ACTIVITY CUISINE

Cook tanov spas

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As the first female guesthouse owner in the town of Alaverdi, Irina Israyelyan founded Iris Guesthouse to present the iconic natural landscape, culinary traditions, and culture of the Lori region. From her diverse menu, Irina offers three different cooking classes to her visitors. In this class, you will learn how to prepare buttermilk soup, “tanov spas” in Armenian, a common dish in Lori cuisine.

Tanov spas is made from traditional buttermilk, a rare delicacy even in this area. Thus, at the Iris Guesthouse you will have the opportunity to immerse yourself in its one-of-a-kind flavors. This hands-on class is ideal not only for those who want to enjoy a local culinary delight but also those looking to learn a new healthy recipe to include in their repertoire.
As you begin to cook the soup, you may be surprised to learn how real buttermilk used to be prepared. Traditionally a woman’s task, making homemade butter took considerable time and energy, through a process that vividly demonstrates both its humble beginnings and its historical significance in Armenian culture. As you will discover, this task requires great physical strength and a sense of rhythm as you churn the wooden barrel in repeated movements. The challenge, however, does not end there. Listen for just the right moment, when the sounds of splashes change as the fat separates from the liquid buttermilk.

Tanov spas was a modest dish and common meal for rural people; and despite its name, buttermilk soup is low in fat. These days locals may add an egg, sour-cream, or butter to boost its nutritional value and enhance its creaminess. Irina will share her own recipe with homemade rezhan, a cream-like dairy product, and strained yogurt. After adding cracked wheat and bringing the soup to a boil, it’s time to enrich its tangy taste with seasonal herbs as a final touch.

Voilà! Enjoy tanov spas both as a great summer cooler and a nice winter warmer.

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