

Pea Cream with Laban Jameed

A dish that combines two childhood tastes in one. What a delight!

By Fadi Kattan

Each one of us remembers picking a pea pod and eating those first peas of the year. Sweet, delicious, and soft. That first taste of spring.

Then there is *laban jameed*,ⁱ reminiscent of grandmother's best *mansaf*,ⁱⁱ or your mother's comforting *ruz bil laban*.ⁱⁱⁱ We all long for those winter days when the family gathers around a dish of *laban*, the quintessence of Palestine's flavors. Wild, animal, intense, and refined. An explosion of taste so strong your taste buds struggle to cope.

What better than to twist those tastes into one spring dish, a light starter, or a main vegetarian course for lovers of Palestine?

3 kg fresh peas, which will give you 1,200 gr of peeled peas
 100 gr liquid cream
 150 gr olive oil
 1 ball of *laban jameed*
 Juice of 1 lemon
 15 gr of coarse Palestinian Dead Sea salt
 200 gr *labaneh*^{iv}



1. Peel the peas.
2. Boil 2 liters of water with the salt.
3. Put 1 kg of peas to boil, leaving 200 gr of peas raw for decoration.
4. Boil the peas for 8 minutes from the moment water starts boiling again.
5. Pour the peas into a colander and cool quickly with cold water.
6. Using a mixer or a handheld blender, blend the cooked peas, the cream, 75 gr olive oil, 100 gr of the water from the boiled peas, and the juice of 1 lemon.
7. When the mixture becomes smooth, it's ready to be served.
8. Spoon three tablespoons of the pea cream into a wide, deep bowl.
9. Make a quenelle of *labaneh* and place it in the center of the cream.
10. Drizzle with olive oil.
11. Using a small grater, grate the *laban jameed* over the dish. (It's helpful to freeze the *laban jameed* ball for 15 minutes prior to grating.)
12. Decorate with a few of the raw peas.

ⁱ Dried yogurt with turmeric and salt, found either fresh or dried.

ⁱⁱ A Palestinian dish that consists of chunks of lamb meat cooked in *laban jameed* sauce and served in a dish on a layering of thin bread soaked in the *jameed* sauce, rice, meat, and roasted pine nuts or almonds; individual bowls of the yogurt sauce are served on the side.

ⁱⁱⁱ Literally: rice with yogurt.

^{iv} Soft, white cream cheese made from thickened yogurt (yogurt strained in a sieve).