

Upside-Down Persian Macaroni With The Crunchy Bottom Layer (Tah-Dig)



In one of my earlier posts I wrote about [Persian macaroni](#). This is a revisit with a focus on making the ته دیگ ماکارونی macaroni tah-dig (crust at the bottom of pan), where the noodles meet the hot oil with a pinch of turmeric and form a flavorful and golden crunchy layer at the bottom of the pan. A good tah-dig is crispy but not burned, crunchy but not hard. Those of you who are familiar with Persian food know that tah-dig is one of the most sought-after parts of a rice dish. Personally, I prefer the flavorful tah-dig over the fluffy and aromatic rice! Noodles also make a delicious tah-dig when making pasta. If by any chance the tah-dig turns out a bit harder than what you expected it to be, pour a spoonful of sauce over it and spread to soften it a bit before biting into it. Here's a link to my other tah dig recipe : [The Art of Making Persian Tah-Dig](#).

For a family of six kids, simple and easy macaroni (Persian style pasta with ground meat and tomato sauce) always had a place on our dinner table while growing up. It was one of my favorite dishes then and now I enjoy making it for my family. Back

home, my mother always cooked pasta with the hollow spaghetti noodles (bucatini). I liked those hollow noodles and I've looked for them many times in the past while grocery shopping but I haven't seen them on the shelves anywhere. It seems that they aren't as popular as the other kinds of noodle varieties here.



Macaroni Tah Dig - Upside-Down Persian Macaroni With The Crunchy Bottom Layer

Ingredients:

Serves 6-8

1 pound ground beef
1 pound spaghetti pasta
1 large onion, finely chopped
1 large tomato, skin removed and diced
2-3 cloves of garlic, minced
1 can of tomato sauce (16 ounces)
1/3 teaspoon turmeric
2 tablespoons chopped flat-leaf parsley
Salt and pepper
Water
Olive oil

Method:

1. In a large skillet heat 3 tablespoons of oil, add onions and saute onion over medium-high heat until translucent. Add the garlic and saute for 2-3

minutes. Add turmeric, stir and continue cooking for another minute or two before adding the beef. Break the beef into tiny pieces with a fork and brown. Scoop out any excess fat. Salt and pepper to taste. Add in the tomatoes and the tomato sauce and 1/2 cup of water. Cover and cook on medium-low heat for 20-30 minutes. Taste and adjust the seasoning.

2. In the meantime, bring large pot of water to boil and cook the noodles according to the package instructions but drain 2-3 minutes before it becomes al-dente, since they'll cook further later on when combined with the sauce in the same pot.

3. In a non-stick heavy-bottomed pot, heat 2 tablespoons of olive oil, add a pinch of turmeric and swirl the pot around to evenly coat the bottom. Add a layer of the noodles, then a layer of the meat sauce, and continue layering till both the sauce and the noodles are done. Place a clean and soft kitchen towel between the pot and the lid. Close tightly and cook on medium to low heat for about 45-50 minutes. The longer you cook it, the thicker the crust but you also don't want to risk getting it burned.

4. To serve, place a large serving platter over the pot, and with a kitchen towel hold on to the sides of the pot and carefully turn over the pot to get the pasta with it's tah-dig intact and in one piece. Cut into it as if you are cutting a slice of a cake. Or, spoon noodles and the sauce mixture onto a platter and sprinkle with freshly chopped parsley. Remove the crust gently and place on the side of the platter or on a separate dish.