



KABĀB

KABĀB (kebab, kabob, cabob), a popular dish which traditionally consists of meat cut in cubes, or ground and shaped into balls; these are threaded onto a skewer and broiled over a brazier of charcoal embers. After the kabāb is cooked, it is placed on a platter or tray and pulled off the skewer with a piece of flat bread. Because of the smoke produced from the drops of fat that fall on the charcoal, kabāb is usually made in the open air, normally in the courtyard of the house. As a general term, it applies to all kinds of food broiled directly over charcoal, wood, or recently gas, with or without the use of a skewer.

Persian cookbooks vary in their account of names, recipes, and varieties of kabāb. The number differs from only four in a Safavid cookbook (Bāvarči Baġdādi, pp. 173-75) to twenty-two kinds of kabāb in a recent manual of cookery by Najaf Daryā-bandari (pp. 175, 195), including recipes from Cambodia, Japan, Syria, Lebanon, and the Caucasus. Musiu Rišār Khan cites twelve Persian and Western recipes (pp. 102-9), Badr-al-Moluk Bāmdād (pp. 72, 84, 97, 103, 110, 118, 120) mentions ten in Persian, Turkish, and European cuisine; and Rozā Montazami (pp. 735-46), describes fifteen kinds of Persian, Turkish, and Greek kabābs. Moreover, authors familiar with Western culture and modern Western techniques of cooking have included such appliances as the electric or gas oven, as well as the elaborately designed American barbecue appliances, in the list of possible accessories and culinary utensils.

With the recent trend in fat-free and health-conscious diets, different charcoal broiled or gas barbecued dishes, including vegetables, have joined the Persian dining tables. Red meat kabābs include *kabāb-e barra* (lamb kabāb); *kabāb-e*



barg (with thin slices of lean meat); *kabāb-e kubida* (ground meat mixed with grated onion, and egg yolk); *kofta kabāb* (ground meat broiled in heated pots rather than over braziers); *kabāb-e čenja* or *konja* (thin slices of lean meat, alternating with *donba*, the fatty part of the Persian sheep's tail); *kabāb-e ḥosayni* (chunks of meat, marinated in a mixture of yogurt, saffron and grated onion put on skewers and simmered over low heat); *kabāb-e del* (heart kabāb); *kabāb-e jegar* (liver kabāb); *kabāb-e ruda* or *ruda pič* (intestine kabāb); *kabāb-e qolva* (kidney kabāb); and *kabāb-e āhu* (venison kabāb). Vegetables used include eggplant, tomato, bell pepper, onion and mushroom. The meat is marinated for two to forty-eight hours in a mixture of onion, saffron, lemon juice, yogurt, salt and pepper, with the possible addition of various kinds of seasoning, such as red pepper paste or teriyaki sauce. Chicken and wild fowl kabābs include *juja kabāb-e bā ostokān* (chicken kabāb with bone); *juja kabāb-e bi ostokān* (boneless chicken kabāb); *kabāb-e kubida-ye juja* or *buqalamun* (using ground chicken or turkey); and kabābs of different fowls, including goose, partridge, pheasant, and quail. In preparation of these kabābs, only salt and pepper and sometimes herbs such as tarragon and sweet basil are used. To soften the fowl, butter or oil is added in the process of cooking.

Fish and shellfish kabābs include fatty fish such as *māhi āzād* (salmon), *māhi sefid* (kutum or roach), *mahi mahi*, *māhi kāvyār* (sturgeon), *maygu* (shrimp), and lobster. Salt, pepper, lemon juice, saffron, and sometimes hot sauces, such as red pepper sauce, are usually added to season these kabābs.

Vegetable kabābs include *kabāb-e gowja farangi* (tomato kabāb), *kabāb-e felfel-e sabz* (green pepper kabāb), *kabāb-e felfel-e tond* (hot pepper kabāb), *kabāb-e bādenjān* (eggplant kabāb), *kabāb-e kadu* (squash kabāb), *kabāb-e qārč* (mushroom kabāb), *kabāb-e sibzamini* (potato kabāb). In cooking these kabābs, liquid oils are added.

Kabāb is usually served with bread or rice, and in recent years with cooked or fried vegetables. Mention should be made of *čelow kabāb*, a popular Persian dish in which the kabāb, either *barg*, *kubida*, or *solṭāni* (a combination of both) is served with steamed rice (see BERENJ iii. IN COOKING), butter, egg yolk, sumac, raw onion, broiled tomatoes, fresh basil, and *duḡ*, a beverage made of yogurt and plain or carbonated water and often served chilled as a refreshing drink. Persian restaurants that focus on serving this dish are called *čelow kabābi*.

There are numerous citations in Persian literature of kabāb served with wine



in royal and aristocratic festivities and hunting ceremonies. Abu Eshāq Ḥallāj Širāzi, known as *Boshāq-e Aṭ'ema* (d. 1423 or 1427), who uses Persian cooking and culinary vocabulary in his humorous poetry, repeatedly employs the term *kabāb*, both literally and metaphorically in his poems.

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