



BĀDĀM II. AS FOOD

ii. As Food

Almonds are consumed both fresh and, more commonly, dried. In the early spring, when the nut is young and tender fresh fuzzy, green almonds, called *čāgāla-bādām* are crunchy and edible. They are sold by vendors on street corners, after having been dipped in salted water. They are also cooked into a stewed lamb dish, *ḵorešt-e čāgāla-bādām*, an infrequent delicacy, since the almonds are edible in this form for only a very short time each year. This dish incorporates chunks of sautéed lamb with finely chopped mint and parsley. It is flavored with sour-grape juice, simmered slowly for several hours, and served with rice.

Dried almonds are served frequently between meals, roasted, salted, and mixed with shelled hazelnuts and pistachios, and unshelled pumpkin and watermelon seeds. This mixture is called *ājīl*.

Dried almonds are used extensively in Persian cuisine, particularly to embellish and flavor rice dishes, such as a variation of *'adas-polow* (lentil pilaf) which calls for the addition of slivered almonds and currants or raisins. *Morašša'-polow* (jewel-studded rice), derives its name from the nuts which decorate this festive dish, including almonds, pistachios, and hazelnuts. Another popular rice dish, *šīrīn-polow* (sweet pilaf) is often prepared with a combination of slivered almonds and pistachios sprinkled throughout the rice, which is further flavored with sweetened orange-peel slivers and chunks of boned, cooked chicken.



Dried almonds are used extensively in preparing baked goods, such as *nān-e bādāmī*, a cookie made with beaten egg whites, sugar, cardamom, and ground almonds, or *qoṭṭāb*, an almond-filled, deep-fried cake. A popular pastry which can be prepared with almonds is *bāqlavā*, made with filo dough, butter, sugar, cardamom, and either coarsely ground almonds or a combination of almonds and pistachios. A popular method of flavoring the almonds is to immerse them in narcissus petals in a tightly covered tin for several days, replacing the petals with fresh ones every day until the almonds have absorbed their fragrance. A popular confection made with slivered almonds is *sowhān-e ‘asalī*, made with sugar, honey, butter, and almonds, and flavored with saffron.