

حلوة سفرجل *Helou S'farjal*

CANDIED QUINCE

This is a traditional Turkish dish, served during the holiday of Rosh Hashanah. Quinces are often mistakenly tasted raw and therefore disliked. In fact, quince should only be eaten cooked because cooking removes the bitter taste and extracts the sweet and aromatic flavor from the fruit. Once cooked, quince has a wonderfully sharp taste that infuses everything around it. Marmalades, for example, were once made exclusively with quince, and the word “marmalade” actually comes from the Portuguese *inannelo* or *marmelo*, meaning “quince.” When shopping for quince, examine the skin; the down of a ripe quince can be easily rubbed off by hand.

Helou are traditionally served in two dishes on a special tray, along with a small bowl of water, small forks, and cups for drinking water. After eating a piece of *helou* with a fork, place the utensil in the water to prevent it from getting too sticky. Traditionally, the set was used for special occasions, including the arrival of a prospective suitor to the home of a young woman’s family. During the latter occasion, the young woman would hold the tray as her suitor and the girl’s father would partake of the sweets. Coffee would be served later.

3 to 4 quinces, cored, peeled,
and cut in 1-inch-thick slices
(about 3 cups)

3 cups sugar

1. In a medium saucepan, cover the quinces with the sugar and cook over medium-low heat. The sugar will melt and liquefy, and the quinces will start to turn a beautiful dark and rosy color.

2. When the mixture bubbles, reduce the heat to low and simmer, stirring occasionally, for 1 hour, or until the quinces are thoroughly coated with a thick, gooey syrup. Transfer the quince and syrup to a jar, and store in the refrigerator for up to 2 months.

🌿 *Note* 🌿

You can use the pits of the quince in the cooking process to achieve a deeper color, but discard them before serving.

Yield: 2 ½ cups