HAWAYIJ

Yield: about 5 tablespoons hawayij

Filled with warming spices like pepper, cumin, and coriander, this traditional Yemenite spice blend also contains nigella seeds, cardamom, turmeric, and saffron. I prefer to blend my hawayij as needed to ensure a deeply potent flavor that shines through the soup.

PREPARATION

1. Either pound all ingredients in a mortar and pestle or use a coffee grinder to grind to a powder. It is okay if you have a few stray bits of whole spices.

HILBEA

Yield: about \(\frac{3}{4}\) cup hilbe

It is no wonder Yemenites eat this soup for Friday night, with a big dollop of hilbe, made of mostly fenugreek seeds and seasoned with garlicky zhug—both fenu-greek and garlic are considered aphrodisiacs!

PREPARATION

1. Soak the fenugreek powder in \(\frac{1}{2}\) cup (120 ml) water for at least 3 hours, until the mixture is gelatinous.

2. Add the zhug, lemon juice, and salt. Using an electric hand mixer or a whisk, beat until smooth. Adjust seasonings to taste. The sauce should be very spicy.

Note: You can either make hawayij and hilbe yourself or buy them online through Pereg Gourmet at www.pereg-spices.com.