

# 'Awwameh or Zalabyeh (fried dumplings)

Slightly adapted from a recipe by Mary Salah Khabbaz, published in 1970 in Ramallah

'Awwameh are served on Epiphany, a Christian feast observed on January 6, according to the Gregorian calendar, and on January 18, according to the Julian calendar. For Western Christians, it commemorates the manifestation of Christ to the gentiles, in the persons of the Magi, on the twelfth day after Christ's birth. For Eastern Christians, it commemorates the baptism of Christ and the manifestation of the Holy Trinity.

## **Ingredients:**

### *- For the dough:*

1 cup flour, sifted

Warm water – enough to make the dough of the consistency of yogurt (around  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup)

$\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon dry yeast

$\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon sugar

Pinch of salt

### *- For the syrup:*

2 cups sugar

1 cup water

$\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon tartaric acid or few drops of lemon juice

2 drops of rose-water

### *- For frying:*

1 litre vegetable oil to fry the dumplings

## **Preparation and cooking:**

1. Bloom the yeast in a small bowl: dissolve the sugar and yeast in  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of the warm water, leave covered for 10 minutes.
2. Gradually add the bloomed yeast to the flour, mixing gently, and add as much warm water as needed to make the dough of the consistency of yogurt.
3. Knead the dough with the palms of your two hands until it is smooth and silky.
4. Leave the dough to rest and rise in a warm place, for two hours.
5. When the dough has risen, knead lightly, and leave it to rise one more time.
6. While the dough rests, prepare the syrup: place sugar in a heat-proof deep pan, add water and make sure to dissolve the sugar without splashing the inside of the pan. Boil on medium heat for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove from heat and add the tartaric acid or lemon juice. When the syrup cools down a bit, add the rosewater. Leave to cool completely.
7. When the dough is ready, fry it in the heated vegetable oil: Heat the oil in a deep frying pan. With one hand, scoop out a handful of dough, and squeeze it upwards between your thumb and index finger. The balls that form should be approximately the size of a pigeon egg. With the other hand, dip a spoon in clean vegetable oil (not the heated one), and scoop out the small amount of dough from the first hand. Lower the small ball of dough into the hot oil. Repeat the scooping, making sure not to add too many balls for each batch, as you don't want the oil's temperature to cool down. Turn the balls in the oil from time to time, so they become evenly colored all over.
8. When the balls are slightly golden in color, lift them with a slotted spoon and place them on paper towels to drain the excess oil. Fry the following batches, until all the dough is fried.
9. After all the batches cool off, fry them one more time, in batches, until the balls get a nice deep golden color. Lift the balls from the oil, shaking lightly to get rid of extra oil, and dip them, while hot, in the cooled syrup. Immerse for a couple of minutes, take them out of the syrup, and place them on a serving plate.
10. Store covered in a cool place.

