



KALLAJUŠ

KALLAJUŠ (KĀLJUŠ), an old Iranian dish, also pronounced *kālajuš*, *kālājuš*, *kaljuš* in different parts of Iran. It consists of fried onions, dried herbs, and boiled *kašk* (dried condensed whey), eaten with bread (crumbled or in pieces). The compound term *kāljuš* is composed of *kāl* meaning unripe, connoting cooked rare, and *juš* (boiling); because, when preparing *kāljuš*, people let it boil only for three seconds (*seh qol*; Dehḡodā, s.v., *kāl* and *kāljuš*; Moʿin, s.v. *kāl* and *kāljuš*; Moḡammad Pādšāh, s.v. *kāljuš*).

Foods containing *kašk*, including *kallajuš*, have been common among tribal peoples and villagers for centuries, especially in wintertime, as it is both easily prepared and affordable for low-income families. *Kašk* is quite nutritious and contains protein and calcium. *Kašk* processing was one of the easiest and most effective ways of conserving dairy products in hot climates during pre-modern times (see Aubaile-Sallenave).

Due to its affordability and simplicity, *kallajuš* has traditionally been associated with the poorer classes of society, to which certain references in prose and poetry texts bear witness. Kamāl-al-Din Esmāʿil's (d. 1237) biting remark about *kallajuš* indicates that this dish dates back at least to the 12th century and that it has been one of the few dishes the poor could afford:

*kājagān-e bā-navā aknun kowrand
kāči o totmāj o lut o maʿdani*



*bi-navāyān niz bahr-e kowd konand
dig-hā-ye kāljuš-e yek mani*
(quoted in Dehḡodā, s.v. kāljuš).

Wealthy masters now eat
kāci, thick soup [āš], delicacies, and mineral water.
The poor also make themselves
pots of six kilos of kāljuš.

Preparation. To make kallajuš, sliced onions are first sautéed in heated cooking oil in a deep saucepan. When the onions have turned golden, turmeric, salt, pepper, and dried mint are added and cooked with the sautéed onions for two or three minutes. Then the desired amount of *kašk* is diluted in water and poured in the pan. The liquid mixture is heated until it comes to a boil for three seconds. Variations can be observed with different people and in different localities. One may like to add other dried herbs, such as tarragon or basil. Some people might add crumbled walnuts or (in Kerman) even small meatballs. Such options are, nevertheless, not common at all, the fixed essential ingredients being *kašk*, onions, turmeric, and mint. Persian *lavāš* bread or *sangak* is broken into small pieces (*talit*) and put in deep bowls of kallajuš and then eaten. Some people may prefer dried bread for the purpose.

Najaf Daryā-Bandari, the Iranian writer/amateur cook, seems to have equated kallajuš with *eškene* (I, p. 980), but the latter is technically a rather different dish that, among other differences, requires no *kašk*. That *kašk* is a basic component of kallajuš can be inferred from the fact that in some sources the term *kaškāb* (*kašk* + *āb*, water) has been given as a synonym for it (see Dehḡodā, s.v. *kālbā* as a variant for *kāljuš*, where Boshāq-e Aṭ'ema's verse has been given as an example; see also, Boshāq, p. 29). Under the sixteenth table in his book, Mirzā 'Ali-Akbar Āšpaz-bāši enumerates three kinds of kallajuš, two of which require *kašk* (p. 53).



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