

## Traditional desserts

Desserts and sweet dishes make a significant part of the Tajik cuisine. The most widespread forms of desserts are halva, crystallized candies, *nishalo* - a frothy sweet made from egg white and sugar and herbs, grape syrup and jams. In addition, each types of desserts and sweet dishes are sub grouped by the main ingredients that they contain, for example for there are multiple types of halva distinguished by its main ingredients such as white halva (which has not been caramelized when baking), red halva (caramelized or with food coloring), milk halva, walnut halva, almond halva, carrot halva etc.

*Nabot* is one of the kinds of national candies of yellowish color as well as representing the craft of producing glassy crystals. The producing way is the following: two parts of sugar and one part of water are put into a cauldron and are boiled on a very slow fire. Syrup is formed from them. Syrup is stirred and boiled till foam appears, then the foam is put off and some egg is added into the syrup, the syrup continues being boiled and appearing foam is constantly put off.

Then, in special cauldron, cotton threads are parallel tightened, gluing the ends of the threads

to the cauldron. These threads are poured with syrup boiling. In an hour, a thin layer appears on the syrup. Cauldron is shut with a special lid. In this condition, the cauldron is left for some seventy-two or eighty hours. During this period sugar crystals are formed around the threads, which gradually will be increased for account of the parts newly added to them. Crystallized ingots are put in the dish to be dried.

The remainder of the sugar syrup that has not crystalized are called *parvarda* is used in culinary.



White halva is one of the wide spread forms of halva prepared for festive days, including commemorative feasts for departed. It is common to all the regions of Tajikistan. It is made from sheep tail fat or butter, flour and powdered sugar. First butter or sheep fat is added into cauldron and after melting flour is added in slightly fried. After it begins to boil up it is removed from the fire and let to cool down a bit. After it cools down powder sugar is added and than it is thoroughly mixed until the entire mass turns white and sugar melts into the fat and flour mix.

Red halva is usually prepared for the weddings. When the groom's family brings presents to the bride's house they will bring red halva. Red halva is prepared in cotton seed oil. Than soft

dough is prepared and added to heated oil and is mixed and cooked until it begins turning red. This, in common language is called «blooming of halva». Afterwards the cauldron where halva is prepared is taken off from the fire and sugar syrup is added and mixed thoroughly. If needed it is put on the fire again for a short time to allow all the ingredients to mix and absorb thoroughly. It takes 3 to 4 hours to prepare the red halva.

*Nishalo* is one of the frothy desserts prepared for both festive and mourning feasts. In



particular, *nishalo* is regularly consumed during the Ramadan month. In this month *nishalo* is sold in halva markets. *Nishalo* is prepared in the following manner: first some licorice root is boiled in water and after being filtered it is let to chill. The licorice water than is added some egg whites and beaten well until it become foamy. The warm sugar syrup is than added to the foam produced from licorice root and egg white and beaten further until it becomes thick and frothy.

The sweet table of Tajik cuisine is very specific, variable and extensive. Tajiks as well as other nations of the Central Asia, do not know a dessert as a final dish. Sweets, drinks and fruit which in Europe crown any meal are served twice during meals in Tajikistan, and sometimes even three times - they are served before, after and during meals.



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