



ḤALIM

ḤALIM, a traditional Persian breakfast dish for the winter, now served at lunch and dinner as well, made with lamb and wheat. It is usually seasoned with salt, pepper and cinnamon, and sweetened with sugar or honey.

Cooking. The preparation of this dish is very demanding, and so it is usually made on a commercial scale, for special occasions, or for a large number of guests. The whole lamb is first boiled in a large pot until cooked. The meat, fat, and tail are then completely removed from the bone and this is cooked further in its own juice in a separate pot, together with an amount of semi-ground and partially-cooked peeled wheat equal to half of its weight. An open-fronted oven (*katta*) is used for this process, because the mixture must be stirred with a large spatula for many hours, in order to produce a thick consistency in which the lamb and wheat are indistinguishable from each other. When *ḥalim* is prepared at home it is common for family members to take turns in stirring the pot through the night so that it will be ready for breakfast.

The demands of *ḥalim* preparation have given rise to the profession of *ḥalim-pazi*, making the dish available for purchase and consumption in the bazaar. Although it is now less common for them to do so, until about 1980 vendors used to exhibit the entire cooked lamb on a large tray during the day before it was to be used to prepare *ḥalim* for breakfast. The tray would often be decorated with oranges and vegetables, and lit up with several small lamps.

Types of ḥalim. As an alternative to lamb, *ḥalim* can also be made using chicken, turkey and goose, or the three together (Bāmdād, pp. 28, 70-71). Since



cooking ḥalim with poultry is less time-consuming, it has become fashionable in recent years to prepare these versions of the dish at home. *Ḥalim(-e) bādenjān* is a distinct type of ḥalim made with eggplant and lentils. Although the wheat is replaced by lentils, meat may still be used in this type of ḥalim. However, if cooked without meat, it has the advantage of being simple to prepare at home. Ḥalim bādenjān is seasoned with dried whey (*kašk*), hot garlic (*sir-e dāḡ*) and hot mint (*na'nā-ye dāḡ*).

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