



# THE TASTE AND SMELL OF DILIJAN



DILIJAN  
COMMUNITY  
CENTER

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Dear reader,

The following manual contains a number of recipes representing Dilijan cuisine. The recipes, the method of preparation and the additional information about the dishes, were collected within the framework of the "Dilijan Archive" project of the "Dilijan Community Center" NGO, aimed at reviving and preserving the distinctiveness of Dilijan cuisine.

In the scope of the project, a group of teenage volunteers of Dilijan Community Center were given the opportunity to develop their research skills and improve their knowledge of English and Russian, so that they could participate in conducting the research and further translating the collected information. Thus, the participant-teenagers had a direct contribution to the preservation of the historical and cultural heritage of their town.

The research was carried out during the months of February-June, 2021. The study was conducted by selecting and interviewing about 40 residents of Dilijan community.

Dilijan cuisine is a part of the traditional Armenian cuisine and depending on the geographical position and its flora, Dilijan has its own unique approaches to cooking. Dilijan, located at the crossroads of the Silk Road and surrounded by the mountains of the Caucasus Minor, has long been a resort center for not only local Armenian people, but also tourists from around the world, who have left their influence on Dilijan cuisine. The cuisine was enriched by the Russian Molokans who resettled in Dilijan at the time of Empress Catherine II of the Russian Empire, Western Armenians from the Middle East who repatriated after the Patriotic War, Kurds who settled in Dilijan in the second half of the 20th century, and tourists from the Soviet Union republics who organized their vacation in Dilijan.

The study revealed a number of interesting recipes, but not all of them are included in this book. We selected those recipes which are the most practical in terms of preparation. We hope that in the future, we will have the opportunity to publish a more extensive work further detailing the beauty of Dilijan cuisine.

Special thanks to the residents of Dilijan community who supported and shared their valuable information with us.

# Desserts



# RICE WITH PLUM CONSERVE

Dilijan cuisine has been enriched with this unique recipe thanks to Theresa Bagratovna, the wife of the famous doctor Gurgen Bagaturov (both of them originally from Baku). Theresa moved to Dilijan in the second half of the 20th century and while receiving medical treatment, she met her husband, doctor Bagaturov. They got married and spent the rest of their lives in Dilijan. This dish can be made with any type of rice and served with a plum conserve.



## Ingredients

- 1 cup of long-grain rice
- 1.5 cup of water
- Plum conserve
- 1 tablespoon of butter
- Salt

## Method

- Wash and drain the rice.
- Melt the butter in a saucepan. Add the rice to it and mix them together.
- Add 1.5 boiling water to the rice and salt to taste. Cover the lid and reduce the heat to simmer. Cook until the water is vaporized. (The amount of water depends on the quality of rice. Follow the boiling process. If the water has vaporized but the rice is not cooked yet, then add at least half a cup of boiling water. Cook until the rice is soft and well-cooked).
- This pilaf is considered "sweet" because it is served with dry plums or plum conserve. Decorate the plate with plums and add the plum conserve sauce to the cooked rice.



# GATA DILIJANESE

Gata is the oldest Armenian pastry, the first written mention of which can be found in the fables of Vardan Aygektsi (12th-13th century). In Dilijan, gata was also considered the centerpiece of the table and was found widespread. The traditional Dilijan family had its own gata ornament. The families had wooden gatas with patterns - the names of family members or symbolic images- engraved on them which were used to decorate the gata before placing it in the tonir (underground clay stove). These ornaments can be found on display in the Folk Art Museum of Dilijan.

To this day, gata is always made for both sad and happy occasions. Grandmothers or housewives, when baking a gata for Easter, put a coin in a gata. After baking, the gata is distributed among the family members. According to tradition, whoever gets the piece with the coin will be successful the following year.



## Ingredients

### For the dough

- 300 g butter
- 3 cups of flour
- 3 egg yolks
- 1 cup of matsoon (yogurt)
- 1 teaspoon of soda
- 1 tablespoon of vinegar
- 1 pinch of salt

### For khoriz (butter filling)

- 4 tablespoons of melted butter
- 1 cup of sugar
- 0.5 cup of flour
- 20 g vanilla powder

## Method

### Make the dough first:

- Add egg yolks and salt to pre-softened butter and beat well.
- Dissolve soda in vinegar and mix it to matsoon (yogurt).
- Add enough flour to the mixture to make a soft, non-stick dough. Depending on the quality, 3 cups of flour may or may not be enough. You need to get the dough that is soft and easy to roll out.
- Divide the dough into 4 equal balls. Cover with a towel, leave them to rest for 30 minutes.

### Meanwhile make the khoriz (butter filling):

- Add 1 cup of sugar to 4 tablespoons of melted butter and mix until the mass is white.
- Then add  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of flour and 20 g vanilla powder. Mix well and divide it into 4 balls.
- Roll out the rested dough balls. Place some khoriz (butter filling) on the flat layers and spread with your hands or knife.
- Combine the four edges of the dough in one knot. Flip the dough so that the knot is underneath. Roll out the filled dough into a round shape. You now have gata.
- Brush dough with yolk and design with a fork. Make holes with a fork so that the filling bakes well. Bake it at 200°C/ 392°F.
- If you want to get a bigger gata size, you can make 1 gata from 2 balls of dough with the appropriate portion of khoriz (butter filling).



# HALVAH DILIJANESE

The secret of halvah made in Dilijan is "rezhan" (homemade milk cream). It is the favourite dessert of locals living in the mountains. Try and you will be convinced that the halvah made with "rezhan" has a unique taste.



## Ingredients

- 100 g "rezhan" (homemade milk cream)
- 0.5 cup of flour
- 3-6 tablespoons of sugar
- 1-2 tablespoons of boiling water
- 10 g vanilla powder
- 10 walnuts

## Method

- Pour the homemade milk cream into a high-sided cast iron pan and put it on the stove.
- Gradually add the flour and mix constantly so that no lumps are formed. The flour should be fried in the milk cream until it turns pink. The mixture should be soft, easily rubbed on the surface of the pan with a spoon.
- When the flour is well fried, add the sugar. You can do this in two ways:
  - add spoon by spoon and stir constantly, or
  - add 1-2 tablespoons of boiling water to the preferred amount of sugar, melt the sugar and add to the halvah mixture. Stir quickly to spread the sugar grains.
- At the end, add 5 minced walnuts and a pinch of vanilla powder. Mix with a spoon to equally distribute them in the mixture.
- When hot, pour the halvah evenly on a flat, low-sided plate. Spread it quickly with a spoon and level the surface.
- Make patterns on the halvah using a fork, cut it in diagonal shapes, and leave it to cool. Garnish the diagonal pieces of halvah with the remaining 5 walnut kernels.
- Serve halvah frozen.

# KATNAHOUNTS DILIJANESE

Katnahounts is mainly made for Easter holidays. It is usually a circle, which in some interpretations symbolizes the Earth. It is a dough woven at the ends, which symbolizes the crown on the head of Christ. In some cases, the woven design is associated with the Pagan goddess Anahit. The name katnahounts means kneaded with milk. The housewives' katnahounts should be big in quantity and served generously.



## Ingredients

- 400 g butter
- 3 cups of sugar
- 5 eggs + 1 egg yolk
- 1 litre of milk
- 2 tablespoon yeast
- 40 g vanilla powder
- 5 cups of flour
- Salt

## Method

- Melt 400 g butter. Add 3 cups of sugar. Beat the mixture or knead by hand, until the sugar is melted as well.
- Add 5 eggs and 2 pinches of salt. Beat to get a smooth mixture.
- Add 1 litre of tepid milk and mix with the ingredients.
- Add the vanilla powder, yeast and flour slowly- cup by cup. Mix the ingredients gently. The dough should be soft and not coarse.
- Place the dough in a warm place and cover it until it is ripe.
- When it is ripe, knead it to rest. Do it twice.
- Divide the dough into 5-6 portions. Roll out the portions in a circle shape on a floured surface. Leave them on the surface to rest and ripen again.
- Make holes on the dough portions using a fork. Beat the egg yolk and brush the dough portions with it.
- Bake them in the oven or masonry oven at 220°C/ 428°F until they get golden colour.

# MASRAMATSOON

Everyone knows about the health benefits of rosehip. It is a huge source of vitamins necessary for the body. It is used to treat various types of inflammatory and digestive problems. Dilijan forests are rich in bright red and black rosehip fruits.

Rosehip is gathered in autumn and is used to make various drinks and dishes - tea, jam, juice, etc. And in the winter months, you can taste "Masramatsoon" (rosehip sauce) in the houses of local Dilijanese. The sauce can be served as a drink, dessert, or soup, with or without bread.



## Ingredients

- 2 kg fresh rosehip
- 4 litres of water
- Sugar to taste
- 2-3 tablespoons of flour

## Method

- Clean and wash rosehips. Place them in a saucepan. Add water. The water should be a bit higher than the rosehips. For about 2 kilograms of rosehips, 4 litres of water will be enough.
- Boil the rosehips until they are soft.
- Leave them to cool.
- Mash them in a colander and then in a sieve to remove hard rosehips and seeds. You may add water while mashing to make the process a bit easier.
- Add 1 cup of water to the mashed clean mass and cook it on low heat. The mass should be thick.
- While cooking we need to remove the black foam.
- When thick enough, add sugar to taste.
- Dissolve 2 tablespoons of flour in the rosehip sauce. Cook for another five minutes.
- Serve hot.

# NAZOOK



Unique methods of making nazook (a type of pastry) can be found in different regions of Armenia, especially in those places where the locals settle in the nearby mountains during the summer months. The older generation takes the herd to the mountains to get more dairy products, to process them and stock up on food for the winter months. Their grandchildren also go to the mountains with them, live in the wild all summer, enjoy ecologically clean dairy products and food.

It is not a secret that the most well-loved holiday of the people of Dilijan is Vardavar, and the locals celebrate it with a special luxury in the nearby forests and mountains. Khashlama (Armenian lamb stew) and nazook are a must in the holiday's menu.

Nazook is one of the oldest and most famous pastries of Dilijan cuisine. It has a fairly easy recipe to make, a unique patterned garnishment and just melts in your mouth. In the mountains, nazook dough is made with fresh and high-fat dairy products: rezhan (homemade milk cream), butter, milk, and khoriz (nazook filling) with melted butter. Nazook made at home has a simpler method of preparation. If you can bake it on the surface of a wood-burning stove, you will get the taste of nazook made in the mountains.

## Ingredients

- 0.5 glass of water
- 0.5 glass of "rezhan" (homemade milk cream)
- 250 g melted butter
- 1 cup of sugar
- 10 g vanilla powder
- 4-5 cups of flour
- Salt

## Method

- Mix 0.5 glass of water and 0.5 glass of "rezhan" (homemade milk cream). Add a pinch of salt and beat well.
- Gradually add flour to this mixture and knead. Make soft dough. Cover with a towel to let the dough rest for about 20 minutes.
- Make a filling - mix 250 g of melted butter, 1 cup of sugar and 3 tablespoons of flour. Add vanilla powder at the end.
- Divide the dough into small, 8 egg-size balls.
- Roll out the balls one by one and get thin square layers.
- Take a layer. Cover it with the filling. Put the second layer on it and again cover with the filling. Repeat the process until you get 4 layers on top of each other covered with the filling.
- Make a roll out of the four layers. Cut the roll into pieces of about 3-4 cm thick each.
- Get round balls from these pieces using a little flour.
- Roll out the balls, getting thin round layers. You now have a nazook.
- Nazook is baked on the surface of the stove or preferably in a hot cast iron pan on a stove on a low heat.
- Bake on both sides until they become pink.





# AVELUKOV PTRUK (SORREL SOUP)

Due to its unique taste and usefulness, sorrel has been one of the most popular plants in Dilijan cuisine since ancient times. Salads, soups, and fried dishes have been made from sorrel. Sorrel soup has an interesting recipe. To ensure the density of the broth, in the past balls were made from a mixture of flour and water and added to the soup. Hence the name ptruk. Today, the soup is prepared in a slightly modified version. The flour is not mixed with water. It is fried in oil. As a substitute, potatoes are sometimes used instead of lentils.



## Ingredients

- 200 g dry sorrel (Latin-Rumex acetosa)
- 1 cup of bulgur
- 1 large onion
- ½ cup of lentils
- 2-3 tablespoons of flour
- 1-2 cloves of garlic
- Vegetable oil, salt

## Method

- Soak 200 g dry sorrel in boiling water for 1 hour. Drain the water. Finely chop the sorrel.
- Wash 1 cup of bulgur and boil in 2 liters of water for 30 minutes.
- Soak the lentils for 12 hours in advance. Boil separately for 30 minutes and drain.
- Chop 1 large onion and fry it in the oil. Add 2-3 tablespoons of flour and continue to stir-fry until the flour gets yellow.
- Add the sorrel, lentils, fried onion and flour to bulgur. Add salt to taste and continue cooking for another 30 minutes.
- Serve the soup with crushed garlic.

# PUMPKIN SOUP

Pumpkins and beans (green and dry) are vegetables that can be found most often in Dilijan cuisine. Interesting recipes have been preserved with stuffed pumpkin.

The following soup with its unique taste has been one of the most favorite dishes of both guests and locals during the winter-spring period in Dilijan.



## Ingredients

- 1 kg pumpkin
- 0.3 cup of rice
- 1 cup of dry beans (white or red)
- 1 cup of diced dried plums
- 1 medium onion
- $\frac{2}{3}$  cup of pickled cabbage juice
- Vegetable oil, 50 g butter
- Red pepper (chili)
- Salt

## Method

- Wash and peel the pumpkin, chop it into cubes and steam in a little water. Then mash the cubes to get well combined mass.
- Soak 1 cup of white or red beans for 12 hours in advance. Then cook and drain.
- Cook 0.3 cup of rice in advance and drain.
- Mix the mashed pumpkin,  $\frac{2}{3}$  cup of pickled cabbage juice, red pepper, salt to taste, 1 cup of diced dried plums, beans and rice together.
- Chop 1 onion and fry it in the oil. Add it to the soup.
- Cook all the ingredients for 1-2 minutes and turn off the stove. Add 50 g butter to the soup.
- Cover the lid to cool off the soup.



# NETTLE SOUP

Nettle has long been known for its health benefits. It was used raw, dried, or fried, extracted or made into a soup. One of the most awaited spring soups is the traditional nettle soup.



## Ingredients

- 500 g nettle- fresh or dried (Latin-Urtica dioica)
- 5 medium potatoes
- 200 g onion or 1 large onion
- 1-2 eggs
- 1 tablespoon of butter
- Vegetable oil, salt

## Method

- Clean and wash 500 g nettle leaves. Set it aside to drain. (People with high blood pressure can soak the nettle leaves in boiling water in advance and then use them in the soup).
- Peel 5 medium potatoes, cut the potatoes into quarters and parboil them.
- Chop 1 large onion and fry it in the oil. Add one tablespoon of butter.
- Add 500 g nettle leaves and the parboiled potatoes with its soup. Add more boiled water, if needed. The water of the soup should hardly cover the ingredients.
- Stir the ingredients occasionally while they are boiling. Mash the potatoes and the nettles in the saucepan.
- Add salt to taste.
- Control the thickness of the soup. It should be thick and look well mixed.
- Beat two eggs. Add a little bit of soup juice to the eggs. Slowly add the mixture to the soup.
- Boil for another 2-3 minutes and turn off the stove.
- Serve the soup with finely chopped garlic, yogurt or their mixture.



# BEAN SOUP

The two key ingredients of this soup are dry beans and wheat. In the winter stock of Dilijan cuisine, one can find a dry green bean crop called "khasham", which is soaked and used in cooking. And the use of wheat was introduced into Dilijan cuisine thanks to the "akhpars". After the Patriotic War, Western Armenian repatriates from the Middle East settled in Dilijan. They are called "akhpars" in a modified form of the Armenian word eghbayr (brother). Since then this soup has been made in the locals' families.



## Ingredients

- 300 g of any type of dry beans (white, red, "Varsenik" sort, etc.)
- 1 cup of crushed wheat
- 1 large onion
- 2 medium potatoes
- 1 tablespoon of butter, vegetable oil
- 1 teaspoon of tomato paste
- Coriander, fennel
- Sweet and spicy red pepper, salt

## Method

- Soak the beans for 12 hours in advance.
- Soak the crushed wheat in hot water for 2-3 hours in advance.
- Parboil the beans. If after 10 minutes the colour of the water becomes too dark, then change it with the same amount of boiling water.
- When the beans are semi-cooked, add crushed wheat and salt to taste. Continue to boil for another 30 minutes.
- Peel 2 potatoes and cut into cubes. Add them to the soup.
- Boil it till the beans, wheat and potatoes are fully cooked.
- Chop 1 large onion and fry it in the oil. Add one tablespoon of butter, 1 tablespoon of tomato paste and 1 tablespoon of chopped fennel and coriander.
- Add the fried ingredients to the soup and stir to cook for another 10 minutes.
- Mash half of the beans to make the soup denser.
- Add chopped coriander and fennel, sweet and spicy red pepper to taste.
- Cover the lid to cool off the soup and serve it.

# CHORATAN SOUP

As soon as the first grass appears in the spring, the local herders move their herd to special pastures to ensure a large quantity of dairy products. The locals would say- "the herd is taken to the mountains", and they live in the so-called "holigs" (wooden houses in the mountains) for several months. In the mountains, of course, a unique subculture is being formed. In the summer months, dairy products are stocked to get ready for winter months. Choratan is one of those products. It is fat-free drained yogurt dried in a round shape which can be used for tan (matsoon (yogurt) dissolved in water) and soup.

Every family still has its own recipe of choratan dish, whether it is tatarboraki with onion and choratan or just choratan with mint. The recipe we have chosen is one of the most interesting ones.



## Ingredients

- 400 g choratan (fat-free drained yogurt dried in a round shape)
- 1 large onion
- Solid dough (2-2.5 cups of flour, a pinch of salt and  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of water)
- Mint or coriander
- Vegetable oil, butter
- Salt

## Method

- Dissolve choratan with water until it has raw milk-cream thickness.
- Add 1 tablespoon flour, stir them together and boil till it becomes a little bit thicker.
- Chop 1 large onion and fry it in the oil. Add salt to taste, 1 tablespoon of chopped coriander or mint and 1 tablespoon of butter.
- Add the fried ingredients to choratan.
- Separately, make solid dough with 2-2.5 cups of flour, a pinch of salt and  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of water.
- Divide the dough into 3-4 cm thick sticks. Cut the sticks into cubes and fry them in a good amount of oil till they get a rosy colour.
- Add the fried dough cubes to choratan soup.
- Add coriander or mint to the cooked soup.
- Serve with dried lavash.

# MALLOW AND MUSHROOM SOUP

Mallow is one of the most popular edible herbs in Dilijan which is used to make fried dishes and soups.

Having a neutral flavor, it is compatible with all vegetables and herbs. This delicious dish prepared with a unique combination of mallow and mushrooms can be boldly considered the improvisation of Dilijanese. Try to cook it and it may become a traditional dish in your family as well.



## Ingredients

- 300 g fresh mallow (Latin-Malva)
- 2 medium potatoes
- 500 g tree mushrooms
- 200 g onion or 1 large onion
- 1 tablespoon of butter, vegetable oil
- Salt

## Method

- Remove the stems of the 300 g fresh mallow, wash the leaves, drain and chop them up.
- Cut the two medium potatoes into cubes.
- Parboil the potatoes and the mallow without salt for 10 minutes. The water should hardly cover the leaves.
- Clean the 500 g tree mushrooms, wash, drain and dice them. Parboil them separately in a little water for 30 minutes.
- Chop one large onion and fry it in the oil. Add one tablespoon of butter.
- Combine all the ingredients - mallow and potato soup, steamed mushrooms and fried onions - in a saucepan.
- Add salt to taste and boil for another 20-30 minutes.
- The soup should be thick.

# KRCHIK #1

The classic pickled cabbage of Molokans is an excellent ingredient for this soup. The pickled cabbage juice adds to the flavour. This dish is often prepared here without greens, almost colorless- with a small amount of tomato paste. It is in the list of obligatory winter soups of Dilijan residents.



## Ingredients

- 500 g pickled cabbage
- 200 g crushed grain
- 1 medium carrot
- 1 tablespoon of sweet tomato paste or 1 canned large sweet tomato
- 200 g onion or 1 large onion
- 1 tablespoon of butter
- Vegetable oil
- Salt

## Method

- Slice 500 g pickled cabbage finely. If it tastes too sour, wash it in cold water.
- Add 200 g clean crushed grain.
- Add water. It should cover the ingredients. Boil for 60-80 minutes. In case the liquid is reduced, add more to keep the previous amount.
- Chop one large onion and fry it in oil. Add 1 carrot cut into fine julienne strips. Add 1 tablespoon tomato paste and 1 tablespoon butter. Combine them and fry.
- Add the fried ingredients to the cabbage and grain soup.
- Boil for another 15 minutes. If the soup doesn't taste sour enough, add 1 cup of pickled cabbage juice.
- The soup should not be thick.



## KRCHIK #2

To make the soup, it is more preferable to use a whole cabbage and chop it. Garlic enriches the taste of the soup, and tasting it with bread makes it more satisfying. It is one of the traditional dishes of the winter-spring period.



### Ingredients

- 500 g pickled cabbage
- 1 cup of pickled cabbage juice
- 4 large potatoes
- 200 g onion or 1 large onion
- 1 tablespoon of tomato paste
- Toasted bread cubes
- Garlic
- Vegetable oil, salt

### Method

- Cut the 500 g pickled cabbage into cubes.
- Cut the potatoes into two or four pieces and add to the cabbage.
- Add 1 cup of pickled cabbage juice and 1-1.5 cups of boiling water. The juice should hardly cover the ingredients. Cook for 30 minutes.
- Chop one large onion and fry it in oil in another frying pan. Add 1 tablespoon tomato paste.
- Add the fried ingredients to the cabbage and potato soup. Reduce heat and let it simmer for 2 hours.
- The soup should be thick. In case the liquid is reduced, add more to keep the same amount.
- Stir the ingredients occasionally while they are boiling. Mash the potatoes in the saucepan.
- Serve the soup with finely chopped garlic and toasted bread cubes.



In the Armenian Highlands, you can find about 300 edible wild herbs, which contain a variety of vitamins and carbohydrates.

There are a lot of wild edible plants in Dilijan that have been used since ancient times- turnip-rooted chervil, chaerophýllum macrospermum (Latin), longleaf, goosefeet, portuláca (Latin), amaranthus (Latin), sorrel, aroids, etc. Locals use the fresh plants to make fried dishes, soups, and pickles. Some types of plants are dried and used during the winter months as well, for example, sorrel, aroids, etc.

The methods of preparing vegetarian dishes typical to this place were passed down from the ancestors. Traditionally, the old woman of the family prepared the dishes and then passed the cooking secrets to the younger generation. The older generation admits that thanks to the forest products, during the difficult years of World War II and generally in all critical situations, the locals overcame the problem of food shortage and did not allow the children to sleep hungry.

In this section, you may find unique methods to make dishes with solomon's seal, sorrel, wild garlic, oyster mushroom, and goosefeet.

# SORREL SALAD

This salad is a typical dish of the autumn-spring period and is often prepared for festive occasions. It should be served cold.



## Ingredients

- 200-300 g dry sorrel or 1 braid of dry sorrel (Latin- Rumex acetosa)
- 30-50 g apple cider vinegar
- 200 g onions
- 150-200 g chopped or ground walnuts
- Vegetable oil
- Salt, black ground pepper

## Method

- Place the 200-300 g sorrel in a saucepan, add boiling water and leave it for 40-60 minutes.
- Drain the sorrel and place it again in the saucepan. Add boiling water. Add salt to taste. Cook until it is ready.
- Drain the cooked sorrel and chop. Add 30-50 g apple cider vinegar and leave for 10-12 minutes. Remove the extra vinegar from the sorrel.
- Separately chop 200 g onions and fry in the oil. Add hot fried onions to the sorrel. Mix them and cover the lid.
- Add chopped or ground 150-200 g walnuts to the dish and mix them together.
- Add black pepper to taste.



# PARBOILED SOLOMON'S SEAL



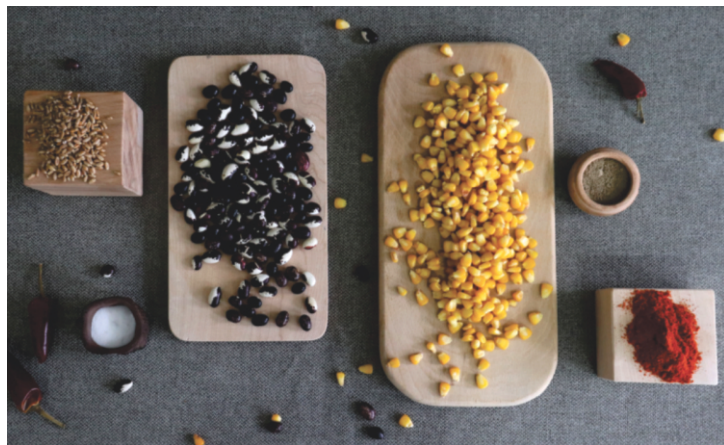
## Ingredients

- 0.5 kg solomon's seal (Latin-Polygonátum)
- Matsoon (yogurt)
- Lemon juice or vinegar
- Salt

## Method

- Clean and wash solomon's seal.
- Parboil for 3-5 minutes (without salt) and drain it.
- Serve with salt/lemon salt/vinegar/matsoon(yogurt).

# TSANDIL/KHATKHASH



## Ingredients

- 1 cup of wheat
- 0.5 cup of dry beans
- 0.5 cup of dry corn seeds
- Salt
- Spices to taste

## Method

- Wash and soak the ingredients for 12 hours in advance.
- Cook the wheat, corn, and beans in separate saucepans.
- Drain the ingredients, mix together and add salt and spices to taste.
- Add oil and chopped greens to taste (thyme, fennel, etc).

# FRIED GOOSEFEET



## Ingredients

- 1 kg fresh goosefeet (Latin-Chenopodium)
- 300-400 g onions or 2 large onions
- 2 eggs
- Salt, ground pepper
- Parsley

## Method

- Clean and wash 1 kg goosefeet.
- Soak the goosefeet in boiling water (without salt) for 3-4 minutes, drain and finely chop.
- Separately chop 2 large onions and fry in the oil.
- Add the chopped goosefeet to the fried onions.
- Add salt to taste and stir-fry.
- Beat 2 eggs and add to the fried ingredients at the end.
- Add pepper and chopped parsley to the eggs.

*You may make nettle leaves, turnip-rooted chervil, sickleweed (falcaria vulgaris), and wild spinach with the same method.*



# FRIED WILD GARLIC



## Ingredients

- 1 kg fresh wild garlic (Latin-*Allium ursinum*) -leaves and stems
- 2-3 eggs
- Parsley, green onion or other greens
- Vegetable oil
- Salt

## Method

- Clean, wash and chop 1 kg wild garlic.
- Parboil in boiling water for three minutes and drain it.
- Fry the chopped wild garlic in vegetable oil and add salt to taste.
- Beat the eggs. You may add chopped parsley, green onion or other fresh greens to the beaten eggs. Add the mixture to the fried wild garlic.
- You may serve it with matsohn and chopped garlic.

# FRIED MUSHROOM

The people of Dilijan gather oyster mushrooms starting from the end of spring until early autumn. In order to gather mushrooms, you need to have some information about tree species and mushroom quality.

Mushrooms should be cut from the tree with a knife and not uprooted. The locals make almost everything from mushrooms: soups, pies, fried dishes, pickles, marinades, etc. During the summer months, locals selling fresh oyster mushrooms can often be seen along the streets of Dilijan.



## Ingredients

- 1 kg oyster mushrooms (Latin-Pleurotus ostreatus) - caps and soft parts of the stems
- 200-250 g onions (can be green onion)
- 2 eggs
- Fennel
- Vegetable oil, butter
- Red and black ground pepper, salt

## Method

- Wash 1 kg tree mushrooms, slice them finely and parboil.
- Separately chop 200-250 g onions and fry them in the oil.
- Add 1 tablespoon of butter.
- Drain the mushrooms and add them to the fried onions. Stir-fry until they are fully cooked.
- Add salt, red and black ground pepper to taste.
- Add chopped fennel to the ingredients and mix them.
- At the end, beat two eggs and add to the dish. Cover the lid.

# Meat Dishes





# TOLMA DILIJANESE



There are many methods to make tolma. One may make it with minced, sliced, beaten beef or pork. They may stuff cabbage, raspberry, bean, grape leaves or vegetables- tomato, pepper, eggplant. The people of Dilijan make not only traditional Armenian tolma, but also have their own unique way of cooking it.

Fresh tussilago farfara leaves are used to roll the tolmas. The unique taste of stuffing is created thanks to the homemade May butter (May is the richest period of vegetation flowering, during which the cow's milk has a high fat content, unique yellow color, and sweet taste), ground wheat (as compared to other regions where rice is used in tolma stuffing, Dilijan people use wheat. Wheat was introduced into Dilijan cuisine thanks to the "akhpars"- Western Armenian repatriates from the Middle East settled in Dilijan), beef tenderloin, and fresh greens. It is this version that will awaken the memories of being hosted by grandma in the mountains during hot summer days.

## Ingredients

- 1 kg beef tenderloin
- 1 cup of ground wheat
- 300 g onions
- ½ teaspoon of red and black pepper
- Dried thyme, coriander, basil, summer savory
- 30-35 tussilago farfara fresh leaves
- Vegetable oil, butter
- Salt

## Method

- Cut the beef into small pieces and beat them.
- Chop half of the onion.
- In a large bowl combine beef, onion and spices - red and black pepper, thyme, coriander, basil and summer savory.
- Add a small cup of warm water and salt and mix them until well incorporated.
- Separately, chop the rest of the onion and fry in butter. Add it to the combined ingredients.
- Wash and drain 30-35 tussilago farfara fresh leaves.
- Make tolmas by stuffing the leaves with the mixture and rolling them.
- Arrange the tolmas in a pot. Add boiling water so that the water is 3-4 cm higher than the tolmas.
- Cover the tolmas with a large plate (before covering the pot with a lid) to make sure that all the tolmas are in water and can cook equally well.
- Cook until all the ingredients are cooked well.

# KORKOT

"Korkot" is one of the most interesting Armenian dishes. It is usually made during winter months. The people of Dilijan prepare this delicious dish from semi-cooked brawn and white wheat soaked in advance. In other regions, the dish is cooked in tonir (underground clay stove), whereas the people of Dilijan simmer it on a low heat on the stove. In terms of taste, the Dilijan recipe is as good as the one prepared in tonir.



## Ingredients

- 0.5 kg white wheat
- 1 kg brawn
- 250-300 g onions
- Vegetable oil
- Salt

## Method

- Parboil the head of the pig. Remove the brawn from the bones and cut it into small pieces. Make sure to use both lardy and meaty pieces for the dish.
- Clean the 0.5 kg white wheat, wash and soak in water for 10-12 hours in advance, then drain it.
- Chop the onions and fry them in oil (this step is up to your taste).
- Spread a layer of white wheat in the bottom of a saucepan. Then add a layer of fried onions and a layer of brawn. Repeat the same steps till all the ingredients are used.
- Add water to cover the ingredients. Put the dish on the stove. Bring to a boil and add a teaspoon of salt. Reduce heat to simmer until the dish is fully cooked.
- Don't mix the ingredients while cooking. Control the cooking process using a long wooden spoon.

# CHICKEN WITH ONIONS AND DRY FRUITS

This recipe became a part of Dilijan cuisine thanks to the people of Artsakh, who moved to Dilijan after the first Artsakh War (1988-1994). According to the Artsakh version of the dish, the chicken is stuffed with dried cornelian and is served with pomegranate sauce. Whereas the people of Dilijan stuff the chicken with prunes or dried cherries and usually serve with lemon juice.



## Ingredients

- 1 whole chicken
- 0.5 kg onions
- Dried fennel
- 300-400 g dry sour fruits - cornel, cherries, plums (without stones)
- Salt

## Method

- Take a whole chicken. Remove extra fat, feet bones, edges of the wings. Make a small hole in the breast.
- Wash the chicken and leave it in salty water for 30 minutes.
- Peel 0.5 kg onion, wash and slice them into rings. Season them with salt.
- Wash the dry fruits, drain and add them to the sliced onion.
- Season the onion and dry fruits with dried fennel. Mix them together.
- Stuff the chicken with mixed ingredients and sew the breast hole with respective thread and needle.
- Place the chicken in a saucepan. Add boiling water, salt to taste and cook until it is fully cooked.
- Remove the chicken from its broth. Leave it to drain. Place it on a plate. Remove the thread. Cut the chicken in half.
- Use the stuffed ingredients for chicken decoration.
- Serve the dish with pomegranate juice, pomegranate syrup or lemon syrup.



# STEAMED PICKLED CABBAGE WITH PORK

Here is another recipe with pickled cabbage, the usage of which became quite widespread in Dilijan thanks to Russian Molokans. The pork of this dish is served with steamed pickled cabbage, thanks to which even the fatty meat becomes appetizing.

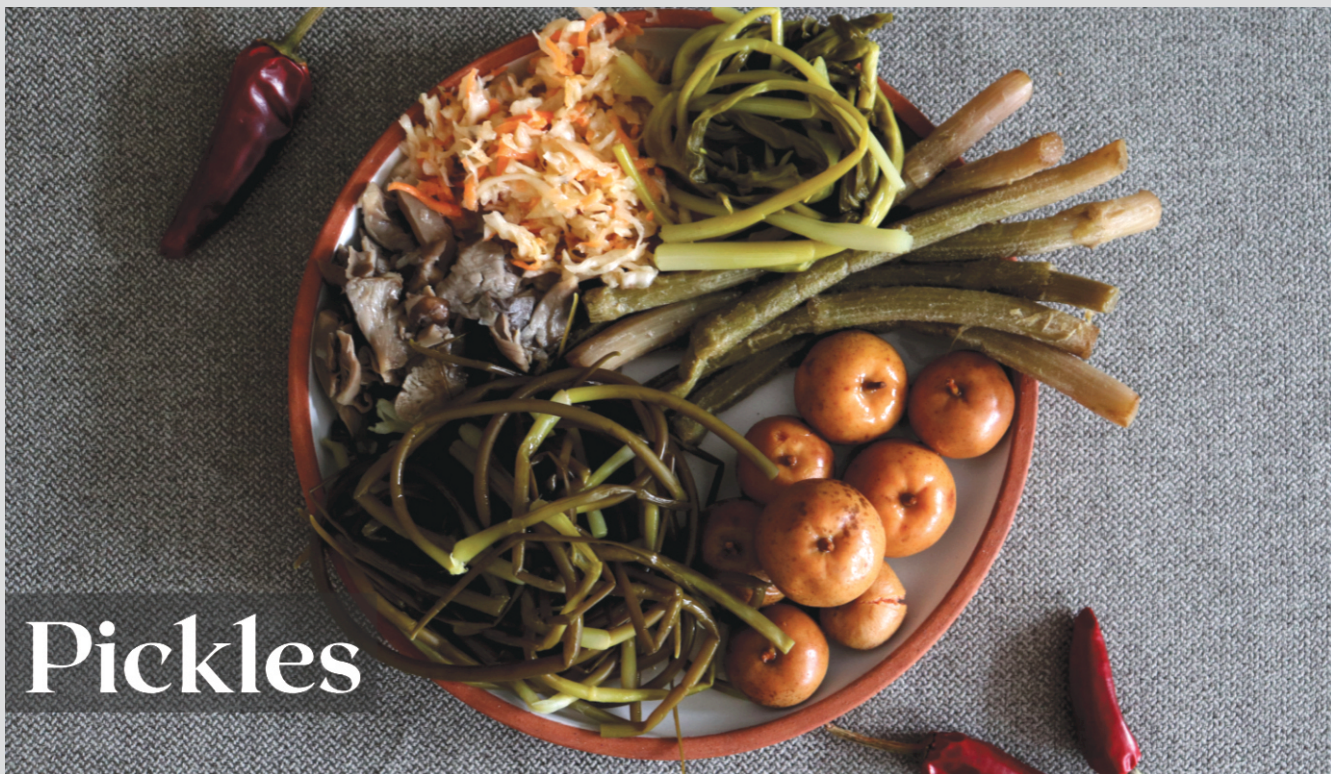


## Ingredients

- 0.5 kg fatty pork tenderloin
- 400-500 g pickled cabbage
- 1 medium size carrot
- 150-200 g onions
- 2-3 tablespoon of tomato paste or 3-4 canned tomatoes
- Parsley or fennel
- Salt, red and black ground pepper
- Other spices to taste

## Method

- Wash the 0.5 kg fatty pork tenderloin, drain and cut into small pieces. Season the meat with salt, black and red ground pepper. Leave it for 15-20 minutes.
- Pour some vegetable oil into a frying pan, place the pork pieces in the oil and cover the lid.
- Reduce the heat to simmer and fry the pieces on both sides. If the meat is tough, you may add ½ small cup of boiling water to cook it well.
- Slice the 400-500 g pickled cabbage. Steam it in a small amount of water for 20-25 minutes.
- Separately chop 150-200 g onions and fry in the oil. Add grated carrot. Mix them together and fry for 2-3 more minutes.
- Add 2-3 tablespoons of tomato paste or canned tomatoes. Mix them well together and cook for another 2-3 minutes. Add salt to the sauce.
- Add steamed cabbage and fried pork with its broth to the sauce. Mix them together and cover the lid. Reduce the heat to simmer and cook for 5 minutes.
- Add chopped parsley or fennel at the end. Cover the lid for 10-15 minutes and then serve.



Pickles and marinades are an integral part of Armenian cuisine in all seasons. The people of Dilijan make pickles from various vegetables, fruits, edible herb stalks, etc.

Traditional vegetable pickles made of cucumber, tomato, cauliflower, cabbage as well as pickles made of forest fruits are quite popular in Dilijan. "Molokan's pickle" made of chopped cabbage and carrot is also popular as there are Russian Molokans living in the nearby villages. Pickled mushroom has a unique taste and is used by many locals. The list of other pickles include hogweed (Latin-Heracleum), chaerophýllum macrospermum (Latin), wild garlic (Latin-Állium ursínum), wild pear (Latin-Pyrus pyraster).

The method of preparation is almost the same. Most pickles are made by fermenting in salt water. Forest fruits, for example, wild pears, medlar, and wild apples are pickled without salt.

# PICKLED HOGWEED

## Ingredients

- 1 kg fresh hogweed leaves (Latin-Heracleum)
- 1.2 tablespoons of salt
- 1 teaspoon of sugar
- Water

## Method

- Clean 1 kg of hogweed by removing leaves and useless stems. Keep the green stems, soak them in water and wash afterwards.
- Boil some water in an enameled saucepan. Put the hogweed in the boiling water, reduce heat to simmer for 5-10 minutes.
- Remove the hogweed from the boiling water and soak it in cold water for 1 hour. Then drain it.
- Arrange the drained hogweed in the container where you are going to pickle it.
- Cover the hogweed with a plate and a heavy mass on the plate.
- Separately make brine - dissolve 1.2 tablespoons of salt and 1 teaspoon of sugar in 1 litres of water. Pour the brine on the hogweed to cover it.
- Cover the lid.
- The hogweed will be pickled in 3-4 days.



# PICKLED CHAEROPHYLLUM MACROSPERMUM

## Ingredients

- 1 kg fresh stems of chaerophyllum macrospermum (Latin)
- 1.5 tablespoon of salt
- Fennel to taste
- Water

## Method

- Clean the chaerophyllum by removing the useless leaves and heads. Leave only green and soft stems.
- Soak the stems in water for some time and wash them.
- Place the stems in boiling water in an enameled saucepan and boil for 5 minutes.
- Remove the stems from the boiling water and drench them in cold water. Afterwards, arrange the stems in the container where they will be pickled.
- Separately make brine by dissolving 1.5 tablespoons of salt in 1.2 litres of water.
- Pour the brine on the arranged chaerophyllum to cover it.
- You may add a few stems of fennel.
- Cover the chaerophyllum with a plate and a heavy mass on the plate.
- The chaerophyllum will be pickled in 3-4 days.

# PICKLED WILD GARLIC

## Ingredients

- 800 g stems and green parts of wild garlic (Latin- *Allium ursinum*)
- 1 tablespoon of salt
- 1 tablespoon of sugar
- Water

## Method

- Clean 800 g wild garlic and wash it.
- Cook it in boiling water for 5-6 minutes until the stems become soft.
- Remove the wild garlic from boiling water and immediately place it in cold water for another 5-8 minutes.
- Then place it in an enameled container. (You may use a jar instead. 1 litre glass jar is an appropriate container for 800 g wild garlic).
- Cover the wild garlic with a plate and a heavy mass on the plate. The aim is to make sure that the wild garlic will not come up to the surface.
- Separately make brine - dissolve 1 tablespoon of salt and 1 teaspoon of sugar in 1 litre of water. Pour the brine on the wild garlic to cover it.
- The wild garlic will be pickled in 3-4 days.

# PICKLED TURNIP-ROOTED CHERVIL

## Ingredients

- 1 kg fresh turnip-rooted chervil (Latin-Anthriscus cerefólium)
- 1.5 tablespoon of salt
- 1 tablespoon of sugar
- 8-10 stems of fennel
- 2 cloves of garlic
- Water

## Method

- Clean 1 kg chervil by removing the flowers on the edges and leaves, then wash it.
- Place it in a saucepan. Add boiling water and simmer it for five minutes. The chervil should be half-cooked.
- Remove the chervil from the boiling water. Place it immediately in cold water and leave for about 10 minutes.
- Arrange the chervil in the container where you are going to pickle it. Add fennel stems and 2 cloves of garlic (garlic is to taste).
- Cover the chervil with a plate and put a heavy mass on the plate. The aim is to make sure that chervil will not come up to the surface.
- Separately make brine - dissolve 1.5 tablespoons of salt and 1 teaspoon of sugar in 1.2 litres of water. Pour the brine on the chervil to cover it.
- Cover the lid.
- Chervil will be pickled in 3-4 days.

# PICKLED MUSHROOM

## Ingredients

- 1 kg oyster mushroom (Latin-Pleurotus ostreatus)
- 0.5 cup of water
- 1 tablespoon of salt
- 4-5 cloves of garlic
- Fennel stems
- 4-5 cloves
- 1 tablespoon of sugar
- 1 small cup of vinegar

## Method

- Clean, chop and wash 1 kilogram of tree mushroom. Then drain it.
- Add 0.5 cup of water and boil for 20 minutes. Remove the foam that comes out while boiling.
- Add 1 tablespoon of salt, spices- fennel stems and cloves, 4-5 cloves of garlic, 1 tablespoon of sugar, 1 small cup of vinegar. Bring to a boil and continue boiling for five minutes.
- When the water is transparent and the mushroom is at the bottom of the saucepan, the mixture is ready.
- Leave it to cool. Then pour it into a dry, clean container and cover the lid.
- The mushroom will be pickled in 4-7 days.



# PICKLED WILD PEAR

## Ingredients

- 1 kg wild pears (Latin-Pyrus pyraeaster)
- 1 tablespoon of sugar
- Water

## Method

- Clean 1 kilogram of wild pear - remove the hard edges and wash.
- Arrange them in a preferred container- a jar or a high-walled saucepan.
- Add water and 1 tablespoon of sugar. The water should cover the pears.
- Cover them with a plate and a weight on top of the plate. The aim is to make sure that pears will stay in the water.
- Leave it for a few days until the wild pears are pickled.

*You may use the method to make pickled medlar (Latin-Mespilus germanica).*



It is said that if there were forests, mountains, and mineral waters in paradise, paradise would be like Dilijan ("Armenia - Open Museum", Y. Kirilova, 1969). The fruits and products of rich nature have enabled the people of Dilijan to produce a number of homemade beverages and make them an integral part of the local cuisine. Wild pears, medlar, blackthorn, mint, and rosehip are widely used in Dilijan cuisine to make juices and syrups. Juices made from various dried fruits are very popular as well and are the traditional drinks of the Easter holiday. And of course, what kind of holiday table without alcoholic beverages - vodka distilled from apples, pears, plums and other fruits? The list of alcoholic beverages made by the people of Dilijan also includes liquors (made from fruits, walnut kernels, peach kernels, etc.) and wines, which are mainly made from grapes grown in Dilijan or from apples, rosehips, raspberries, etc.

It is impossible to imagine rainy Dilijan evenings without a cup of hot tea, which the people of Dilijan often make with the herbs, the flowers of some trees, field flowers or berries that they gather. You can even combine several herbs and get a wonderful result. The most commonly used types are linden (Latin: *Tilia cordata*), hawthorn (Latin: *Crataegus*), mint (Latin: *Méntha*), Saint John's wort (Latin: *Hypericum*), valerian (Latin: *Valeriana officinalis*), costmary (Latin: *Tanacetum balsamita*), thyme (Latin: *Thýmus*), camomille (Latin: *Matricária chamomílla*), rosehip (Latin: *Rōsa*). To make tea, fresh herbs and berries should be washed and soaked in boiling water. The brewed tea should be used during the same day. In the case of drinking for therapeutic purposes, it is recommended to follow the medical instructions and use in the right dose to avoid side effects.

# MINT SYRUP



## Ingredients

- 0.5 kg fresh mint (Latin- Menthā)
- 0.5 teaspoon of citric acid or the juice of half fresh lemon
- 1 litre of water
- 1.2 kg sugar

*Wild mint can also be used to make the syrup.*

## Method

- Clean the 0.5 kg mint by removing the hard edges and damaged parts.
- Separate the leaves from the stems and wash. Drain them in two different containers.
- Season the leaves with citric acid or lemon juice and mix together.
- Boil 1 litre of water in a saucepan. Add the mint stems to the water and boil for 5-6 minutes. Then remove the stems from the water.
- Add the seasoned leaves of mint to the same water. When all the leaves go under the water, switch off the stove. The leaves must not boil long.
- Leave the leaves in the water for 6 hours. Then take them out and squeeze them, pouring the juice into the same water.
- Add 1.2 kg sugar and boil for 1.5-2.5 hours until it is dense. The colour of the syrup is usually lighter than the mint.
- The ready syrup should be dense. You may check it by dripping a drop on the plate. The drop should not flow.
- The syrup may be preserved or freezed. You may make tea or soft drinks from it.



# MEDLAR JUICE

## Ingredients

- 5 kg medlar
- 6 litres of water
- Sugar to taste

## Method

- Remove the edges of medlars. Wash and place them in a pot. Pour enough water to cover the fruits.
- Cook the medlars until they soften.
- Turn off the stove and leave the medlars in the water for about 4 hours.
- Mash the cooked medlars in a colander and remove stones and hard parts. You may add the boiled water while mashing to make the process a bit easier.
- Mix the puree well. Add boiled water if needed. Put the pot on the stove and cook for 15-20 minutes. Control the density of puree.
- Add sugar to taste and remove the black foam.
- You may preserve or freeze the juice.

# BLACKTHORN JUICE



## Ingredients

- Ripe, healthy fruits of blackthorn (Latin-Prunus spinosa)
- Water
- Sugar

*(150-200 grams of blackthorn and 100 grams of sugar per 1 litre of juice)*

## Method

- Wash the blackthorn and place it in a jar/container.
- Separately make syrup. Mix 100 grams of sugar with 1 litre of water.
- Add the syrup to the blackthorn and cover the jar/container with a lid.
- There is no need to boil the juice. In case you decide to do so, boil it for 20-25 minutes.

# ROSEHIP JUICE



## Ingredients

- Fresh rosehip (Latin-Rosa)
- Water
- Sugar

*(About 20 rosehips and 100 grams of sugar per 1 litre of juice)*

## Method

- Wash the rosehips, place them in a pot.
- Add enough water to cover the rosehip. The water should stand a bit higher.
- Boil the rosehip until they soften.
- Remove the pot from the stove. Cover it with blankets so that the steam stays in the pot. Leave it for 2 days.
- After 2 days remove the fruits from the juice.
- Add sugar to the juice and boil for 15 minutes.
- The juice is now ready!

# DRY FRUITS JUICE



## Ingredients

- Any type of dry fruits/mixture of dry fruits/a handful of raisins
- Water
- Sugar to taste
- Citric acid or spices to taste: cinnamon, cloves, dried citrus zest, etc.

*(100-200 grams of dry fruits per 1 litre of juice)*

## Method

- Clean and wash the dry fruits. Place them in a jar/container.
- Make syrup by adding as much sugar as you want to 1 litre of water.
- Add citric acid or spices to taste: cinnamon, cloves, dried citrus zest.
- Boil the syrup and add to the dry fruits. Cover the container with a lid.



# WILD PEAR JUICE



## Ingredients

- Fresh wild pear (Latin-Pyrus pyraster)
- Water
- Sugar

*(20 wild pears and 100 grams of sugar per 1 litre of juice)*

## Method

- Clean and wash wild pears.
- Cut the pears into halves, place them in a jar/container.
- Separately make syrup. Mix 100 grams of sugar with 1 litre of water.
- Add the syrup to the wild pears.
- Boil the wild pear juice for 30-35 minutes and preserve.

# VODKA AND WINE

In the last century, as in all of Armenia, vodka distillation was widespread in Dilijan. Until the 60's, the main drinks for sad and happy ceremonies (even weddings) were factory-made brandy, homemade vodka and wine.

In Dilijan, vodka was made from local raw materials such as wild pears, apples, plums, as well as fruits brought from other regions, such as grapes.

The main technology used for vodka distillation was as follows. To get fruit alcohol, in large copper pots, the ripe raw material was poured and boiled over burning wood, meanwhile having constant water circulation through the vodka distilling equipment.

This process was repeated twice, after which distilled water was added and the vodka was ready. In terms of the degree of alcohol concentration, home-made vodka surpassed factory made vodka, which was gradually pushing home-made vodka out of everyday life.

During the last century, wine was widely consumed as well. Before the 60s, during the pre-holiday season, it was customary to take wood from Dilijan and exchange it for wine in the settlements of the Ararat Valley. However, by the middle of the century, factory-made wine was already quite popular. Homemade blackthorn and rosehip wine types were quite popular in Dilijan and were used during various festivities.

The information was provided by Albert Simonyan.



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**Photos by** Stella Mkrtchyan

The photos were taken at "Toon Armeni" Guest House in Dilijan. The artisanal goods of the local craftsmen created in the framework of Dilijan Community Center's "MADE" project are featured in the photos.

### **About Dilijan Community Center**

Dilijan Community Center (DCC) was created on the basis of Dilijan Youth Center, founded in 2014 by the philanthropists Ruben Vardanyan and Veronika Zonabend. Over the years, Dilijan Youth Center expanded the scope of its activities and turned into Dilijan Community Center. It currently operates with the following mission: to shape an educated, engaged and inclusive community by strengthening the capacity of residents and inspiring lifelong learning. The four main areas of activity of Dilijan Community Center are: non-formal education, community empowerment, culture, and sport. Up until now, the Center has implemented numerous educational and entertainment programs, capacity building trainings, and cultural events, all by the community and for the community.

Recipe\_\_\_\_\_

Ingredients

Method



Recipe\_\_\_\_\_

Ingredients

Method











## Contact Us

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