

## Sweet Cheese-Filled Pancakes

Qatayef, a traditional Ramadan dessert, are small, fluffy pancakes filled with fresh cheese and sometimes nuts, spices, or dried fruit. The half-moon-shaped pastries are fried until golden and crisp, then soaked in a sugar syrup to create a sticky, sweet delight with just a touch of salty tang from the cheese.

Note: You can use fresh cheese from a Middle Eastern grocery store, or grated fresh mozzarella, ricotta, or a combination. A pinch of salt added to the cheese adds a nice contrast to the sweet syrup that saturates the pancakes.

From *"The Bread and Salt Between Us"* by Mayada Anjari with Jennifer Sit, Lake Isle Press, 2018

### INGREDIENTS

#### PANCAKES

2 cups all-purpose flour  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
½ teaspoon salt  
2 ½ cups warm water, plus more if needed  
1 teaspoon active dry yeast  
Vegetable oil or butter, for greasing the pan

#### SUGAR SYRUP

1½ cups sugar  
1¼ cups water  
1 tablespoon orange blossom water (optional)  
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice

#### FILLING

1½ cups coarsely grated unsalted mozzarella (see Note)  
½ cup crème fraîche  
Pinch of salt  
Vegetable oil, for frying the filled pancakes

*Makes about 24 pancakes*

### PREPARATION

1. Make the pancake batter: In a large bowl, combine the flour, baking powder, salt, water, and yeast. Whisk until smooth and no lumps remain. Cover with a kitchen towel and set in a warm place for 45 minutes to 1 hour, until slightly bubbly.
2. While the batter sits, make the syrup: Place the sugar, water, orange blossom water (if using), and lemon juice in a small pot and stir to combine. Cook on medium-high, stirring occasionally, until the sugar has melted. Remove from the heat and let cool.
3. When the batter is ready, lightly grease a large nonstick skillet with vegetable oil. Heat the pan over medium-high until hot. Give the batter a good stir to recombine. It should have the consistency of pancake batter; if it's too thick, add a little extra water, up to ¼ cup. Working in batches, drop about 2 tablespoons of the batter into the pan and let it spread to form a 4-inch-wide circle. Cook for 2 to 3 minutes, until the pancakes are just golden brown on the bottom, and bubbly and dry on top; do not flip the pancakes. Transfer to a platter or baking sheet browned side down, and make the remaining pancakes, greasing the skillet again if necessary. Let the pancakes cool completely.
4. Make the filling: In a bowl, stir together the cheese, crème fraîche, and salt.
5. Form the qatayef: Place 2 tablespoons of the filling in the center of a pancake. Fold in half to form a half-moon and pinch the edges to seal well. Repeat with the remaining filling and pancakes.
6. Heat 1 inch of vegetable oil in a deep skillet on medium high. Working in batches, add the qatayef and cook for 1 to 2 minutes per side, flipping once, until golden brown on both sides. Transfer to a plate lined with paper towels with a slotted spoon to drain and repeat with the remaining qatayef.
7. Transfer the qatayef to a serving platter and drizzle each with 2 to 3 tablespoons of the sugar syrup. Let cool and serve.



Liz Clayman

### THE BREAD AND SALT BETWEEN US by Mayada Anjari with Jennifer Sit

"A quietly powerful reflection on how food can bring families together."  
—Marcus Samuelsson, Head Chef Red Rooster, Harlem

Organized by everyday fare, celebrations, and sweets, *The Bread and Salt Between Us* offers over forty recipes that recall the flavor and comforts of Mayada's home in Syria. From the fresh tabbouleh she learned to prepare alongside her mother and sisters to Baklava or the rice pudding that won over her future husband, these easy-to-approach dishes, like Chicken Kabsa, Green Fassoulia or White Fassoulia, or Rice Pilaf with Vermicelli tell the story of a family whose culinary traditions have sustained them as they build a new life in the United States.

