

THE ART OF  
Armenian Cooking



ROSE BABOIAN

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## BASDERMA

(Dried Meat)

It is very important to select good tender beef. If good beef is not used *basderma* will be very tough and hard to chew. Have the butcher slice a piece of beef  $1\frac{1}{4}$  to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches thick ( $1\frac{3}{4}$  to 2 pounds).

Cover completely *1 slice of beef* with  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup pure salt. Place in a pan. Cover. Let stand in refrigerator or in a cool place for 3 days. Turn over once a day.

Remove salt. Wash thoroughly. Soak in cold water for about 50 to 60 minutes. Drain. Then dry thoroughly with a towel. Place the beef inside a towel and press with hands to remove all the moisture.

Wrap in a dry towel. Place a tray on top. Put a heavy weight over the tray. Let stand for 24 hours in refrigerator or in a very cool place. (After 12 hours change into a dry towel.)

Make a hole on the top end of meat. Pass a heavy string through the hole and make a loop large enough to pass a stick through it (a broomstick will do). Now *basderma* is ready to dry.

Hang *basderma* by an open window, in a shady screened porch, or in a garage. Drying time depends upon the weather. October and November are the best two months in the year to make *basderma*. If there is much dampness in the air the drying time will naturally be longer. It usually takes 8 to 12 days to dry this *basderma*.

Cover dried *basderma* completely with Chaiman and Paprika Paste for *Basderma* (given below). Let stand for about 5 days in a cool place.

Hang basderma again to dry for a few more days. Then store in refrigerator. If making a large quantity, store basdermas in freezer and remove one at a time.

Serve sliced very thin.

*Hint:* If basderma, with time, becomes too dry, soak overnight again in chaiman and paprika paste.

#### CHAIMAN AND PAPRIKA PASTE FOR BASDERMA

Mix together  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup paprika;  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup chaiman; 4 teaspoons allspice; 2 teaspoons black pepper; 1 teaspoon cayenne; 1 teaspoon kimion;  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon cinnamon;  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon nutmeg;  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon cloves; 1 to 2 teaspoons salt (if basderma is very salty use very little salt or no salt at all); and 1 teaspoon garlic powder or 1 to 2 cloves finely chopped garlic, optional.

Stir in  $1\frac{1}{3}$  cups (approximately) cold water. Blend thoroughly to make a thin paste. Add more water if necessary.

#### AINTAB GROUND MEAT BASDERMA

(*Sujouk*)

**Cotton Bags for Basderma:** Use thin cotton material. For 2 pounds of meat, use one 7×12-inch bag or two 5×9-inch bags. Allow about  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch more material for each seam. Make double seams with sewing machine to avoid raveling of threads. Leave one short side open. Seams should be on the outside of the bag.

Prepare 2 bags 7×12 inches or 4 bags 5×9 inches.  
Mix together in a large bowl 4 pounds finely ground