

Tanur making

The term *tanur* refers to a variety of ovens, the most commonly known is cylindrical clay used in cooking and baking. *Tanurs* are installed subterranean or above the ground. *Tanur* making belong to the same category of craft as pottery making as it is traditionally made from clay.

For *tanur* making choice of clay is important and usually clean soil is chosen. When the mud is prepared for making *tanur* some animal wool is added to it so that it won't crack or be too fragile. It is stomped thoroughly for hours until

a homogenous mixture is achieved and than it is covered with a cloth and left for two days to mature.

Tanur has three main parts. The first part is called "takhtai avval", which is 300x35 or 40 cm. This piece after being flattened is attached from two extremities into a round shape. After leaving



it for 3 or 4 hours to get semi-dry it is then shaped and hammered softly to smooth and strengthen the wall capacity. Then a second layer “takhati duvum” is also shaped and attached to the first part. The second layer will be cone-shaped and then also hammered to attach into the first layer. Afterwards the third layer, called mouthpiece is prepared and attached from the top side of the conical figure. All the joint sections are worked out thoroughly to prevent cracking or breakage and the “mouth of *tanur*” is given a rolled-up round shape. The *tanur*'s mouth is usually 50 cm in diameter and *tanurs* used for baking *sambusa* has 65 to 70 cm diameter. In addition, depending on the request of the customer the size of the *tanur* can be adjusted.

Tanur after the first stage of shaping is then left in the sun to dry and to enforce the drying charcoals are used to burn slowly from inside. After 4 or 4 days *tanur* is elevated and put on top

of bricks for the lower part of the *tanur* also dry and the air circulate through it.

Tanur installation has also its peculiar requirements. Usually two parallel brick walls of 80-90 cm tall are laid. The perimeter of the wall will be 100 cm and the space between them 120 cm. It is usually installed horizontally with the back of *tanur* directed towards Kaaba (Mecca) so that the baker when working will be facing the Kaaba.

After installation firewood is lit and kept burning for 15 to 18 hours. After it is completely baked and dried another 6 hours high fire is lit in *tanur* to heat it to the highest temperature possible after which *tanur* will attain red ceramic color. In one hour after the firing procedure then the first bread in the new *tanur* is baked.

Depending on its workmanship and quality one *tanur* can serve from 10 to 15 years in a household.



