

Afghan Spring Food is Called Samanak: Trina Ehsan

INGREDIENTS.

Half kilograms of wheat,
Four cups of flour,
Ten cups of water,
Four teaspoon sesame seeds,
Two tablespoon walnuts.

We wash the wheat, spread it on a tray and cover it with a cotton cloth to sprout. Every day we moisten the wheat with just a sprinkle of water. After a few days, tiny shoots begin to sprout and after two weeks, very white roots will grow which is the sweetest part and at the top grass will grow.

When the grass is ten centimetres high it is ready to cook. So we chop all the white the green and the seeds didn't sprout, grind them and mix with one cup of cold water. To have a juicy liquid we place a cloth on the top of a big pot and slowly pour the mixture on the cloth then we squeeze the cloth to extract the liquid. The solid which is left on the cloth we mix with another cup of water and repeat the same process again and again until we get all the extract from the mixture.

Then we add eight cups of cold water and slowly sprinkle the flour while stirring the mixture until it's smooth. Then we place the pot on the fire and stir the mixture constantly, to ensure it doesn't stick to the base of the pot. It will be cooked when the colour is brown, the consistency is like semolina pudding and it is sweet enough without needing additional sugar. It takes hours and hours to cook the Samanak. Obviously it depends how much wheat we use. Therefore we prefer to choose the night time for cooking Samanak.

It is a true team effort, and during this very lengthy process, everyone would sing while the stirrer stirred, then someone else would take their turn to stir. We also have a song created especially for making this epic dish.

Here are the lyrics:

While Samanak is boiling, we are stirring,
The others are sleeping but we keep on stirring,
Samanak is spring's food and this happiness occurs once a year,
Who knows what will be happening for next spring.

When it has cooked we cover the pot with a cotton cloth and leave it for few hours to cool. Then we put it on a tray sprinkle with sesame seeds or walnuts, ready to serve.