



BŪRĀNĪ

BŪRĀNĪ (rarely *būlānī*), generic term for a category of Iranian dishes, now usually prepared with yogurt and cooked vegetables and served either hot or cold as main dishes, accompaniments, or salads. The term is found as early as the 5th/11th century in the poetry of [Abu'l-'Abbās Marvazī](#) and Nāṣer-e Ḳosrow, in the works of the 8th/14th century satirist 'Obayd Zākānī, and in the *divān* of [Boshāq Aṭ'ema](#) (d. 827/1423 or 830/1427; cf. *Dehḳodā*, s.v. *būrānī*). According to Naḳjavānī (p. 145), the term *būrānī* is derived from the name of [Būrān](#), daughter of Ḥasan b. Sahl and wife of the caliph al-Ma'mūn, who is supposed to have created this dish. The author of the *Farhang-e Nafīsī* (Nafīsī, I, p. 657), however, suggests the name of the Sasanian queen Būrāndokt (r. 630-31) as the origin of the term.

Ḥājī Moḥammad-'Alī Bāvaṛčī, in his *Kār-nāma* (comp. 927/1521), defined *būrānī* as any *qalya* (stew) containing yogurt and garlic (p. 154). In contrast to the modern *būrānī*, the main ingredient of which is a single cooked vegetable, his recipe includes browned lamb cubes the size of almonds and onion rings (cf. the line by Nāṣer-e Ḳosrow quoted in *Dehḳodā*, loc. cit.). They were simmered in a small amount of salted water; then such vegetables as beets, zucchini, eggplant, cabbage, spinach, and even cucumbers or melon rinds were added and simmered over low heat. Sometimes the dish was seasoned with caraway seed (Bāvaṛčī, p. 155). The *būrānī* was served on a bed of garlic, drained yogurt, and dried mint, with water and thickened yogurt poured over it, and drizzled with saffron dissolved in oil (p. 155). Bāvaṛčī also describes (p. 63) the variant *būlānī/pūlānī*, which, however, he includes in the category of



soups (*āš*).

In another work from the Safavid period, *Māddat al-ḥayāt* (The substance of life), by Nūr-Allāh, chef to Shah ‘Abbās I (r. 996-1038/1588-1629), a whole chapter is devoted to *būrānī* (pp. 238-39). Nūr-Allāh’s recipes for various kinds of *būrānī* are similar to those of Bāvaṛčī, though in some variations attributed to Yazd and Shiraz he substitutes whey (*kašk*) for yogurt and in *būrānī-e māṛčūba* (asparagus) he includes eggs instead of yogurt.

By the 13th/19th century meat was no longer included in the normal *būrānī*, which had become a dish consisting of one cooked vegetable and yogurt. Mīrzā ‘Alī-Akbar Khan Āšpazbāšī, chef to Nāṣer-al-Dīn Shah (r. 1264-1313/1848-96), included seven dishes in the category *būrānī* (pp. 45-46, 75): *būrānī-e esfenāj* (with spinach), *būrānī-e kadū* (with zucchini), *būrānī-e čōgondar* (with beets), *būrānī-e bādenjān* (with eggplant), *būrānī-e lūbiā-ye sabz* (with green beans), *būrānī-e kangar* (with prickly artichokes [cf. Schlimmer, *Terminologie*, p. 308]), and *būrānī-e qāṛč* (with mushrooms). His cooking method is far less elaborate than those of the Safavid chefs; vegetables were simply to be simmered or sautéed, then mixed with yogurt and salt and pepper. This method is similar to that found in most contemporary Iranian cookbooks. The most popular modern dish in this category is *būrānī-e esfenāj*, prepared with chopped spinach. It is served topped or mixed with yogurt and seasoned with salt and pepper. In recent years parsley has sometimes been added, and in some regions sautéed onions are included.

In some parts of Iran these dishes are not called *būrānī* but are rather referred to as *māst* (yogurt) and the accompanying ingredient: *māst o esfenāj* (yogurt and spinach), *māst o labū* (yogurt and beets), and so on.

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