

حلوة كرات *Helou Kerrateh*

CANDIED TRUMPET GOURD

This sweet often makes an appearance on the Rosh Hashanah table. The word *kerrateh* resembles the Hebrew word *karet*, meaning “to banish,” which is used in a blessing that asks G-d to banish our enemies in the coming New Year. A little *miskeh*, or mastic, lends an exotic taste to this dish. Mastic is a resin collected from the *Pistacia lentiscus* tree, which is native to the Mediterranean region. There is an old Syrian saying that on Rosh Hashanah, the white is for good luck and the green is for fertility.

1 trumpet gourd (about 3 pounds),
peeled and grated

1½ tablespoons freshly squeezed
lemon juice (about ½ lemon)

4 cups hot *shira* (Fragrant Aleppian
Dessert Syrup, page 249)

1 drop green food coloring
(optional)

⅛ teaspoon mastic gum, available
in Middle Eastern groceries
(optional)

1. Place the gourd in a medium saucepan with the lemon juice and enough water to cover completely. Cook over medium-high heat for 15 minutes, or until tender.
2. Nestle a colander in a medium bowl. Put the gourd in the colander and press firmly to drain. Let stand so that the grated gourd drains thoroughly. The drier the gourd, the firmer the *helou*.
3. Return the gourd to the saucepan and add the *shira*. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, then reduce the heat

to low and simmer, stirring occasionally, for about 1 hour until it reaches a jamlike consistency.

4. Just before removing from the heat, stir in the food coloring and the mastic gum, if desired. Remove from the heat and let stand until cool. Transfer the gourd and syrup to a jar and store in the refrigerator for up to 1 year. When ready to serve, place in a small bowl with whole, peeled almonds and pistachios.

Yield: 10 to 12 servings (1 quart)