

## Let's Learn About Barazek!

*Teachers, please review this insightful background info on barazek and share with your students in an age-appropriate way before eating the snack. Use the guiding questions to inspire discussion while your students enjoy the snack.*

**Eid al-Fitr (pronounced “EID al fitter”):** Eid al-Fitr means “the feast of breaking the fast”, it’s an Islamic festival that marks the end of Ramadan. During the month of Ramadan, some Muslims choose to fast (ie. go without food or drinks) from sunrise to sundown. Eid al-Fitr is a time for feasting, as well as charity, generosity, and joy.

**Barazek:** Barazek is a delicious cookie of Syrian origin that has spread throughout the middle east, including being enjoyed in Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine. It’s often enjoyed during Eid al-Fitr feasts.

Traditionally, barazek is made with sesame seeds and crushed pistachios. **We adapted our version to be more allergen-friendly, so it is nut-free, gluten-free and vegan.** You won’t be able to tell from the taste though! Ours is flavoured with vanilla sugar, but traditionally, honey and a special spice called mahleb which is made from the seeds of a unique kind of cherry called St Lucie cherry can also be used. The rich and buttery texture of barazek is similar to shortbread cookies.



**Food Memories:** Aoush Mseitf has shared her recipe for barazek with us, just as she shares her food with many people. Aoush is a very talented home cook, and her family thinks she should open a restaurant! She is Executive Chef Katherine of Growing Chefs next door neighbour, and Katherine agrees that she is one of the best cooks she has ever met. She likes to cook many Syrian dishes, but BBQ is her favourite, as it is so tasty and healthy. She thinks that barazek is important because it is a dish most Arabs only make for Eid al-Adha and Eid al-Fitr, and it is offered to visitors that come during Eid. **Barazek reminds Aoush of her beloved Mother and Father, and all of her family back home in Syria, as it brings back memories of when they used to be together.**

**We hope you enjoy this snack as much as Aoush and we do!**



## Guiding Questions

### Junior/Intermediate/Senior:

1. Have you tasted barazek before? How was it different? (if no one has, skip this question)
2. Have you tasted any foods that originate from the Middle East? Discuss the flavours and the ingredients.

Examples: Hummus, falafel, tabouleh, shawarma, pita, kebab, baklava

3. Have you ever participated in a feast or a fast before? Discuss the experience
4. Does your family have any special holiday traditions or holiday foods (this could be for Eid or any other holiday)? Discuss the traditions

### Primary:

Sensory exploration encourages the use of descriptive language instead of just saying “yum” or “yuck”.

1. What are our five senses?
2. How does it smell?
3. How does it look?
4. How does it feel?
5. How does it taste?
6. How did it sound when you took a bite?
7. Is anyone nervous to try new foods? Explain that’s okay. Why is it good to try new foods? Discuss the benefits.
8. What is your favourite cookie? Have you ever helped make it?



## Barazek

*“Barazek is a traditional Syrian cookie recipe that is often eaten at times of celebration, such as Eid al-Fitr. These delicate shortbread-like cookies are fun to make, with a soft dough that is rolled and then pressed into sesame seeds to give it a crispy, nutty flavour. The version that was taught to us by Aoush Mseitf is made with vegetable based ghee and corn flour, making them gluten free and vegan.”*

**Yield:** Makes 6 dozen cookies

**Level:** Intermediate

### INGREDIENTS

- 6 cups white corn flour
- 3 cups vegetable based ghee
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon vanilla sugar
- 2 tablespoons simple syrup
- 1½ cups icing sugar
- 1 - 1½ cups water

### For sesame seed topping:

- 2 cups roasted sesame seeds
- 2 tablespoons simple syrup
- 1 tablespoon icing sugar
- 1 tablespoon water

### EQUIPMENT

- Measuring cups
- Measuring spoons
- Bowls, various sizes
- Baking sheet
- Parchment paper
- Spoons
- Dish towel

### DIRECTIONS

#### **Get Organized!**

Gather your mise en place; get together all of the equipment needed for the recipe and gather your ingredients

#### **Get Prepped!**

- Measure out corn flour, vanilla sugar, and baking powder into a large bowl.
- Measure ghee into a separate bowl.
- Measure simple syrup into a separate bowl. To make simple syrup, bring equal parts water and sugar to a boil, to ensure all sugar crystals dissolve. Let cool.
- Measure water into a separate bowl.
- Add the ghee into the corn flour mixture, and work with your fingertips until all of the ghee is incorporated in small chunks, less than pea size.
- Add the icing sugar into the bowl and mix it in, until it is completely incorporated.
- Slowly stir in the simple syrup, and the flour. Knead the dough together until it forms a smooth, soft dough. If it feels too wet, add a bit more corn flour. The dough should feel wetter than a normal cookie dough, this helps for the sesame seeds to stick to it.
- Set the dough aside in the fridge to rest for 15 minutes.
- To make the sesame seed topping, combine 2 cups of toasted sesame seeds with simple syrup, icing sugar, and water. Stir together until all of the ingredients are well combined.

**DIRECTIONS  
CONTINUED**

***Get Cooking!***

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Roll the cookie dough into slightly smaller than golf ball sized pieces.
3. Set a small amount (about 1 cup) of the sesame seed mixture on a clean surface. Place a small amount of extra corn flour out as well, to help if the dough sticks to your hands.
4. Press the one side of the cookie ball into the sesame seeds, and flatten the cookie until it is about ½ centimeter thick, and would fit in the palm of your hand. If dough is sticky, dip the dough or your hands in corn flour before flattening it.
5. Place the cookie sesame seed side up on a baking sheet, and repeat the process with the rest of the dough.
6. Bake cookies for 12-14 minutes, until slightly golden brown around the edges.