

Candied pumpkin

Dulce de kalavasa

Amber, luscious, candied pumpkin steeped in a ginger syrup with crunchy toasted almonds-“Dulce de kalavasa” is a much loved Rhodesli sweet .

It is splendid as a topping on cakes or simply served with Greek yogurt for a quick dessert.

As the festival of Purim approaches we recall the traditions of the Sephardim of Rhodes Island. One of the most beautiful customs of our Sephardic folklore is the offering of sweet treats to any guests throughout the year.

On Purim the exchange of sweet treats abound referred to as “*Platikos de Purim*” - platters of sweet treats. This included Boulokonio, Baklava, Biscotchos , halva, Lokum, candied fruits and a plethora of sweet indulgences.

Another custom was for parents to gift some money to young kids known as “*Purimlik*”.

Made this festival be a joyous one or as we wish in Ladino “*Purim alegre y dulce, ke gozen kon gusto!*”

1kg (2¼lb) pumpkin, peeled

2 tbsp lime powder*

For the syrup:

1 cup honey

1½ cups sugar

1½ cups golden syrup

1 cup water

1 tsp ground ginger

1 cup whole blanched almonds, toasted

Cut the pumpkin into long thin strips 1 x 6cm (½ x 2in). Place in a dish with enough cold water to cover and add the lime powder. Allow to soak for 2 hours. This process firms up the pumpkin for preserving. Rinse thoroughly.

Prepare the syrup: In a large heavy-based pan bring the honey, sugar, golden syrup and water to a boil. Add pumpkin strips and allow to cook on medium heat for about 1 hour or until the syrup coats the back of a spoon. Remove from the heat, add the ginger and toasted almonds. Allow to cool.

Transfer the candied pumpkin and syrup into warm sterilised jars and store in a cool dark place.

• *Stella's Hints:*

- * Lime powder is available from pharmacies.