

Flavours from home



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This book of recipes and poems is an expression of people's longing for home and a chance at a new life. It is a collection of memories of the motherland – its familiar flavours, sounds, smells and unique energy. It celebrates a wealth of different cultures through food, and reminds us of our shared humanity – our hopes, fears and aspirations.

These recipes and poems were contributed by refugees taking part in the Refugee Council's **Sowing Seeds** allotment project in West London, developed to help tackle feelings of loneliness and isolation. Having fled unimaginable horrors, such as war, torture and persecution, refugees in the UK find themselves confronted by public hostility fuelled by ignorance, misinformation and prejudice.

Many refugees in Britain have a strong connection to the soil, having come from rural societies in countries such as Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burma, Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq. The allotment creates opportunities for people to spend time together outdoors enjoying nature, and to provide them with a cheap source of fresh vegetables and a healthy diet. It's also an opportunity for refugees to engage with the local community.

The Sowing Seeds allotment is only one of the many life-changing and life-saving projects and services run by the Refugee Council – the UK's leading charity helping asylum seekers and refugees.

Farida Stanikzai, Refugee Council (Hounslow)

Bakri Hassan Alnajeeb – writer, journalist and torture victim from Sudan – tells us how the Sowing Seeds allotment project has given him something to look forward to.

“I feel very happy when I go to the allotment. It reminds me of my small village near the river Nile in Sudan – it’s an open area, big and green. It reminds me of farming in my country.

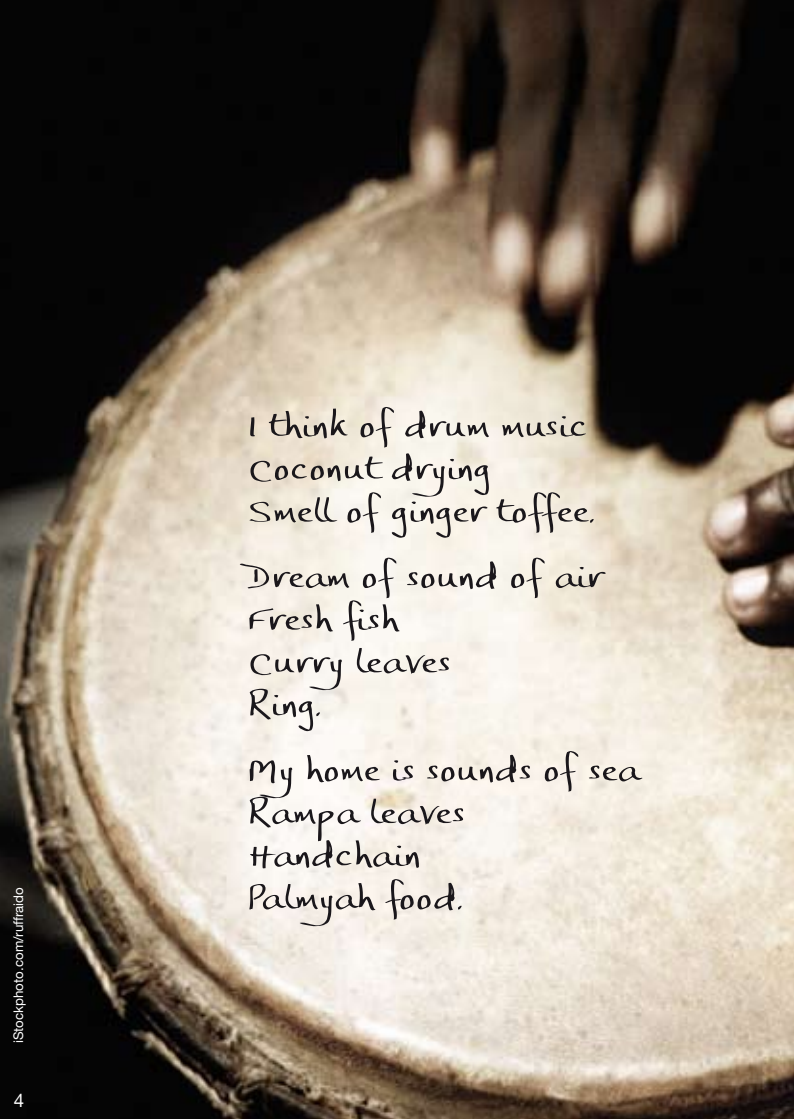
We meet at the allotment twice a week and have some food together. We enjoy growing different vegetables and some flowers. I feel relaxed there because of the open air and nice scenery, otherwise I sit inside my room all day looking at the walls and ceiling.

I am alone and don’t have any family here. In Sudan I worked with my father on the farm. My days here pass slowly. I’m not allowed to work. I take medicine for my mental health.

Before the allotment project I was depressed for a long time. Now I’m meeting new people and feel like I’m part of a community.

The allotment is like a garden where we can go and see the sky and feel the air – not the street. At our garden we can enjoy. I step back into life.”

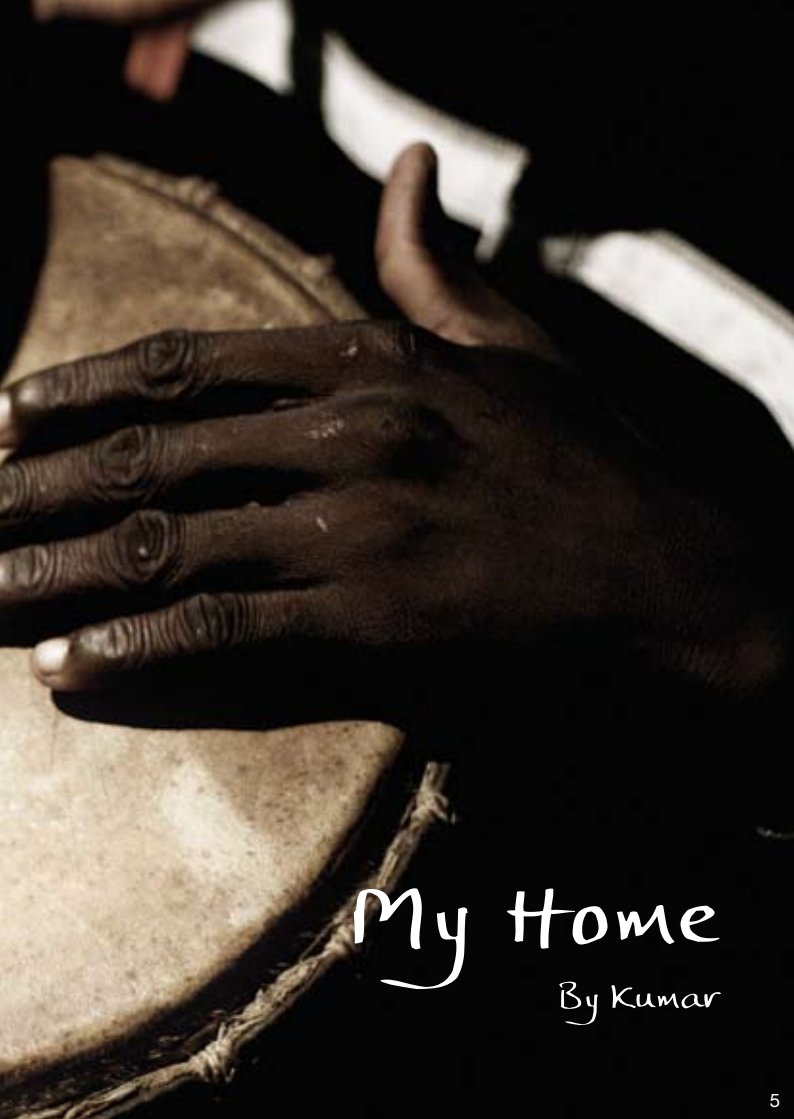
A huge debt of gratitude goes to the Big Lottery Fund and BAA Heathrow Fund, Groundwork, West London Mental Health Trust, Strike a Chord, Rachael Fernandes and other volunteers. Because of their support, Sowing Seeds and the poetry projects have made a big difference to people’s lives.



I think of drum music
Coconut drying
Smell of ginger toffee.

Dream of sound of air
Fresh fish
Curry leaves
Ring.

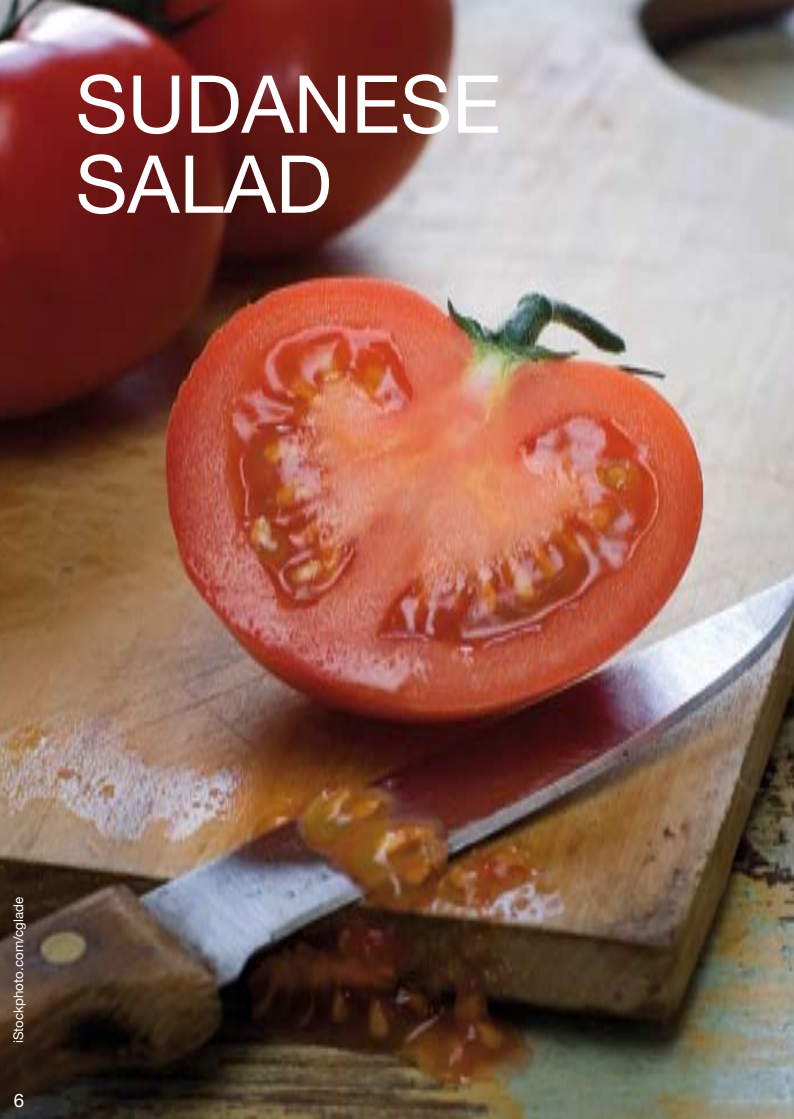
My home is sounds of sea
Rampa leaves
Handchain
Palmyah food.



My Home

By Kumar

SUDANESE SALAD



4 tomatoes
3 spring onions
Green chilli (optional)
3 tablespoons of peanut butter
2 lemons
Handful of coriander
Handful of mint
1 packet of feta cheese
2 tablespoons sesame oil
½ tablespoon of cumin
Salt

Cut the tomatoes, chilli and spring onions into small pieces and put in a bowl.

In a separate bowl pour the lemon juice onto the peanut butter and mix until it becomes liquid. Pour this on the tomatoes and spring onions.

Cut the feta cheese into small squares and mix into the salad mixture. Sprinkle on the cumin and then add sesame oil. You can also add some rocket leaves to the salad if you wish.

Mix altogether with the coriander and mint and serve with pitta bread.

MAUSHAWA

(Pulse and Yoghurt Soup)

This Afghan dish is a hearty, tasty soup. Warm, creamy and healthy it's an essential winter warmer – perfect for cosy times.

60g chickpeas
60g red kidney beans
400ml thick yoghurt
60g mung beans (or green split peas)
60g pudding rice
2 tablespoons powdered dill

230g beef, veal or lamb (cut into half-inch cubes)

120g finely chopped onion

3 tablespoons of vegetable oil

60g tomatoes, skinned and chopped

$\frac{1}{3}$ pint water

$\frac{1}{4}$ – 1 tablespoon of red pepper

Soak the chickpeas and red kidney beans in water overnight. Put the chickpeas, red kidney beans, mung beans and rice in a large pan with 2 pints of water, including the water in which the pulses had been soaking. Bring to the boil and cover with a lid that is slightly ajar. Turn the heat low and let simmer. Cook until the pulses are soft.

Meanwhile, cook the meat and sauce. Over medium heat, fry the chopped onion in vegetable oil until soft and golden. Add the meat and fry some more until brown. Add the tomatoes, stirring well and boil for a couple of minutes. Add $\frac{1}{4}$ pint of water, then salt and pepper. Stir well and bring back to the boil. Turn down the heat and simmer until the meat is tender and the sauce is thickened.

In a separate bowl, stir a crushed clove of garlic into the thick yoghurt. Add a pinch of salt.

When cooked, mix all the ingredients – the rice, chickpeas, red kidney beans, together with the juices in which they have cooked, the meat stew, the chakah, powdered dill and salt to taste. Stir well and add extra water if you want to thin the soup. Continue stirring and simmer for another 5–10 minutes to allow the flavours to blend.

Serve the soup with some naan bread.

FALAFEL

Sudan

Originally from Egypt, falafel is a fried ball or patty made from spiced chickpea and/or fava beans. It can be served as either a mezze (starter) or on a salad, or with hummus, or as a main dish as a sandwich in a pitta bread with lettuce, tomatoes, and tahini.



400g can chickpeas, drained
1 medium onion, finely chopped
1 tablespoon minced garlic
2 tablespoons fresh parsley, finely chopped
1 teaspoon coriander
 $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon cumin
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons flour
Vegetable or canola cooking oil

Combine the chickpeas, garlic, onion, coriander, cumin, salt and pepper (to taste) in medium bowl. Add flour and mix well. Mash the chickpeas, making sure all the ingredients are mixed in well. You can also use a food processor to do this. You want the mixture to be a thick paste. Form the mixture into small balls, about the size of a ping pong ball. Slightly flatten.

Fry in 2 inches of hot oil until golden brown. Serve the falafel either on its own or with hot pitta bread accompanied by salad, hummus and tahini or garlic sauce.



Home

When I think of home
I always think about machines hum
Early morning at home
Surrounded by smells of aubergine
Sauce and foutou
Mixed with the agreeable one of pure
Wood
I also dream of fresh mangoes, atcheke
And fish

As a carpenter, the machine's sound
reminds me of home
Because I used to spend most of my
time in my working place.
Hum
Wrrr

SABZI

Afghanistan

Pureed spinach cooked with leek and garlic, served with basmati rice.

½ cup olive or sunflower oil

2 leeks

Handful of fresh coriander

1 tablespoon black pepper

1 teaspoon salt

Crushed garlic clove

Spinach (5 bunches)



Wash the leeks and cut into small pieces. Heat the oil in a pan and add the leeks. When the leeks have softened, turn the flame low.

Add the crushed garlic and chopped coriander into the pan, then add the salt and pepper. Stir for a couple of minutes then add the spinach.

Let everything cook on a low heat until the water evaporates. This should take around 15 minutes.

Serve with rice or pitta bread.





LENTIL CURRY

Afghanistan

250 grams lentils (yellow, red or green)

½ cup vegetable oil

1 medium onion, finely chopped

1 tablespoon black pepper

1 tin chopped tomatoes

3 cloves crushed garlic

1 teaspoon ground turmeric

8 cups boiled water

Salt

Wash the lentils and boil in a pot for 20 minutes until soft, leaving the water inside.

In another pot heat the oil then add the onions and fry for 5 minutes until translucent.

Add the turmeric, then the garlic. Stir for one minute then add the can of tomatoes and stir again for 5 minutes. Add salt and pepper to taste.

When the sauce is ready, add the boiled lentils, stir and leave it to cook for 10 minutes.

ADAS POLOW

Iran



Serves 6 people

500g ground beef or lamb
500g basmati or long grain rice
400g gram lentils
120g raisins
½ teaspoon saffron
2 onions, sliced
½ cup cooking oil
½ teaspoon turmeric
½ teaspoon black pepper

Let the rice soak for 4 hours. Cook in a non-stick pan for 15 minutes in salted water. Drain water and transfer cooked rice to a bowl. In another pan, boil 3 cups of water and add the washed lentils and salt. Let this cook for 20 minutes till it is soft and tender.

In a large skillet, add some oil and the sliced onions. Fry until they are golden brown. Add the meat, salt turmeric and black pepper. To this add 2 cups of hot water and cook until the water evaporates.

In another pan, add some oil and ½ cup of water. To this pour in half the rice, then add meat, washed lentils and raisins, then add the rest of the rice. Cook this for 20 minutes then pour the dissolved saffron over it.

TIMMEN BAGILLA WITH CHICKEN



Iraq


Timmen is a very popular dish in Iraq – rich, delicious and best accompanied with yoghurt salad.

Serves 4 people

Bagilla:

- 1kg green broad beans, peeled and cut in half
- 4 cups of rice
- 1 pack of fresh dill
- 1 pack of fennel leaves

Chicken Broth:

- 1kg chicken drumsticks
 - 1 handful bay leaves
 - ½ cup pepper corns
 - 1 tablespoon curry powder
 - ½ cup olive or corn oil
 - Chilli pepper and salt to taste
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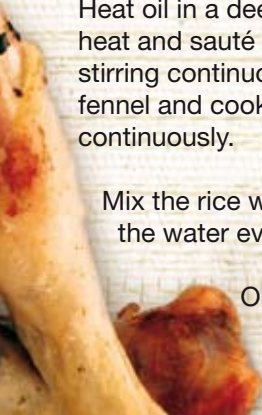
To make the chicken broth, boil the chicken drumsticks with salt, bay leaves, peppercorns, curry powder, corn oil and chilli pepper for 15 minutes. Then remove the chicken from the pan and fry in oil (or grill) until brown.

Pour the rice into a pan and cook for 20 minutes (with either the chicken broth just made or with a chicken stock cube).

Heat oil in a deep cooking pot over medium to high heat and sauté the green broad beans for 15 minutes stirring continuously. Add fresh chopped dill and fennel and cook for another 15 minutes stirring well continuously.

Mix the rice with the Bagilla in a pot and heat until the water evaporates, then reduce the heat to low.

Once the Bagilla is ready, serve with the fried chicken.



Knives with forks
Not knives with fear
Tears of joy
Not tears of sorrow

Peace and harmony
Not trouble and strife
Flowers and babies
Not wreathes and tears

God of joy
Not God of war
Friends forever
Not enemies everywhere
Kisses and kindness
Not fighting and hating

Brothers and sisters
Not strangers and devils
Hopes and hugs
Not tears of despair

Rainbows and riches
Not clouds and concern
Poems and prayers
Not poverty and pain
Health and humour
Not sick and sadness
Thanks for the day
Not fear of the night.

My wish for the world
That we all belong somewhere
We all know love and kindness
We find happiness
We find work
We have hope for the future
We fulfil ourselves
We share our love and laughter
We overcome fear.

My wish for
the world

asylum is a human right

The Refugee Council is committed to creating a fair, humane and effective asylum system that provides protection and enables refugees to rebuild their lives in safety.

If you would like to make a donation to help the Refugee Council continue its vital work, please visit the website at

www.refugeecouncil.org.uk or call
020 7346 1205.



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