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Food & Wine



Taste of Authentic Druze Culture and Cuisine

Explore the culinary secrets
of the Galilee

▶ **WHEN BASMA HINO'S** husband, Marcel, was injured during a mission while serving in the Israel Defense Forces and then sadly passed away, the new mother and widow knew immediately she had to do something to honor both her husband and baby boy, Noor. So right in the center of the peaceful village of Julis—a magnet for tourists seeking the scents and flavors of the Galilee—Basma opened Noor Restaurant and Café.

The Druze are an Arabic-speaking ethnoreligious people widely known for their generosity, hospitality, and delectable dishes. Any visitor seeking a taste of authentic Druze cuisine will instantly feel as though they've stepped inside Basma's very own home at Noor Café. From its gorgeous interior reminiscent of a

traditional Druze household to the aromatic spices that fill the air, everything is designed to give customers a taste of home. Even its name, meaning "light," is significant: the restaurant is named after Basma's son.

"My son is the light of my life," said Basma. "Now, his name brings light to anyone who enters my café."

Café-goers are treated to incredible authentic dishes, including vegetarian friendly options, as well as baked goods with recipes Basma has used for over 20 years. "I want to share Druze hospitality, cuisine, and culture with everyone who comes to visit the Galilee," said Basma. "Guests come from all over and they come to the café to hear my story, eat, and discover our village."

With traditional cuisine like tabouleh salad, homemade hummus, or Druze-style pita filled with chicken and sumac, finished with a cardamon infused black coffee and one of Basma's confectionary bakes, it's not hard to see why there's always a wait to get a table at Noor Restaurant and Café. ▀

Basma Hino is a member of JNF-USA affiliate Western Galilee Now. For more information on Noor Restaurant and Café (not kosher) or to make a reservation, visit westgalil.org.il/en/ent/noor/ (English), [facebook.com/NoorRestaurantKonditorei/](https://www.facebook.com/NoorRestaurantKonditorei/) (Hebrew), or call +972.72.395.7686

Noor Restaurant and Café Ma'amoul Zard (Date-filled cookies)

Servings: 32 cookies

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE DOUGH

- 8 cups all purpose white flour
- 1¼ cups butter
- ¼ cup corn oil
- ¼ tsp. milk
- 8 oz. lukewarm water

FOR THE FILLING

- 2/3 lb. medjool dates, peeled, pitted, and chopped
- 2 tbs. butter or margarine
- Baharat spice, to taste*

*Baharat spice can be found in Middle Eastern markets and online grocers.

INSTRUCTIONS

- Preheat the oven to 350°F.
- In a large mixing bowl, combine the flour and butter and work them together with your fingers.

- Add the milk and water gradually into the mixture and knead it into a pliable dough. Let the dough rest for 30 minutes, then roll out 32 portions into smooth balls.
- Process the chopped dates, butter/margarine, and baharat in a food processor into a smooth paste consistency. Divide the date paste into 32 portions and roll them into smooth balls.
- Flatten a dough ball, place it in the palm of your hand and cup it. Place a date ball in the center and bring the edges of the dough together tightly. Once sealed slightly flatten it out.
- Bake the cookies smooth side up on a large baking sheet for 15 - 20 minutes or until golden. Remove the cookies and place them on a wire rack to cool. ▀

