

A mi abuela,
Ana Guillen Palma

In memory of my friend, my mentor,
David Gitlitz

CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-------------|
| Foreword by David Gitlitz | viii |
| Introduction..... | 1 |
| Bread and Snacks..... | 9 |
| <i>El Pan de los Siete Cielos</i> : The Bread of the Seven Heavens..... | 10 |
| <i>Mufakhhkar</i> : The bagel from Syria..... | 12 |
| <i>Empanaditas</i> with spinach and cheese..... | 14 |
| The making of <i>peot</i> : The <i>challah</i> of Spain in the thirteenth century | 16 |
| Baked <i>muğabbana</i> : Cheese pies | 20 |
| Falafel: Simple chickpea croquettes | 22 |
| <i>Matza</i> : Unleavened bread | 24 |
| <i>Calentita</i> : Chickpea flour cake..... | 26 |
| Corn <i>tortillas</i> : A Passover Mexican crypto-Jewish dish..... | 28 |
| Vegetables and Eggs..... | 33 |
| <i>Güesmo</i> : A Swiss chard dish | 34 |
| <i>Huebos hammados</i> : Red hard-boiled eggs..... | 36 |
| Eggplant <i>almodrote</i> : Eggplant, garlic, and cheese dip..... | 38 |
| <i>Acelgas con garbanzos</i> : Swiss chard stew with chickpeas..... | 40 |
| Eggplants | 43 |
| Eggplant <i>isfiriya</i> croquettes | 44 |
| <i>Almoronia</i> : Eggplant and meatballs | 46 |
| Sweet fried eggplants to break the fast | 48 |
| <i>Caçuelas</i> : Eggplants with saffron and Swiss chard for a <i>converso</i> wedding..... | 50 |
| The Explicitly Jewish Dishes between the Western cookbook <i>Kitāb al-ṭabīḥ</i> and the Eastern cookbook <i>Kitāb al-waṣf al-aṭ'ima al-mu'tāda</i>..... | 53 |
| “A Jewish dish of chicken,” with stuffing..... | 54 |
| “A Jewish dish of chicken”..... | 56 |
| “Jewish partridge,” stuffed | 58 |
| “A Jewish dish of partridge” | 60 |
| “A stuffed buried Jewish dish”..... | 62 |
| “A Jewish dish of eggplants stuffed with meat” | 64 |
| <i>Makābīb la'nūhā al-yahūd</i> : “Meatballs cursed by the Jews” | 66 |
| Meat and Fish..... | 71 |
| <i>Adefina</i> : The iconic slow-cooked chickpea and beef stew | 72 |
| <i>Cecina</i> and <i>namkasūd</i> : Dried meat | 74 |
| <i>Tharīd</i> : Thick soup with unleavened bread and chicken | 76 |

| | |
|---|------------|
| <i>Oriza</i> : Wheat grain and chicken stew | 78 |
| Meat pie of the Fernandes <i>conversos</i> from Bahia..... | 80 |
| <i>Converso</i> fish stew | 82 |
| <i>Converso</i> fish pie | 84 |
| Two Yom Kippur Menus of <i>Conversos</i> from Mexico | 89 |
| Gaspar Váez, 1640..... | 90 |
| Salomón Machorro, 1650..... | 92 |
| Soups | 95 |
| <i>Fidāwīsh</i> : Short vermicelli noodles with tuna, saffron, and mint..... | 96 |
| <i>Puchero</i> : Maimonides' chicken soup | 98 |
| Maimonides' <i>Regimen of Health</i> Menu | 103 |
| Green vegetables sauté..... | 104 |
| <i>Gazpachuelo</i> : Lemon broth..... | 106 |
| Quince, Pear, Apple, and Pomegranate Juice..... | 108 |
| Desserts and Pastries | 113 |
| <i>Murakkaba</i> : The Moroccan <i>mufleta</i> | 114 |
| <i>Muhallabiyye</i> : Almond rice pudding | 116 |
| <i>Nuegados</i> : Orange and honey fried dough | 118 |
| <i>Isfenġ</i> : The Andalusian donut | 120 |
| <i>Maqrūt</i> : Fried diamonds with dates and walnuts..... | 122 |
| <i>Hojuelas</i> , <i>fazuelos</i> or <i>fijuelas</i> | 124 |
| Rice and honey pudding..... | 128 |
| <i>Berenjenas confitadas con canela</i> : Candied eggplants with cinnamon | 130 |
| <i>Neulas encanonadas</i> : Brik pastry rolls with almonds and honey | 132 |
| Maimonides Cake | 136 |
| My Recipes Based on Historical Sources | 141 |
| Manioc cheese balls with candied <i>pimentas biquinho vermelhas</i> | 142 |
| Cottage cheesecake | 144 |
| <i>Batbot</i> : Flat chewy Moroccan bread | 146 |
| <i>Tortitas de acelga</i> : Chickpea flour croquettes with Swiss chard | 148 |
| <i>Pão de queijo</i> : Tapioca cheese balls | 150 |
| Rose apple tart..... | 152 |
| Spinach <i>mina</i> | 154 |
| Acknowledgements | 156 |
| Bibliography | 157 |
| List of Illustrations..... | 160 |
| Index..... | 161 |
| About the Author | 164 |

FOREWORD

Like many cookbooks, the one that you have in your hands is a miscellany. Unlike most of them, you will find that this one comes with a heart, a spine, a soul. Its spine is the resilience of a thousand years of Sephardi cooks, living in minority enclaves surrounded by powerful, attractive, and frequently unfriendly majority cultures; cooks who retained the essence of their Jewish culinary heritage and transmitted it from mother to daughter, and sometimes even from parents of both genders to their diverse children. Its heart beats to the rhythms of the Jewish week and liturgical year, Shabbat, Sukkot, Pesach, Yom Kippur, the fasts and feasts, the tables around which Jewish families gathered from season to season and from century to century. Its soul is nurtured in a faith that despite the hatred and fear, the Inquisitions and the pogroms, the silent discriminations and the seductive attractions of assimilation, the kitchens of Sephardi descendants in Spain, in Portugal, and in all the lands of the great Sephardi diaspora are, and will forever be, cooking Jewish.

Hélène Jawhara Piñer is perhaps uniquely prepared to confect this cookbook. She is an accomplished chef and an experienced communicator. Her doctorate, from the French University of Tours, acknowledges her work in two intimately intertwined fields, medieval history and the history of food. Her skills as both a chef and teacher have been frequently showcased at festivals and on television.

Most of us are familiar with the broad outlines of the history of the Jews of Spain and Portugal. How their origin dates back to second century Roman expulsion of the Jews from Jerusalem and Palestine. How these displaced Jews often struggled during their early centuries in the Iberian Peninsula under Romans and Visigoths, and how they thrived during the 800-year rule by Muslim kingdoms. How the tiny Christian enclaves in the peninsular north resisted the Muslims and gradually pushed south and grew into the large kingdoms of Castile and Aragon, and their smaller neighbors Navarre and Portugal. How the Jews who had now come to be living under Christian rule were increasingly persecuted. How when in the late 1400s Castile and Aragon united under Ferdinand and Isabel, the self-styled Catholic Monarchs, Jews were offered the choice of conversion or exile. And how the religious behavior of those who chose to convert and remain as Christians was rigorously policed by the Inquisition.



INTRODUCTION

This cookbook is unique. It is not based on family recipes but on the history of the Jewish people from Spain, and by extension the Sephardim, from the thirteenth century to the present day. It is a cookbook derived from historical sources—be they culinary, judicial, literary, or medical—from the East and the West. Its recipes were prepared over five years as part of my doctoral research in history, which traces and uncovers the existence of dishes prepared for and by Sephardic Jews. This is also a cookbook that reveals social issues of the time: the vast majority of these dishes were prepared in societies rife with anti-Semitism, where food served as a tool to denounce the liturgical practices of the Jews.

Origin

Sephardi: in order to understand the subject of this cookbook, we need to remember what this term means. *Sefarad* is the Hebrew word for “Spain.” The name goes back to the book of Obadiah (עובדיה) verse 20, where the terms “Tsarfath” and “Sefarad” appear:

... וגלת החל—הזה לבני ישראל אשר—כנענים עד צרפת, וגלת ירושלים אשר בספרד ירשו ...

Although those terms in context must refer to places in Mesopotamia, in medieval Europe the names *Tsarfath* and *Sefarad* were assigned by Jews respectively and retroactively to France and Spain so as to claim that Jews were present in the West *before* Jesus was crucified, and therefore could bear no responsibility for the act.

Sephardim is the name originally given to the Jews from Spain and Portugal after 1492, and was later applied to all Jews of the Iberian diaspora. *Conversos* referred to anyone who converted, as well as their descendants, regardless of whether they continued to self-identify as Jewish or Christian. The word was used to indicate Jewish ancestry. Initially, at least in theory, it was value-neutral. *Crypto-Jews*, or *Judaizers* (as the Inquisition called them), were newly converted Christians (i.e. *conversos*) who still evidenced Jewish beliefs or practices.

Jews are documented in Iberia from the second century until the fifteenth under Roman, Visigothic, Muslim, and Christian rule. Their living conditions in Christian Spain deteriorated from the eleventh century up until March 31, 1492, when the Alhambra Decree ordered the Jews to either convert or accept expulsion. This act was part of a plan by the Catholic monarchs, Isabella I of Castile and Ferdinand II of Aragon, to unify Spain principally

through religion. The Inquisition—aimed at identifying converts who continued to practice their former religion in secret—had been created a few years earlier (1478).

The exiles left Spain initially for Portugal, southern France, Italy, and Morocco, and later for Ottoman Turkey (which included Greece) and other eastern Mediterranean countries. Some also crossed the Atlantic illegally, as Jews were banned from travelling to the territories of the New World. Indeed, one of the main tenets of the Inquisition was to stop Jews from spreading their religion in this “new” part of the world, since the Catholic kings feared this would taint their efforts to convert indigenous peoples to Christianity. However, we know that Sephardi people did cross the Atlantic to Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, the Dominican Republic, and other countries. *Conversos* from the Americas were also called *marranos*, a pejorative term sometimes used to label Sephardic crypto-Jews. *Marranos* are characterized by a mix of Jewish and Catholic practices. Nonetheless, these different factions of Jews are all considered to be Sephardim.

Sources

For more than five years, I have been analyzing the recipes described in the three cookbooks of the Iberian Peninsula: two written in Arabic in the thirteenth century, the *Kitāb al-ṭabīḥ* and the *Fuḍālat al-ḥiwān*, and one written in Catalan in the fourteenth century, the *Sent Soví*, for a total of over a thousand recipes. Throughout the Middle Ages until the nineteenth century, only eight recipes have been found that are specifically identified as “Jewish” in their name. All the information available on Jewish cooking and practices of the time is found in other kinds of sources. The ways we can identify a certain dish as Sephardic lies in how the dish was cooked, the feast for which it was consumed, the way it was prepared, the ingredients it contained, the source of the meat, the type of wine consumed, and so on.

In my research, I carried out a careful reading and meticulous analysis of these recipes and coupled it with the study of other sources: literary (the *Libro de Buen amor*, the *Cancionero de Baena*, the *Copla a Pedro González*, and the *Cancionero general*), scholarly (dictionaries, Humach), medical (the *Regimen of Health* by Maimonides), judicial (Inquisition trials)—all of which reinforce a historical connection with the Jews. This research and cross-breeding of historical sources allowed me to establish links between the dishes and Sephardic culinary techniques. The analysis and comparison of historical sources mentioning these dishes attest to the transmission of these dishes and practices in the Iberian Peninsula as well as around the diaspora today.

Naturally, the way these recipes were compiled and presented in these various sources is very different to what we expect from recipes today. For

example, there is rarely any mention of quantities of the various ingredients. It was through a careful comparison of disparate material, coupled with background research on agricultural and medicinal practices, that I was able to piece together how these dishes were made. The aim of this book is to offer as close a reconstruction as possible of what the dishes looked and tasted like, in the tradition of the fascinating and inspiring book *A Drizzle of Honey* by David Gitlitz and Linda Kay Davidson.

I chose not to include foods that did not exist in the territory in question at the time, such as tomato, pepper, potato, or chili, which were not present in the Iberian Peninsula before the sixteenth century and were only regularly consumed a century later; only corn is mentioned, as part of a recipe found in the records of an Inquisition trial in Mexico.

Jewish Holidays

Food and Jewish holidays are interwoven. In Jewish culture, talking about food means talking about religion, and talking about Jewishness means talking about licit and illicit foods. The dietary laws of Kashrut enshrined in the Torah impose a framework for the practice of Judaism. This is also the common thread in the transmission and permanence of culinary uses in the different Jewish communities: all Jewish holidays require specific preparations to be made, including culinary ones, and often involve fasting. This book intends to show how these special culinary traditions and requirements both revealed the Jews' identity to the Inquisition, and allowed it to survive through the centuries.

Shabbat

The place occupied by the Shabbat and the culinary practices of this day of rest, celebrated on the seventh day of each week, is so important that I thought it needed a special explanation. Shabbat begins Friday night before sundown and ends at nightfall on Saturday. During this period, no work—including cooking—is allowed, according to the Torah, and it requires special arrangements that the Inquisition clearly noticed: bringing olive oil to the synagogue, eating cold dishes for lunch on Saturday, cooking in separated pots (e.g., with pork and lard for the non-Jewish servants and without for the Jewish lords), dressing up on Friday night, eating sealed, stuffed dishes that would not reveal their content, and so on. These Shabbat practices were respected by Jews everywhere, and sadly resulted in trials and condemnation on the other side of the Atlantic as well.

Maimonides

Moshe Ben Maimon (1135–1204) is the most famous of the Jewish scholars of Medieval Spain. Known by the acronym RaMBaM or Maimonides, this philosopher, doctor, theologian, and rabbi was born in the city of Cordoba,

in Andalusia (southern Spain), at the beginning of the twelfth century. He fled his hometown because of the persecutions of the Berber Almohad dynasty. Exiled in Morocco in 1160, he took refuge in Akko (1165) and Jerusalem. Finally, he moved to Egypt (1166) and ended his days in the city of Fostat. Maimonides wrote on a vast range of topics, all imbued with the Judaism he practiced, such as *Mishneh Torah*, the *Guide for the Perplexed*, and the *Regimen of Health*. It is particularly this latter work that highlights Maimonides' interest in food, medicine, and diet, and it is for this reason, coupled with his living in Spain at the time the *Kitāb al-ṭabīḥ* was written, that he is so important for my cookbook, as he makes recommendations about the diet that everyone should follow to stay healthy.

Inquisition trials

You might wonder how there can be a relation between the Inquisition and the cookbook you hold in your hands. As we mentioned, in 1478, the Spanish monarchs established the court of the Inquisition, which was tasked with investigating and unmasking the *conversos*, or crypto-Jews, who continued to practice Judaism in secret. In particular, the Inquisition targeted celebrations of Jewish religious festivals, as well as adherence to the dietary laws of the Kashrut, to identify and denounce *converso* Jews. The censors collected information on illegal traditions: those who continued to light Shabbat candles on Friday evenings, bring oil to the synagogue, dress in clean clothes on Friday nights, pray in Hebrew, refrain from working on Saturdays, and attending Mass on Sundays were accused of breaking the law.

But another trigger was their culinary practices, which were easily observable and were thought to indicate a latent or a purposeful adherence to the beliefs of their former religion. The Inquisitors were mainly looking at four categories of culinary data: foods that followed Kosher rules like avoiding pork and shellfish; special foods like matza for Jewish holidays; any food prepared on Friday and warmed over to eat on the Shabbat; and any food that was served in conjunction with a Jewish observance, like a birth, wedding, funeral, or concluding a Jewish fast day. The courts then recorded all the facts, noting in writing the food and culinary practices of the Jews: food names, techniques, preparation—everything the Jews ate and the ways in which they ate were recorded during the trials. This is why reading and analyzing the trial records of the Inquisition was a major source for this study. The Spanish records used for this book are those kept at the Archivo Histórico Nacional in Madrid. They mainly concern the northern cities of the territory, such as Ávila, Ciudad Real, Almazán, and Soria, and they are published in the multiple volumes of the *Fontes Iudaeorum Regni Castellae*. As for sources on the Inquisition in Mexico, I used the Archivo General de la Nación of Mexico. Finally, Heitor Furtado de Mendoza's

books *Denúncias de Pernambuco (1593–1595)* and *Primeira visitaço do Santo Ofício ás partes do Brasil: Denúncias da Bahia (1591–1593)* offered me essential information concerning the Inquisition in Brazil.

My creations

Jewish cuisines are all about adaptation, evolution, and transmission, which is why I decided to also include some of my own original recipes. They are a few samples of dishes made in accordance with the laws of Kashrut and the Jewish holiday traditions, the fruit of my own creativity as a Sephardic chef. Almost all my family members on my mother’s side are bakers, pastry chefs, cooks, butchers, or caterers. I inherited my passion for making French pastries from them. On my father’s side, my grandmother was and still is an important source of my culinary inspiration, for she is a master at simple and delicious cuisine with a perfect combination of flavors. My ideas also come from meeting other lovers of history and food, particularly during my conference trips: Tel Aviv, São Paulo, Philadelphia, Madrid, Casablanca, and New York are only some of the many cities I traveled to with a wonderfully rich food heritage that fuels my creativity in adapting history to modern flavors. And of course, historical sources are a great part of my inspiration, particularly for holidays such as Shabbat, Yom Kippur, Rosh HaShana, and Shavuot that include some of my favorite foods—eggplant, spinach, olive oil, cheese, bread, coriander, cinnamon, garlic, and honey.

To eat is to remember

This book is the result of five years of doctoral research during which I analyzed more than two thousand different pieces of evidence from different sources relating to Jewish history. For each food category, I include a brief introduction and some reflections on the evolution of the recipes and customs in the Sephardic diasporas. In doing so, I explain the importance of the Jewish holidays and the significance of religion in food and culinary practices. Each recipe is presented, discussed, and illustrated to lend cachet to *Sefarad*.

For me, a dish tastes differently when you know where it really comes from. Its history makes each bite more intense, more delicious.

Sephardi: Cooking the History aims to be the reference cookbook for a sample of recipes of the Jews of Spain and the diaspora from the thirteenth century onwards. It presents the Sephardim of the world as the best representatives and witnesses of a cuisine that continues to live and thrive today.







BREAD AND SNACKS

“One of these [beneficial generalizations] is that [among] the good foods that ought to be adopted by everyone who desires the continuation of his health, [is] wheaten bread properly prepared [...]. What I mean by properly prepared bread is that it should be made from fully ripened wheat, dried of its superfluous moisture, in which spoilage from age has not begun. The bread should be made of coarse flour; that is to say, the husk should not be removed and the bran should not be refined by sifting. It should be well raised and noticeably salty. It should be well worked during kneading, and should be baked in the oven. This is the bread that to the physicians is properly prepared; it is the best of foods.”

Maimonides,
Regimen of Health, Chapter I (1198)

El Pan de los Siete Cielos

The Bread of the Seven Heavens

Serves 6

Time: 1 hour

For the dough:

- 1 ⅓ cup (200 g) flour
- 1 ⅓ cup (200 g) semolina
- 1 ½ tsp salt
- 1 tbsp fresh yeast
- 1 cup (200 ml) lukewarm water

For the stuffing:

- 1 ⅓ cup (200 g) cheese (like feta)
- ¼ cup (60 g) olive oil
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 clove of garlic
- 5 leaves mint
- 1 strand thyme
- pomegranate (optional)
- honey (optional)

There is no medieval written source for this dish. This is not surprising, since there is no book that refers specifically and openly to Jewish culinary practices, due to fears of religious persecution. The dish originated in the Iberian Peninsula, and was later eaten in Salonika when the Jews migrated there after their official expulsion from Spain in 1492. It is traditionally prepared for Shavuot, also known as the “Feast of Weeks,” or “Pentecost,” a Jewish holiday marking the beginning of the wheat harvest and commemorating the sacred giving of the Torah to Moses and the people of Israel on Mount Sinai. There is a relation between bread and Heaven in the Torah: in Exodus (16, 4) God says to Moses, “I will rain down bread for you from the sky.”

Even in the detailed Inquisition records of Spain, I did not find any information related to foods for Shavuot specifically. However, one interesting finding dates back to a trial in 1484 in the north of the country: it mentions that conversos were keeping a fifty-day feast which they called “the giving of the Law.” In another trial record from 1501, there is reference to a converso who was denounced for spending “all night, until the morning, cooking” to celebrate Pascua del Espíritu Santo (Shavuot or Pentecost). For Christians, this holiday is celebrated seven weeks after Easter. For Jews, Shavuot is celebrated seven weeks after Passover. Another relevant mention of Jewish recalcitrance appears in a trial from seventeenth-century Mexico, a Spanish colonial territory, where conversos were denounced for celebrating this holiday forty days after Passover.

The significance of this bread’s seven rings is interesting: some sources indicate it refers to the seven stages of holiness through which the soul passes when the body dies. But it could also symbolize the traditional seven-day waiting period after Passover, when Jews await the celebration of Shavuot and the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai. Or maybe the rings represent the seven days during Passover when eating leavened bread is forbidden. The bread’s shape likely represents Mount Sinai.



Even if there is no official historical source for this dish, I decided to recreate it and use cheese to stuff the bread, as cheese and other dairy products are traditionally consumed for Shavuot.

To make the filling, lightly crush the cheese in a bowl using a fork. Add the olive oil, crushed mint and garlic, thyme and salt. Leave the mixture in the fridge while you start on the dough.

Now start on the dough: dissolve the yeast in 3 generous tablespoons of lukewarm water. In a bowl, mix the flour, the semolina and the salt. Pour in the water and yeast. Knead for 10 to 15 minutes and cover with a towel. Let the dough rise for an hour.

Roll out the dough with a rolling pin until you have 1 hand wide and 5 hands long.

Distribute the filling along to the long edge, and roll up the dough.

Stretch the roll into a cylinder 2 cm in diameter (1 inch).

Now, grease your hands with olive oil and arrange the dough into a tall spiral, to create Mount Sinai.

Brush the bread with olive oil and sprinkle it with thyme and mint.

Line a roasting pan with baking paper, and leave the bread to rise for about 30 minutes.

Bake in a 375°F (190°C) oven for 30 minutes.

Mufakhkhar

The bagel from Syria

Makes 10

Time: 2 hours 30 minutes

- 3 ¼ cups (500 g) flour
- 1 tbsp (20 g) fresh yeast
- ⅔ cup (150 ml) lukewarm milk
- ⅓ cup (generous, 85 ml) lukewarm water
- 2 egg whites
- ½ tbsp (10 g) salt
- ½ tbsp (10 g) sugar
- egg wash
- seeds (poppy, sesame, nigella, linseed)

The Kitāb al-wuṣḥa ilā l-habīb fi wasf al-tayyabāt wa l-tīb (Scents and Flavors the Banqueter Favors) is a cookery book compiled in Syria in the thirteenth century. It includes a section about ka'ak (small baked goods) "of several varieties," one of which I propose here, the mufakhkhar. The Kitāb al-wuṣḥa instructs us to "knead the dough [made with flour, milk and sourdough] with the spices [fenugreek and mastic, toasted anise, nigella seeds, coriander and sesame seeds] and leave to rise fully, then form rings. Fill a pan with water, and bring to a full boil. Put the rings on a dowel, lower them into the water, remove, and put on a tray." This thirteenth-century mufakhkhar recipe is probably the first for what is nowadays known as a bagel.

Dissolve the yeast in 3 generous tablespoons of lukewarm water.

Mix the flour and the milk in a bowl. Pour in the rest of the water. Add the sugar, salt and egg whites.

Add the fresh yeast, dissolved.

Knead for 10 to 15 minutes.

Cover with a napkin and let the dough rise for an hour and a half.

Then, using your fists, punch as much air out of the dough as possible. Take it out of the container and knead it for two minutes. Leave to rest.

From a sheet of parchment paper, cut out 10 squares, 6 × 6 inches in size. Sprinkle each square very lightly with flour.

Divide the dough into 10 balls, and poke a hole in the middle of each. Put each ring on its piece of parchment paper. Cover and let the bagels rise for 20 minutes.

Turn on the oven at 410°F (210°C).

Bring some salted water to the boil in a large pan.

Take one of the pieces of parchment paper with its bagel on it. Turn it upside down into the water. Peel off the paper very carefully. Cook for 3 minutes on each side in the simmering water, two at a time if you have room.

Line a tray with parchment paper. Put the bagels on it and brush with egg wash. Sprinkle with your favorite seeds.

Bake for 15–20 minutes.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

Приобрести книгу можно

в интернет-магазине

«Электронный универс»

e-Univers.ru