



BURBARA (DESSERT MADE WITH WHEAT BERRIES)

Annually on the fourth of December, Eastern Christians in Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria prepare this nutritious dessert in honor of Saint Barbara, executed by her father, a roman pagan king. This recipe symbolizes her escape journey as she hid in wheat fields and is also prepared for celebrating a child's first tooth. The recipe uses whole wheat berries or cracked wheat (coarse bulgur), an excellent source of fiber and a great source of minerals such as manganese, copper, and zinc.

Yield: 2 servings

Serving Size: 1 bowl

Ingredients:

- 3 L of **water**
- ½ cup of **whole wheat berries***
- 1 tbsp of **anise (fennel) seeds***
- 1 **cinnamon stick**
- 1 cup **water** to steep the spices
- 2 tbsp of **sugar**
- 1 tsp of **rose water***
- 1 tsp of **blossom water***
- Optional toppings: **shredded coconut, pre-soaked nuts, such as walnuts, almonds, and pistachios**

Instructions:

1. Pre-soak the wheat berries in 1 L of water for at least 12 hours. Drain them and set aside.
2. Pre-soak nuts of your choice: walnuts, almonds, and pistachio for at least 12 hours (this will soften the nuts to mimic the creaminess of the cooked wheat berries; an optional step if you prefer to keep the nuts crunchy).
3. In a small tea kettle, boil anise (fennel) seeds and cinnamon stick for five minutes and steep for one hour.
4. Bring 2 L of water to a boil in a large pot and add the drained wheat berries. Simmer for about 30 minutes, adding more water, if needed.
5. Wheat berries are done when the kernels are soft and tender throughout. To check, taste or press a kernel against the pot.
6. Strain the anise (fennel) seeds and cinnamon into a small bowl and add the infused water it to the pot with the cooked wheat berries. Discard the spices.
7. Add the sugar, rose water and blossom water and mix well. The mixture should be creamy and loose.
8. Pour into bowls and garnish with toppings of your choice: shredded coconut, pre-soaked nuts such as walnuts, almonds, and pistachios.
9. Serve immediately, or chill.

*Note: Find these ingredients at Pete's Fresh Market or any Middle Eastern market. The amount of sugar, rose water, blossom water, anise, cinnamon, and toppings are highly customizable. You can increase, decrease, add, or eliminate any of these ingredients based on your preferences.

