

# Ube Cheese Halaya

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- 10 g active dry yeast (1 Tbsp)
- 160 g warm water ( $\frac{2}{3}$  cup)

- 115 g sugar ( $\frac{1}{2}$  cup + 1 Tbsp )
- 113 g melted butter ( $\frac{1}{2}$  cup or 1 stick)
- 180 g warm whole milk ( $\frac{3}{4}$  cup)
- 15 g salt ( $\frac{3}{4}$  tsp)
- 450 g ube halaya (jam) ( $\frac{1}{2}$  cup for dough +  $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups for filling)
- 1 tbsp ube extract
- 2 eggs (beaten)
- 320 g All purpose flour ( $2\frac{1}{4}$  cup)
- 355 g Bread flour (plus more for dusting)
- 240 g white mild cheddar cheese or gouda (cut into 15 g cubes)
- 90 g plain breadcrumbs (about 1 cup )

1. In the bowl of a stand mixer combine water, yeast and sugar and let sit for 5 minutes or until frothy.
2. Add milk, butter, sugar, salt, halaya, ube extract and beaten eggs and mix for 1-2 minutes with the dough hook attachment until blended.
3. Combine flours and add to the ube mixture in 2 halves. Mix for 1-2 minutes at low speed until well blended then turn up to medium speed and mix for about 10 minutes, scraping the bowl a few times. Dough will be sticky.
4. Move the dough into a lightly greased bowl, cover with plastic wrap and let rise for one hour.
5. Turn the dough onto a floured counter and decompress the dough by fold in on itself several times. Roll out the dough into a log and scale into sixteen 90g pieces. Roll each piece into a tight round and cover with tea towel or lightly oiled plastic wrap for 5 minutes.
6. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Pour the breadcrumbs into a small bowl. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

7. Flatten a ball of dough into a round shape on a floured countertop. Use a cookie scooper or spoon to place about 20g of halaya in the middle of the dough round, place a cube of cheese on top and bring up the edges of the round over the cheese cube as if drawing up purse strings (or making bao). Pinch the top a few times then roll (seam side down) briefly to seal the seam. Roll in breadcrumbs to evenly coat the surface then place seam side down on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Repeat with the remaining dough balls.
8. Place the pandesal about  $\frac{1}{2}$ " apart on one cookie sheet. Cover with lightly greased plastic wrap or place in a large plastic storage bag and let proof for  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour.
9. Bake for 20-25 minutes or until the bottoms are just turning golden and tops are firm to the touch. Cool in pan for 5 minutes then turn out onto a cooling rack to cool for a few more minutes before serving.
10. Pandesal can be reheated in a 300°F oven for 10 minutes.

Cheese:Filipino Eden cheese is also used which is similar to a mild cheddar

Depending on the brand of all purpose flour you might need less water (I made this recipe with King Arthur).

We experimented with cheese amounts and types: some liked half the amount used in this recipe, some preferred Gouda over cheddar.

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# My Mother's Crème Caramel

A French custard with a self-saucing caramel top that is ubiquitous in Egypt. This recipe is my mother's with a few of my tweaks. It differs from crème brûlée in that it is a liquid caramel instead of solid.

## Crème Caramel

# *Crème Caramel*



## **Custard**

- 4 cups +  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup whole milk
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup sugar
- 2 tsp cornstarch
- 6 eggs (room temp)
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

## **Caramel**

- 1 cup sugar

- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup water

## Caramel

1. In a small saucepan dissolve sugar in water. Stir constantly over medium heat. Stop stirring once the sugar is dissolved.
2. Keep the syrup at a gentle boil until it reaches a dark rust color (approx 375°F). This will take about 10 minutes but you need to babysit it as it gets close to that temp as it can quickly burn.
3. With oven mitts on quickly pour the caramel into the casserole dish and rotate constantly to coat bottom and sides of the pan before it hardens. Cool completely.

## Custard

1. In a medium saucepan warm the 4 cups of milk over low heat. Remove from heat just before boiling and immediately add sugar. Whisk to dissolve the sugar.
2. In a separate small bowl whisk the cornstarch into the remaining  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of milk then add to the hot milk mixture. Let cool until just warm to the touch. In the meantime, preheat the oven to 350°F.
3. Beat eggs and vanilla in a small bowl then add to cooled milk mixture. Run the mixture through a chinois or sieve at least twice to produce a smooth, homogenous custard.
4. Pour custard into caramel-coated dish. Place dish into deep roasting pan and add enough water to immerse the custard dish half-way. (Add the water while the pan is in the oven). Cover custard dish with wax paper or parchment.
5. Bake for 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  hours. Remove from bain-marie (water bath),

remove the wax paper and let cool completely on a rack.

6. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight.
7. To serve: loosen the sides with a dull knife. Have ready a serving dish that is 1" deep and wider than the casserole dish. Invert the serving dish over the casserole dish and, holding both tightly, flip them both over. The crème caramel should fall out of the casserole dish easily and self-sauce with the caramel. Keep refrigerated when not serving.

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## **Hungarian Gulyás (Goulash)**

I do not presume to be an authority on Hungarian cuisine but my husband asked me to post this recipe because he thinks I hit the nail on the head. I did refine the recipe to his taste and customs – there are no red peppers or turnips in this version as you might find in others. The key I have found is to be very liberal with the paprika – you want to coat the meat in a thick layer of it – I don't measure it I just keep pouring until I get a blanket of red.

Also, although it is traditionally made with lard and, indeed, my husband and brother-in-law prefer it that way, I could not stand the smell more than once so have switched to butter.

While we were in Hungary in 2017 I was I was discussing the difficulty of making nokedli with a cheese grater when my husband's family eagerly told me about this tool called the nokedli sagado! See the picture below in the recipe... it is essentially a huge grater that sits on top of a boiling stock pot perfectly suited to make many nokedli at once and cut your time down in half! I searched for it all over the place and had almost given up on finding one before our trip back home. Stephen's cousin got word that I had been looking for one and seemed to miraculously produce one for me on the very last day of our trip! If you make goulash regularly you must have one of these!

In general, our trip seemed to be full of surprises like these... it seems that Stephen's family knew how interested I was in Hungarian cuisine and every family member we visited that year made a gift for me of some utensil or book or pot. When we were in Mosonmagyaróvár his family there gave me a huge traditional goulash kettle. I found a way to bring that home even though it took up most of one suitcase. It barely fits on my stove top but I use it anyway!

## **Gulyás (Hungarian Goulash)**





- 3 tbsp butter (or lard)
- 2 lb beef chuck steak or stew beef (cubed)
- 1 large onion (chopped)
- 1 tsp caraway seeds
- 3 cloves garlic (minced)
- 2 carrots (chopped)
- 2 potatoes (chopped into cubes)
- salt

## **Nokedli (noodles)**

- 1 egg
- 1 pinch salt
- 1 cup AP flour (142 g)
- 1 tbsp olive oil

1. Heat the butter in a large stockpot. Sauté the onions until translucent. Add the caraway and garlic and cook for another two minutes.
2. Remove from heat and add the meat, add salt to taste and coat the whole layer of meat with a thick covering of paprika (just keep pouring paprika until you can't see the meat anymore). Cover and allow it to simmer at low heat for 2-3 hours or until the meat is cooked but not falling apart.
3. Add carrots and 4 cups water and simmer at low heat for about 30 minutes.
4. Add potatoes and simmer for another 10-15 minutes or until potatoes are tender but not falling apart.
5. Serve hot with nokedli.

## **Nokedli (Noodles)**

1. Fill a medium stockpot 3/4 full with water and a sprinkle of salt and bring to a boil.
2. Beat the eggs with the salt and 100 ml water (scant 1/2 cup). Add flour and mix with a wooden spoon until you achieve a smooth, viscous dough.
3. Using either a cheese grater or a nokedli sagado (see picture) set atop the stockpot push the dough through the holes into the boiling water, using the back of a wooden spoon or spatula. Think of using a scraping

motion across the holes. Scoop up the noodles with a slotted spoon once they rise to the top.



4. Rinse with lukewarm water and drain. Stir in oil.

You can make the nokedli (noodles) ahead of time and add to the hot goulash when you serve it.

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# Updated Feteer Meshaltet Recipe and Video

Feteer meshaltet or fiteer is a popular Egyptian street food that is a cross between strudel and puff pastry. It is a basic dough that is stretched really thin and folded with clarified butter between the layers of dough. It can be topped simply with powdered sugar and honey for a sweet snack or filled with sausage or other savory fillings like cheese. This is an updated recipe as I have been experimenting with temperatures and currently favoring baking at 450F for a slightly crisp top and nice separation of layers.

For step by step pictures instead of video:  
<http://thecakedr.com/egyptian-pastry/feteer-meshaltet-step-by-step-pictures/>

## Feteer Meshaltet



The Original Egyptian Puff Pastry

- 3 cups AP flour (423 g )
- 1 cup lukewarm water (240g)
- ½ tsp sea salt
- 1 cup clarified butter or ghee or samna (approx 200 g at room temp)

1. Start in your mixer with your dough hook at “stir” until it becomes a shaggy dough then turn up to setting “4” and knead for another 2-3 minutes. Let rest at room temp for 1/2 hour to 1 hour. Place in an oiled bowl, turning over to cover all sides of oil and cover with plastic wrap. Let rest at room temp for 1/2 hour to 1 hour.
2. Preheat your oven to 450°F and grease your 8” cake pan or pizza pan with clarified butter. Grease your work surface with clarified butter as well.
3. Roll out the dough initially with a rolling pin. Once you get it flattened out a bit start stretching out the rest with your hands – similar to stretching strudel dough but you gently lift and pull at the edges. The dough should be paper thin and might tear a little at the edges but don’t worry about that. Once you're done stretching, cut the thick rope-like edge off with scissor or a pizza cutter or just tear off with your hands. Slather more clarified butter over the entire surface making sure to get the edges.



4. Pull up one of the longest sides and bring it to the middle. Do the same for the other longest side. The

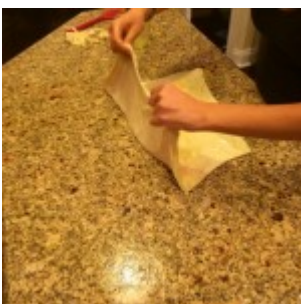
edges should meet in the middle of your [now] rectangle . Again, slather these newly exposed surfaces with clarified butter.



5. Bring in the two shortest sides to meet in the middle and butter again. Think of creating an envelope. Try to keep the dough laying flat and smooth rather than bunched up and wrinkled. You may try stretching it out less than I did to make it easier your first time around.



6. Now fold over in half lengthwise so that the longer edges meet and you form a narrow rectangle. Start folding up the rectangle into triangles similar to folding up a flag – remember to butter the newly exposed surfaces. Place the whole thing seam side down into your buttered pan.



7. Let rest for 10 min in the pan then press down with your fingers to spread the dough to the edges of the pan.



8. Bake at 450°F for about 18-20 minutes until it gets a nice golden brown on top, brushing with clarified butter halfway through.
  9. Brush the top with butter right after baking for an even softer, richer texture. After baking, cover with a towel to “soften” the top of the pastry. You can also eat it right away with a variety of toppings such as powdered sugar and honey which is most traditional.
- The dough can rest in the fridge up to overnight before the stretching step.
  - The scraps that you collect from trimming the thick edge can be reknaded, allowed to rest, and used for another feteer.
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# All I Know About Sourdough (which is just the tip of the iceberg)

During this time of the COVID-19 pandemic there has been a lot of interest in sourdough bread which makes me super excited because I have been saying for at least a couple of years now ...sourdough bread is just REAL BREAD. It is the way bread was made before commercial yeast became available in 1938. Yeast is naturally found in the air, in our environment and it is believed that the ancient Egyptians happened upon it and its wondrous abilities to leaven dough quite by accident when meal and water were left out and fermented.

I just started on this adventure a couple of years ago so what I know is minimal – the tip of the iceberg – but I decided to share what I do know and help direct you to resources far more knowledgeable. Also, I thought you might like to hear the story of Father Abraham – my sourdough starter.

My sourdough starter (or levain) began with some information I gathered on the internet just like everyone else. I was very reticent about starting one but I decided to take the plunge. I learned a lot the first few months and am still learning.

Think of a sourdough starter as a living yeast. If you put a food source like flour plus water out and keep it open to room air it will attract yeast spores and some bacteria. The yeast will feed on the food source and grow (become active). When it is active it produces carbon dioxide and alcohol. It will continue to do this for about 12 hours and then slowly



extinguish its food source and become inactive or dormant. If it is not fed again for a long period of time it will die. But if you either feed it every day or keep it in the fridge so that its activity slows down (and feed it at least once a week) you can keep it alive perpetually.

You couldn't keep adding flour and water every week to your starter indefinitely – that would be impossible to maintain. So every time you feed it you need to discard some of it – cull the herd essentially. If you pull the starter out of your fridge after a week that starter is no longer active. So whatever you take out to discard before you refeed is inactive or “sourdough discard.” This can be used for many recipes that call for sourdough discard such as pancakes, muffins, biscuits and even cakes. Or it can be thrown away. But, if you refeed without discarding any of the starter first then all of that is active sourdough and can be used to bake sourdough bread. So you either cull the herd (discard) or have a cookout (sourdough bread) but you have to take some out each time you feed. Ok, that was a weird and gruesome analogy but hopefully it makes sense.

If you forget to feed your refrigerated starter for a couple of weeks the alcohol it produces begins to collect at the top and this is what is colloquially referred to as “hooch.” This does not necessarily mean that your starter has passed to the next realm. You can usually revive it by pouring off the hooch and giving it a couple of feedings back to back.

When it is active it behaves just like the commercial yeast you are used to using in your recipes but better. How better? Well, nutritionists and food experts say that human beings were meant to eat fermented foods; that our digestive tracts function better with the addition of fermented foods in our

diets. That is because fermented foods with live active cultures like yogurt or kombucha or kimchi populate our digestive tract with healthy bacteria that are essential for proper gastrointestinal functioning. Bread made from sourdough may no longer contain live cultures but the gluten is partially broken down or fermented by the yeast (before baking) and thus makes it easier for us to digest. Some experts and artisan bakers believe that gluten intolerance or sensitivity increased when we started moving away from traditionally made bread toward commercial products (during World War II; Michael Pollan's series "Cooked" explains this beautifully).

The sourdough starter is thus essentially your yeast source plus a small source of liquid and flour. If your starter is 100% hydrated (meaning you feed it equal parts water and flour) you can substitute it in a recipe by just replacing equal parts of flour and water in your recipe.

So, back to my original statement – sourdough bread is just "real bread." The sour taste is dependent on the length of fermentation. I bulk ferment and proof my bread for a total of 4 1/2 hours. Many choose to do a final proof of 12-13 hours which further enhances that sour taste. The longer you ferment the dough the more "sour" it will taste. But I really don't like that word because "sour" denotes something spoiled which sourdough bread isn't. This is just the word we have chosen to describe the "tangy" or sharp feeling we get in our mouths when we taste it. Actually, this sour taste is what causes salivation and begins the digestion process. You won't get that physical response from supermarket bread.

Peter Reinhart, the bread guru himself, said that yeast is a living thing that sacrifices itself to create this most basic

but most amazing thing for us, bread. I was so moved by my sourdough starter and these words that I named mine Abraham – the father of many sons.

I have included a couple of my youtube videos below showing how to use a sourdough starter to create a boule (or round loaf) and a batard (similar to a baguette).

Recipe to use for boule, batard or baguettes from King Arthur:  
<https://www.kingarthurflour.com/recipes/naturally-leavened-sourdough-bread-recipe>

Some of the tools I use in breadmaking:



# Mexican Conchas

## Conchas or Pan Dulces



This recipe is originally from [:https://www.acozykitchen.com/?s=conchas](https://www.acozykitchen.com/?s=conchas)<https://www.acozykitchen.com/?s=conchas>. I made minor modifications here.

- 5 g instant yeast ((1.75 tsp))
- 113 g unsalted butter, melted (1 stick)
- 12 g vegetable oil (1 Tbsp)
- 66 g sugar ( $\frac{1}{3}$  cup)
- 225 g whole milk, room temp (scant cup)
- 12 g kosher salt (2 tsp)
- 8.5 g vanilla extract (2 tsp)
- 2 eggs room temp
- 5 g ground cinnamon (2 tsp)
- 568 g AP flour (4 cups)

### **Craquelin (topping)**

- 113 g unsalted butter, room temp (1 stick)
- 172 g sugar ( $\frac{2}{3}$  cup)
- 142 g AP flour (1 cup)
- 4 g vanilla extract (1 tsp)
- 10.5 g cocoa powder (2 Tbsp)
- 2 drops food color gel

1. In a bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the dough hook add the butter, oil, sugar, milk, salt, vanilla, cinnamon and lightly beaten eggs. MIX for a minute.
2. Add the flour and yeast and mix on low for one minute until the ingredients are combined then increase to medium speed and mix for 5 minutes. Dough should clear the sides of the bowl.
3. Transfer the dough to a large lightly oiled bowl and cover with plastic wrap. Chill overnight.

### **Craquelin (topping)**

1. Mix butter, sugar, flour and vanilla in the bowl of a stand mixer until smooth.
2. Divide into two portions. Add cocoa to one and food

color to another.

3. Roll out topping between 2 sheets of parchment paper to about 1/16" and chill for an hour until firm or up to overnight.

## **Assemble**

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Divide the dough into 12 equal parts about 80g each. Tuck the edges underneath to form a tight ball then roll in your palm on an unfloured surface to create a tighter ball. Place on the parchment-lined sheet pans.
3. Cut circles with a 3" cookie cutter and place on the dough balls, pressing lightly to adhere.
4. Cut designs with a knife as desired, cutting all the way through the topping but not the dough.
5. Rest at room temp for 30 minutes covered with a tea towel.
6. Bake for 20-22 minutes or until bottoms are lightly golden.
7. Eat as soon as they are cool enough that they won't burn your mouth!