until the onions just begin to turn brown. Then add the chopped garlic and sauté until fragrant.
- Deglaze pan with dry white wine, scraping up any bits from the chicken or vegetables. Add tomato paste and crushed tomatoes.
- Return chicken pieces to the pan and partially submerge them in the stewing liquid. Add bay leaves.
- Turn heat up to high, bringing the mixture to a boil. When boiling, turn heat down to low and cover the pan. Let simmer for 30-40 minutes or until all chicken pieces are cooked through.
- When ready to serve, remove bay leaves. Taste the mixture and if necessary, add salt, pepper, red pepper, and/or khmeli suneli. Finely chop the cilantro and tarragon and add it to the pan.
- Serve hot.

2. PKHALI (Spinach and walnut paté- Guria region)

- **Ingredients**

- Spinach (1.5lbs)
- Walnuts, shelled (1.5 cups)
- Fresh cilantro (1 cup packed)
- Onion (1 small)
- Garlic cloves (4-6)
- Khmeli suneli* [*see Ingredient Note, page 4*] (1 tbsp)
- White wine vinegar (2tbsp)
- Sunflower, walnut, or canola oil (3tbsp)
- Salt/pepper to taste
- Pomegranate seeds

- **Recipe**

- Blanch or steam the spinach until it wilts, then shock in an ice water bath. Once spinach has cooled, using your hands squeeze out as much excess moisture as possible from the spinach.
- Add spinach, walnuts, cilantro, onion, garlic, khmeli suneli, white wine vinegar and neutral oil to a food processor and pulse until all ingredients are blended together. You can also use a meat grinder or a large mortar and pestle (the traditional method). Add salt and pepper to taste.
- Spread out mixture on a serving plate, or form small balls of the mixture and place them on the serving plate. Refrigerate before serving for at least 1 hour.
- Before serving, garnish with pomegranate seeds. Serve cold, either with Georgian cornbread (mchadi**) [*see Ingredient Note, page 4*] or less traditionally, as a dip with the cracker of your choice.

3. **KHACHAPURI** (Cheese-filled bread- variants from Imereti region and Samegrelo region)

• **Ingredients**

- Flour (4.5 cups) *plus more for rolling out*
- Kosher salt (2 tsp)
- Sugar (2 tsp)
- Water, lukewarm (1.5 cups)
- Dry instant yeast (0.75 tsp)
- Shredded mozzarella or sulguni cheese (1lb)
- Crumbled feta or Imeretian cheese (0.5-0.75lb)
- Butter or erbo (ghee)

• **Recipe**

- Using a stand mixer with a dough hook attachment, add the flour, salt, sugar, instant yeast and water to the bowl. Mix on low speed for 2-3 minutes until all ingredients are incorporated, and then turn the speed up to high for 3-4 minutes until a smooth but slightly sticky dough forms.
- Oil a mixing bowl and place the dough in the bowl. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and place in a warm area for about an hour or until the dough has approximately doubled in size.
- To make the filling, combine the shredded mozzarella or sulguni cheese with the crumbled feta or Imeretian cheese and mix well.
- When dough has risen, use a knife or bench scraper to cut the dough into 5 equal pieces. Take one piece and set aside the others, covering them with a towel so they don't dry out.
- Lightly flour a work surface. Using a rolling pin, roll out the dough into an approximately 10-inch round. Scoop $\frac{3}{4}$ of a cup of the filling and tightly pack it together until it forms a ball, and then place it in the center of the dough round. Stretch the edges of the dough so they form around the filling, and make multiple pleats and folds at the top of the dough to completely enclose the filling. Using your hands, very gently press the dough ball into a 7-inch round, starting from the center and working outward. Using your hands, a knife or a skewer, poke a small hole in the center of the dough once it is rolled out so that trapped air can escape from the dough while it cooks
 - This is the end of the assembly process for *imeruli khachapuri* (Imereti-style khachapuri). For *megruli khachapuri* (Samegrelo-style khachapuri), take an additional 0.5 cup of the filling and sprinkle it on top of the formed khachapuri.
- Heat a cast-iron pan or a griddle over medium-high heat on the stove.
 - For *imeruli khachapuri*, place the khachapuri on the cooking surface and cook for 3-4 minutes, or until the khachapuri is well-browned (with some charring). Flip the khachapuri and cook on the other side for 3-4 minutes. Using a brush, immediately spread melted butter or erbo (ghee) on the top side of the khachapuri. Serve immediately!
 - For *megruli khachapuri*, set oven to broiler setting. Place the bottom side of the khachapuri (without cheese) on the cooking surface and cook for 3-4 minutes, or until the khachapuri is well-browned. Then, move entire cast-iron pan or griddle into the oven, and broil until the cheese is melted and the top side of the bread is cooked through. Serve immediately!

INGREDIENT NOTES:

***KHMELI SUNELI** (Dried Georgian spices blend)

“Khmeli suneli” (literally: “dried spices”) is a combination of several spices frequently used in Georgian cooking, packaged conveniently for commercial markets. While blends vary, almost all mixes contain ground coriander seed, blue fenugreek (*utskho suneli*), dried red chili, and dried marigold. In Georgia, these spices are almost always sold separately, and home cooks blend the specific mixture of seasonings and ratios that they like best for different dishes. In the former Soviet Union, and increasingly in the West, these spices are packaged together as “khmeli suneli.”

In the United States, I recommend purchasing a pre-mixed khmeli suneli blend, despite its less authentic status. For a more authentic variety, you can make khmeli suneli yourself, and I’ve included a recipe below. But since I’ve found certain spices (blue fenugreek and dried marigold) to be difficult to source in the US and substitutes to be detrimental to the flavor of the recipe, it’s much easier to just buy the mix.

Here’s how you can acquire khmeli suneli:

- Many Russian and Eastern European markets have pre-mixed khmeli suneli, usually in packet form. In the Greater Boston Area, [Baza Foods](#) markets stock khmeli suneli packets (look for the Cyrillic Хмели-сунели)
- Amazon ships it. I like [this brand](#) and [this brand](#).
- You can make it yourself. Amazon and Baza Foods sell [blue fenugreek/utskho suneli](#), which is different from the fenugreek seeds that are widely available in the U.S. Dried marigold is often sold as [tea](#). Recipe:
 - Dried ground coriander (3 parts)
 - Ground blue fenugreek (3 parts)
 - Dried ground marigold (2 parts)
 - Cayenne pepper (1 part)
 - Mixes will also usually have some form of dried herbs. I recommend 1 part made from some combination of summer savory, marjoram, dried parsley, dried dill, or dried basil.

****MCHADI** (Georgian cornbread) – (to serve with Pkhali) - Here is a good recipe: <https://georgianrecipes.net/2013/03/29/mchadi-georgian-cornbread/>

Many other good Georgian recipes are available on that same website: <https://georgianrecipes.net/>