



| Photos courtesy Idit

Idit's

ETHIOPIAN KITCHEN

BY EITAN BARAK

F rael has a very varied cuisine due to the influx of immigrants from more than 100 countries. All these countries have different foods and different ways of preparing it. Some people have made it their business to promote their cuisine by establishing restaurants or catering services based on their national food.

One of those is Idit, a catering company that specializes in Ethiopian food. Idit not only offers clients Ethiopian food but also organizes events with an Ethiopian ambience. This includes Ethiopian music, more or less traditional Ethiopian dishes, and a staff of cooks and waiters dressed in Ethiopian garb.

Ethiopia is a large country with diverse regions separated from each other by mountains, rivers and deserts. Consequently, many of these regions have their own distinctive cuisine. Different dishes for different parts of the country.

Idit's chef, Sariatto Asfa, says, "Ethiopian dishes are based on slow-cooking. The food is cooked over a low fire for a relatively long period of time. Most of the traditional dishes consist mainly of legumes and cooked root vegetables. Spices are used liberally. This compensated for the small number of basic ingredients used when cooking and because Ethiopians believe that very spicy foods are beneficial for male virility."

Spices are an important element in Ethiopian cuisine. The most commonly used spices are cardamom, black pepper, red pepper, cumin, turmeric, black mustard, cinnamon, cloves, coriander, ground ginger, fenugreek, different kinds of chili and other hot peppers. In addition, liberal use is made of garlic and onions.

In Ethiopia, spices are usually purchased in their raw and unprocessed forms. They are ground with a mortar and pestle when needed. Consequently, there mixtures made up of a number of such mixtures. Two of the

most common mixtures are Berbere and Korarima.

Berberere is a spicy red mix consisting of hot Ethiopian red pepper, Ethiopian black pepper, English pepper, cardamom, cloves, cumin, fenugreek, nutmeg, coriander, ginger, turmeric, salt, paprika and cinnamon. Korarima, a mixture commonly used for cooking vegetables, consists of nutmeg, Ethiopian cardamom, ginger, cloves and black pepper.

One of the most popular dishes in Ethiopia is injera, a kind of fermented flatbread made from teff flour. Its sour taste is the hallmark of Ethiopian cuisine. Ethiopians eat it morning, noon and night. Injera is a soft, damp pita that is reminiscent of the Yemenite bread lachuch. Injera is round and full of tiny holes like pancakes. The bread is baked on a large black clay plate over a fire. Injera is commonly used in lieu of plates and utensils at meals. A piece of injera is torn off and used to grab a bit of each dish, like with pita and hummus. It's also the perfect serving platter for sauces, dips and cooked dishes.

Tibs, a kind of thick stew, is undoubtedly the fast food of Ethiopia. Every Ethiopian mother will tell you it's an easy dish to make that everyone loves.

Doro Wat is one of the most well-known dishes in Ethiopia. It is usually reserved for holidays and special events. It is a poultry dish in which the chicken is traditionally cut up in a very precise manner. It is cut into 12 pieces, each with its own special name. The choicest pieces are served to elders and honored guests. The skin is considered a delicacy that is shared by all.



DORO WAT

- 4 chicken legs, with the thighs and drumsticks separated
- 4 chicken wings
- 1kg. white onions, finely diced
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sunflower oil
- 1 garlic bulb, crushed into a paste
- 3 tbsp. minced ginger
- 1.5 tbsp. sunflower seed paste
- 1 tbsp. Tikur Kimem (Black Spice) – a mixture of minced garlic, garlic powder, ginger powder and cardamom
- 5 tbsp. Berebere powder (described above). Or you can use 4 tbsp. of Berbere paste.
- 1.5 tbsp. salt
- 4 hard-boiled eggs

In a wide, deep pan with a heavy bottom, heat the oil on medium heat. Add half of the minced garlic and ginger and cook for 2 minutes. Add the onions and cook until the onions dry up a bit and are golden (about $\frac{1}{2}$ hour). Be careful that the onions on the sides of the pan don't burn.

Add the Berbere powder/paste and continue cooking on medium-low heat. Note: Berbere powder burns easily, so it's important to constantly stir the pan. Add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of hot water any time you see that the mixture is starting to stick to the pan. Keep cooking and stirring until the mixture is uniform in texture, has a glossy sheen, and the oil has risen to the top.

Add the chicken. Mix well and cover the pan. Let the chicken cook for $\frac{1}{2}$ hour on low heat. Add 1 cup of hot water. Add the remaining minced garlic and ginger, Tikur Kimem and salt.

Cook for 15 to 20 minutes. Taste the dish and turn off the heat. Poke the eggs a couple of times with a fork and gently add them to the sauce. Let the Doro Wat sit for 10 to 15 minutes to give the eggs time to absorb the flavors. Serve.

- 2 tbsp. sunflower oil
- 600 gr. entrecote or beef fillet, sliced into medium-size strips
- 2 onions, thinly sliced
- 1 hot green pepper (optional)
- Salt and pepper to taste

Season the meat with pepper. Heat a wide pan with the oil. Brown the meat lightly, then flip it over. Add the onions and continue cooking until the onions are translucent and start to turn golden. Add the hot pepper and lower the heat. Add salt as desired and serve.



TIBS



INJERA

- Teff flour
- Water
- Oil

Place teff flour in a bowl and slowly add cold as you stir. Mix until you have a uniform paste that's not too soft or hard. Cover with a damp towel and set aside for 12 hours, ideally overnight.

After the dough has risen and soured, dilute it with some cold water and set it aside once again. Add $\frac{3}{4}$ of a liter of boiling water and stir until you get a thin pancake-like batter. If the boiling water isn't enough, add a little more cold water and keep stirring until there are no lumps. Cover the dough and let it sit for 6 hours until the batter is bubbling and has white foam on top.

Heat a wide pan (ideally Teflon) on high heat. Oil the pan with a cotton swab. With a ladle, pour the batter into the pan. When the dough starts to bubble, cover the pan for 1 minute. Transfer the injera to a plate or tray. Repeat the steps with the rest of the batter.