



BĀQLAVĀ II. THE SWEET

ii. The Sweet

Bāqlavā is a sweet pastry known throughout the Middle East which in Iran is commonly made with almonds (*bādām*), less frequently with pistachios (*pešta*), and, in the past, with lentils (*ʿadas*). In Turkey and Greece it is made with walnuts and covered with a kind of dough which forms a harder surface than that of the Persian *bāqlavā*. The Turkish *bāqlavā* is the one commonly used in the West. The pistachio *bāqlavā* is considered more elegant than the other kind. The finest quality *bāqlavā* in Iran is reputed to be that which is made in Yazd, where it is packed in tins and prepared for sale throughout the country. Tins of *bāqlavā* are frequently given to friends and relatives as gifts at Nowrūz.

In Iran the almonds and sugar are pounded or ground together, then mixed with melted butter or fine quality shortening, and flavored with cardamom (*hel*) before being spread over layers of very thin filo dough (*nān-e lavāš* or *nān-e tonok*). Alternate layers are then built up, the top sprinkled with slivered almonds or pistachios; it is then baked until golden. When cool, it is cut into lozenge-shaped pieces. A sweet syrup made with boiled sugar and water, frequently flavored with rose water (*golāb*), is then poured over the pastry.

Traditionally, *bāqlavā* is not made in the home, but in bakeries and special factories. In recent years, as ovens and baking facilities have become more prevalent in Iran, increasing numbers of women have taken to preparing *bāqlavā* at home, particularly for special occasions such as weddings.



Although traditionally *bāqlavā* is lozenge-shaped, when made at home it is sometimes cut into squares, and sometimes rolled into individual, cigarette-shaped rolls.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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