



A Taste from Home



RECIPES SHARED BY THE WIDOWS WE
SERVE, FROM THEIR HOMES TO YOURS



Introduction

Ramadan is a month of nourishment, of the body, the heart and the soul.

Across the communities where The Zahra Trust works, mothers prepare meals not just to break the fast, but to preserve tradition, comfort their children, and create moments of normality despite hardship.

This book brings together recipes shared by women supported through our programmes, widows, mothers and caregivers, who continue to give generously within their homes, even when resources are limited.

As you prepare these dishes in your own home this Ramadan, we invite you to remember the families behind them, and the quiet strength that fills their kitchens every day.



“ One bite, and I remember who we were, and where we belong.

– Sakina Abdullah

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**In Iraq,
widows carry
generations of
love through
the meals they
make.**

Hiba's Biryani



Iraq



6 Servings



45 Mins

Ingredients

- 600g Rice
- 1 whole chicken, cut into six pieces
- 50g of sliced almonds
- 50g of Raisins
- 150g Peas
- 3 large onions, sliced
- 3 tablespoons (ground coriander, cardamom, bay leaves, cumin, cinnamon, cloves, turmeric, black pepper, salt)
- 3 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 300g Yogurt

Directions

1. Soak the rice for one hour or more.
2. Slice the onions and fry them in plenty of oil until caramelised and golden brown. Set aside.
3. Boil the chicken until cooked, then lightly fry it in oil and set aside.
4. Bring water to a boil, cook the rice until done, then drain and set aside.
5. In a pot, sauté a small onion in oil at the base.
6. Layer the rice, adding caramelised onions, peas, almonds, chicken pieces, and a sprinkle of spices between each layer.
7. Cover the pot tightly and cook over very low heat for around 30 minutes.

Hiba's Muhalabi



Iraq



6 Servings



45 Mins

Ingredients

- 1 litre Milk
- 100g Sugar
- 40g Cornstarch
- ½ teaspoon Cardamom
- Optional: 30g grated coconut

Directions

1. Place the milk in a pot over heat.
2. Add sugar, then cornstarch, stirring continuously over low heat.
3. Continue stirring until the mixture thickens and becomes smooth.
4. Add ground cardamom.
5. Pour into flat dishes and leave to cool.

Behind the Recipe

A little message from the special women who provided these recipes

“

My children occasionally ask me to make them biryani, but with Iraqi flavour and spices. I try to make it when I can, especially during Ramadan, because it brings them joy and reminds us of special family moments.

– Hiba Jassim

A Widow and Mother of 5



Rabab's Teshreeb



Iraq



6 Servings



1 Hr 45 Mins

Ingredients

- 1.5 kg whole chicken, cut into pieces
- 3 medium onions peeled
- 4 medium potatoes, peeled and halved
- 2 dried limes (loomi)
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1½ tsp salt
- 1 tsp turmeric
- 1 tsp curry powder
- 1 dried lime (ground) or juice of ½ lemon
- 1.5 litres water (enough to cover chicken and potatoes)

Directions

1. Heat the oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add the chicken pieces and sauté lightly until they change colour.
2. Add the whole peeled onions and dried limes to the pot. Cook for about 5 minutes, stirring gently.
3. Add the potatoes and pour in enough hot or warm water to cover the chicken and vegetables (about 1.5 litres).
4. Season with salt, turmeric, curry powder, and ground dried lime (or lemon juice). Stir gently.
5. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat, cover, and simmer for about 60 minutes, until the chicken is fully cooked and the potatoes are tender.
6. Taste the broth and adjust salt or seasoning if needed, then remove from heat.

Behind the Recipe

A little message from the special women who provided these recipes

“

My children often ask me to make Tashreeb. It is cheaper to make with chicken than meat and it fills everyone and I try to fulfil this request every 15 days.

– Rabab Abdul

A Widow and Mother of 7



Rabab and her children

**In Lebanon,
every meal
is a quiet act
of resilience
and love.**

Nidal's Fettuccine Pasta



Lebanon



3 Servings



25 Mins

Ingredients

- 250 g fettuccine
- 2 tbsp olive oil or butter
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 240 ml cooking cream
- 50 g grated Parmesan
- Salt & black pepper
- 75 g mushrooms
- 150 g cooked chicken pieces

Directions

1. Boil the fettuccine in salted water according to package instructions until al dente. Drain and set aside.
2. Heat olive oil or butter in a pan over medium heat.
3. Add garlic and sauté for one minute until fragrant.
4. Add cream and warm gently without boiling.
5. Stir in Parmesan cheese, salt, and black pepper until slightly thickened.
6. Add pasta, chicken, and mushrooms. Mix until coated with sauce.

Behind the Recipe

A little message from the special women who provided these recipes

“

This is an easy and filling meal prepared at home for family dinners.

– **Nidal Mostafa**

A widow in Lebanon who lives with her 2 children and is supported by The Zahra Trust

This recipe is shared as a symbol of resilience, love, and the quiet strength found in everyday acts of care.



Lara's Chocolate Brownies



Lebanon



6 Servings



40 Mins

Ingredients

- 200 g sugar
- 120 g melted butter or oil
- 2 eggs
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 40 g cocoa powder
- 60 g flour
- ¼ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp baking powder

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C.
2. Mix sugar and melted butter until combined.
3. Add eggs and vanilla extract and mix well.
4. Add cocoa powder, flour, salt, and baking powder and mix until smooth.
5. Pour the mixture into a greased baking pan.
6. Bake for 20–25 minutes until set but soft inside.
7. Allow to cool, then cut into squares.

Behind the Recipe

A little message from the special women who provided these recipes

“

This is a well loved dessert and I know you will love it!

– Lara Medlej

A widow in Lebanon who lives with her 2 children and is supported by The Zahra Trust

This recipe is shared as a symbol of resilience, love, and the quiet strength found in everyday acts of care.



Zeinab's Homemade Pizza



Lebanon



6 Servings



1 Hr 25 Mins

Ingredients

- 250 g plain flour
- 7 g dried yeast
- 1 tsp sugar
- 180 ml warm water
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- ½ tsp salt
- 120 g tomato sauce
- 100 g grated mozzarella
- Toppings of choice

Directions

1. Mix yeast, sugar, and warm water in a bowl and leave for 5–10 minutes until foamy.
2. Add flour, salt, and olive oil and knead until a soft dough forms.
3. Cover and let the dough rise for one hour.
4. Preheat the oven to 220°C.
5. Roll out the dough and place it on a baking tray.
6. Spread tomato sauce evenly over the dough.
7. Add cheese and chosen toppings.
8. Bake for 12–15 minutes until the crust is golden and the cheese has melted.
9. Slice and serve warm.

Behind the Recipe

A little message from the special women who provided these recipes

“

This is a lovely recipe to make with your children!

– Zeinab Chaalan

A widow in Lebanon living with her 4 children and supported by The Zahra Trust



**In Afghanistan,
food is more
than survival,
it is comfort,
tradition,
and home.**

Gul's Kabuli Pula



Afghanistan



6 Servings



1 Hr 30 Mins

Ingredients

- 1.5 kg rice
- 1 kg lamb meat
- 2 onions
- 3 carrots (thinly sliced)
- 100 g raisins
- About 0.5 litres oil
- Salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 clove garlic
- Cinnamon (as needed)

Directions

1. Sauté carrots in oil until soft and lightly golden. Add raisins and cook briefly. Set aside.
2. Heat oil in a pot and add meat. Sauté until the colour changes.
3. Add chopped onions and cook until golden.
4. Season with salt, pepper, and optional spices. Add water to cover the meat and cook until tender.
5. Rinse and soak rice in salted water for 30 minutes. Boil until half-cooked, then drain.
6. Layer rice in a pot, add meat and some broth, then top with carrot and raisin mixture.
7. Cover and steam on low heat for 30–40 minutes.

Steps in Pictures



Behind the Recipe

A little message from the special women who provided these recipes

“

This is Afghanistan's national dish and is prepared for special family meals.

– Gul Chaman

A widow and mother of 2

Gul is mother of two children on the outskirts of Kabul. The father passed away five years ago, and since then, the mother has been providing for the family's basic needs.



Gul and her children

**In Pakistan,
widows preserve
home through
the flavours
passed down
in families.**

Zakia's Gajar Ka Halwa



Pakistan



5 Servings



1 Hour

Ingredients

- 1 kg carrots, grated
- 1 litre full-fat milk
- 150 g sugar
- 60g ghee
- ½ tsp cardamom
- 40 g mixed nuts

Directions

1. Heat ghee and sauté grated carrots for a few minutes.
2. Add milk and cook on low heat until the carrots are tender and most of the milk has evaporated.
3. Add sugar and continue cooking until the mixture thickens and starts leaving ghee.
4. Add cardamom powder and nuts and cook for a few more minutes.

Behind the Recipe

A little message from the special women who provided these recipes

“

This is prepared on Eid days. My children always expect it.

– Sayeda Zakia

A Widow and Mother of 4



Salma's Fruit Chaat



Pakistan



4 Servings



15 Mins

Ingredients

- 1 apple
- 1 banana
- 1 guava
- 1 pear
- 100g pomegranate seeds
- ¼ tsp salt
- 1 tsp chaat masala
- 2 tbsp sugar
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 120 ml cream

Directions

1. Chop all fruits and place them in a bowl.
2. Add salt and chaat masala and mix well.
3. Make a syrup using sugar and lemon juice and pour it over the fruit.
4. Add cream and mix everything together.

Behind the Recipe

A little message from the special women who provided these recipes

“

I like to make this during Ramadan because it is easy, healthy, and children love it.

– Salma S

A Widow and Mother of 5



Sakeena's Baltistan Noodle Soup



Pakistan



5 Servings



45 Mins

Ingredients

- 500 g chicken or mutton
- 120 g wheat flour (for noodles)
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 tsp ginger-garlic paste
- 2 tomatoes, chopped
- 1 tsp red chilli powder
- 1 tsp cumin
- ½ tsp turmeric
- ½ tsp black pepper
- Salt to taste
- 2 tbsp oil
- Fresh coriander
- 1.5 litres water

Directions

1. Heat oil and sauté the onion until soft.
2. Add meat, ginger/garlic paste, tomatoes, salt, turmeric, and chilli powder. Cook until oil separates.
3. Add enough water to cover the meat and cook until tender.
4. Roll wheat dough thin and cut into small strips.
5. Add dough strips to the boiling broth and cook for 6–8 minutes until the soup thickens.

Behind the Recipe

A little message from the special women who provided these recipes

“

This is a traditional dish of Baltistan usually prepared in winters. It is a type of soup. There are many variations in this dish. I have to save up for a long time just to have enough that we can make this dish. My kids really enjoy!

– Sakeena

A Widow and Mother of 7



Sakeena and her children

**In India,
widows keep
family heritage
alive through
the flavours of
their kitchens.**

Temina's Coconut China Grass Halwa



India



7 Servings



1 Hr 20 Mins

Ingredients

- 0-12 strands china grass
- 500 ml water
- 500 ml coconut water
- 300g coconut jelly
- 150-200 g sugar

Directions

1. Wash and soak china grass in 2 cups water for 20-30 minutes.
2. Heat the soaked china grass with the same water, stirring until fully melted and clear.
3. Add coconut water and cook on low heat for 5 minutes.
4. Add sugar and cook until slightly thick.
5. Add coconut jelly and stir continuously 5-10 minutes until glossy and smooth.
6. Pour into a tray and spread a little coconut jelly on top.
7. Chill for about 30 minutes to set.
8. Cut into pieces and serve cold at iftar.

Behind the Recipe

A little message from the special women who provided these recipes

“

A cool, soft and refreshing dessert made from coconut and china grass (agar agar). This halwa is gentle on the stomach, hydrating after a long fast, and perfect for serving chilled at iftar.

– Temina Iqbal

A Widow supported by
The Zahra Trust



Ma's Fish Pulao



India



5 Servings



45 Mins

Ingredients

- 400g basmati rice (soaked 20 minutes)
- 400 g fresh sea fish (surmai or similar)
- 1 onion, sliced
- 1 small tomato, chopped
- 1 tsp ginger-garlic paste
- 2 tbsp oil + 1 tbsp ghee
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 cloves
- 3 peppercorns
- small cinnamon piece
- pinch shahi jeera
- ¼ tsp turmeric
- Salt to taste
- 800ml water
- Fresh mint and coriander
- Few drops lemon juice(optional)

Directions

1. Rub fish with salt and turmeric; set aside.
2. Heat oil and ghee, add whole spices.
3. Fry onion until golden, add ginger-garlic and tomato.
4. Add fish and cook lightly on both sides.
5. Add drained rice, salt and water.
6. Bring to a boil, then cover and cook on low (dum) until rice is done.
7. Sprinkle mint, coriander and lemon; rest 5 minutes and gently fluff.
8. Serve hot with yogurt or simple salad.

Behind the Recipe

A little message from the special women who provided these recipes

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In Kodinar's coastal Shia homes, fresh sea fish is everyday nourishment. This one-pot pulao is mildly spiced, fragrant and easy to digest, often prepared for iftar or after majlis, symbolising unity and shared blessings.

– Sayyeda Ma Irshad

A Widow supported by
The Zahra Trust



Nargis' Gul Gule



India



Makes 20



30 Mins

Ingredients

- 300 g plain flour
- 200 g jaggery (non-centrifugal sugar)
- About 240 ml water (as needed)
- ½ tsp cardamom
- Oil for deep frying

Directions

1. Dissolve jaggery in a little warm water.
2. Add flour and mix well.
3. Add more water slowly to make a thick, smooth batter.
4. Mix in cardamom if using.
5. Heat oil on medium flame.
6. Drop small spoonfuls of batter into the oil.
7. Fry until dark golden and crisp, turning gently.
8. Remove and drain on paper towel.

Behind the Recipe

A little message from the special women who provided these recipes

“

A simple, comforting sweet loved for its deep caramel flavour and homemade warmth.

– Nargis Khatun

A Widow supported by
The Zahra Trust

A traditional Ramadan sweet from the coconut and jaggery rich coastal belt. These small fried bites are crispy outside, soft inside and naturally sweet from jaggery, giving quick energy after fasting.





**Your donations help
keep food on the table
for widows and their
families, so they can
pour love into every
meal, and offer a small
comfort that nothing
else can replace.**