01/18/10 - Ghormeh Sabzi Soup, Persian Green Herb Soup

Living in Beverly Hills affords me the opportunity to be up close and personal with many Iranians. There is a very large Persian population in Beverly Hills and the Westside of Los Angeles. The majority fled tyranny after the demise of the Shah. Beverly Hills is so ethnic that the public school system takes a holiday for Norooz or Persian New Years (vernal equinox celebration). The school calendar reads ?closed for local holiday'.

If there is one thing, we all love to eat in my home it is Persian food. Kabab (barg or koobideh), Ghormeh Sabzi, Tah Digh, and Zereshk Polo are some of our favorites. We also frequently order in delivery or take out Glatt Kosher Persian food from Kabob and Chinese on Pico Boulevard. There are many authentic Persian restaurants on the West side of Los Angeles and Beverly Hills. As I have noted some are even kosher.

I would like to say many thanks to my friend Nina for showing how to make Ghormeh Sabzi. This allows me always to have it at my fingertips. Now, all I have to do is perfect the Tah Digh to go with it.

Tonight, Monday is one of those rare cold rainy evenings in Beverly Hills. I am making my own cross ethnic feast to banish the unfamiliar damp gloom. The line-up includes fresh made, Ghormeh Sabzi; left-over, brown rice blend with Anaheim chile; grilled lime and sumac glazed chicken thighs, and zucchini-mushroom stir fry. This meal is super healthy, appetite satisfying and left-over using up all at the same time. Great!

Recipe

4 strips of beef short ribs

2 large brown onions, peeled and cut in small dice

1 bunch of scallions or 1 leek, cleaned and chopped small

4 garlic cloves, peeled and chopped

2 tablespoons of vegetable oil

¼ cup turmeric

1-2 teaspoons salt

1 teaspoon pepper

3 quarts of water

1 bag of dried red kidney beans cooked in two quarts of water until soft or

3 14 oz cans of organic red kidney beans rinsed and drained.

5 preserved Persian lemons

10 large bunches of parsley (curly or Italian), washed, dried, and chopped

8 large bunches of cilantro, washed, dried, and chopped

2 bunches of dill, washed, dried, and chopped

2 bunches of shanbelile (fenugreek), washed, dried, and chopped

1-2 bunches of mint, washed, dried, and chopped

3-4 tablespoons of olive oil

Cut each strip of beef short rib into 3 or 4 pieces. Preheat a heavy bottomed Dutch oven and when it is hot add 2 tablespoons of oil and then the meat. Let the meat seer on all sides, then remove from the pan, and set aside for a moment. Turn the heat down to medium and add the prepared onions and garlic. Sauté the onions for a few moments in the oil and fat that remains in the Dutch oven. Season the onions with salt, pepper, and turmeric. Next, add the short ribs back in and stir. Add the water and cover the pot letting the meat and onions come to a boil.

In the meantime, preheat a large sauté pan, add the oil, and then add all the chopped herbs. They reduce dramatically as you stir and fry them. Keep frying until any moisture released evaporates. When the herbs are ready, you may add them to the soup. Before adding the herbs, check the boiling soup for any scum that may need skimming.

After adding the herbs, dump in the cooked kidney beans. Next use a sharp object to poke a hole in each of the preserved lemons. I use the tip of my instant thermometer for checking meat temperatures to poke the holes. Throw in the lemons. Check the soup for seasoning. Cover and simmer on low heat for 2 hours.

Uncover and simmer for one more half hour and it will reduce and thicken. Serve over any kind of rice, but especially basmati, maybe even Tah Digh.

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