

Kalbura basti (aka Hedgehogs)

I named these Turkish syrup-drenched cakelets 'hedgehogs' due to their spiky appearance and potential appeal to kids. Making them is great fun, involving an unusual use for a colander (a 'kalbur' in Turkish). I helped make them in Erhan Seker's restaurant kitchen, under the watchful eye of his assistant Nesrin.



Makes: 24 hedgehogs

Preparation time: 45 minutes

1500 ml sugar

1300 ml hot water (from the tap or kettle)

2 tsps lemon juice

225 ml yoghurt

3 eggs

1 heaping tsp bicarbonate of soda

flour

2 large handfuls coarsely crushed walnuts

1. Heat the water, sugar and lemon juice together in a large saucepan until the sugar melts and then the solution comes to a boil. Boil for about 10 minutes, then set aside to cool.
2. Whisk the eggs and yoghurt together in a bowl until smooth.
3. Add some flour and the bicarbonate of soda and mix in with your hands. Keep adding flour and squidding and kneading it in until you have a soft, moist dough "like ear tits", as they say in Turkey, ie supple like the feel of an earlobe.
4. Grease a high-sided baking tray/dish with olive or vegetable oil.
5. Heat oven to 170C, with a rack in the middle.
6. Take a colander with a flat (or flattish) base – the prettier the pattern of little holes on it the better – and place it upside down on the counter. Take a ball of dough the size of a clementine and roll it into a sphere. Place it on the upturned colander and pat into a disk nearly 3" wide.
7. Place a heaping teaspoon of crushed walnuts into the dough disk, then roll it up towards you into something the shape of an American football. You'll need to do this very delicately so as to not ruin the goosebump pattern created by the colander, but securely enough so that it will not leak out its filling later.
8. As soon as it's rolled, place it seam-side down into the greased baking dish. Repeat with remaining dough and nuts. You can place them fairly close together as they will only expand a little bit on baking.

9. Bake at 170C for 45 minutes.
10. As soon as the tray comes out of the oven pour the cooled sugar syrup all over the little cakes. Cover loosely with another metal tray or some foil for 10 minutes, then uncover and let cool.
11. Delicious served with clotted cream or ice cream.

