05/09/10 - Rice Stuffed Tomatoes, Tomates Yenas

On my trip to Turkey, I ate the best tomatoes stuffed with rice reminiscent of my Nona's. The old people like my Nona had the patience to leave things in the oven just an extra few minutes until they had that little extra something, sort of a caramelization that happens just before something becomes overdone. Today people are impatient and in a hurry, they don't wait for that ?aha' moment of perfection for some cooked foods that give their best and most sublime flavors with that extra couple of minutes of cooking time.

The night we ate these tomatoes, I asked the waiter how they made them, following is an my interpretation;

1 cup long grain rice orTurkish Baldo rice

½ cup chopped onion

1/3 cup chopped parsley

3 tablespoons olive oil

1 teaspoon salt

1 tablespoon Baharat seasoning (optional)

1 cup cold water

Wash and dry the tomatoes. With a sharp tomato knife cut off the top of each tomato. Reserve the tops to place back on the tomatoes once you fill them. Hollow out the tomatoes using a sharp knife or a sharp melon ball-er. Reserve all the juice and tomato pulp in a bowl.

Preheat the oven to 350º. Put a little olive oil, 1 teaspoon, in an 8 x 8 inch baking dish.

Preheat a saucepan, add two tablespoons of olive oil, and then add the onion and parsley. Stir and sauté until the onions are sweet and translucent. Season the rice with salt and Baharat if you like. Next add the rice, give it a couple of stirs, and then add the one cup of water. Simmer until all of the water is absorbed. The rice will be about half way cooked through. Now add the reserved tomato pulp and juice to the rice. Remove the rice from the heat and with a large fill all of the tomatoes. Replace the tops of the tomatoes and place them in the prepared baking dish. Drizzle the remaining olive oil over the tomatoes.

Place the tomatoes in the preheated oven and bake for 1 hour or until the tops are beginning to have little black spots and the rice has absorbed all of the tomato juice and is cooked through.

Serve these with the kufte in the previous post or with fish or chicken.

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