

Quince Stew  
*Chorosht'e Be*

My mother-in-law makes this stew almost every Shabbat because it is my sister-in-law's favorite! Whenever I buy quinces, I have to hide them because my children love to eat them raw! This fruit is not really meant to be eaten raw...it is meant for jams and stews. I guess my kids must be "hard-core" Persians!

The quince tree originates from Iran and Caucasus. The Romans used its oil for perfume, while the Greeks enjoyed it cooked. *Beh dune* (seeds of the quince) are also used by Persians to treat colds and coughs. The seeds are removed from the fruit and set aside to air dry. Then, mix 1 tablespoon of seeds in 1 cup of hot water and steep for a few minutes until the water gets very thick, like jelly. The first time my mother-in-law gave me this concoction was my wedding day (what a day to have a cold) and it helped me tremendously.

**Tricks of the trade**

Make sure to remove the entire core of this fruit, since any remainder will cook along and harden like a rock in the inner layer of the fruit! Since quinces are often hard to find, the second I find some I buy many and freeze them already sliced in separate bags so I can use them as needed. Lamb or veal are also delicious in this recipe, or make it vegetarian-friendly by using *seitan* (wheat "meat") instead.

By the way, most Persian stews freeze really well, but don't freeze this one, because it has potatoes and potatoes don't like the freezer!

**1 large onion, chopped**

**3 garlic cloves, pressed**

**¼ cup olive oil**

**2 pounds stew meat**

**2 teaspoons salt**

**1 teaspoon pepper**

**3 cups water**

**1 (6-ounce) can tomato paste**

**2 quinces, do not peel; just slice like an apple (make sure to remove the entire core)**

**¼ cup lime or lemon juice or the juice of 3 limes**

**¾ cup pitted prunes**

**2 potatoes, peeled and cut into medium dice**

1. In a 6-quart saucepan, sauté the onion and garlic, in olive oil until the onion starts to become translucent (about 1 minute). Add the meat; cover and cook until meat no longer looks red, stirring occasionally. Add salt and pepper.
2. Add water, tomato paste, lime juice, quince, prunes, and potatoes. Simmer, covered, for 1 hour, stirring occasionally.
3. Serve hot in a casserole dish.

Yield: 8-10 servings