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INDUSTRY NEWS



American Culinary Federation
Chefs and Culinary
Professionals of Chicagoland

ACF Chefs and Culinary Professionals of Chicagoland, founded in 1925, is one of the fastest-growing chapters of the American Culinary Federation (ACF). Click [here](#) for more information.

Sobia

When the air temperature is 109F in the morning, you approach the day a little differently. That is the case as I look out at the Saudi skyline from my hotel. Being in Saudi Arabia during Ramadan is an interesting food experience. Ramadan is a special time for the Muslim world. For a month, your eating schedule is completely turned around, as you must fast from sun up to sun down without drink or food. Then you enjoy a daily break-fast meal called the Iftar.

The Iftar is a communal event meant to be shared. The mood was described to me as more of a holiday with joy permeating the evening events. The day is quiet, ending at 4:00 PM, and the streets are quiet! At night, it is a completely different story. After 10, everyone goes out and the streets are packed. It kind of reminded me of going to the mall just before Christmas.

The Iftar is the first meal after sun down, and the one I experienced was amazing. It was one of the biggest buffets I had seen in a long time. I have a lot of respect for the chefs preparing the meal, as you can't taste the food during the preparation during Ramadan. Everything was vibrant and reflected both modern and classic dishes from the area.

By the way, breakfast after the last prayer was served at 1:30 AM.

If you don't know, Saudi Arabia is a dry country where it is forbidden to serve, consume, or store alcohol. From a westerner's perspective, what is one to serve with a celebration such as the lavish Iftar if you can't pop a cork or pour a malt beverage? They do so with other, more sensible, healthier options, from sweetened date and milk drinks to vibrant fruit cocktails. This put me into a dilemma-what to do with my monthly beverage selections. So, with a little time on my hands and the internet, I found a traditional Saudi fermented beverage that is very interesting from a modern flavor profile. In the US, we have become fascinated by embracing more fermented products and vinegars. Just look at all the recommendations that we should be drinking glasses of unfiltered vinegar for our own health as well as a trend of sipping vinegars in our cocktails.

A beverage call Sobia is something that gains popularity during Ramadan and is sold from street vendors in several major cities across the kingdom. Why this one? It has fermented barley in it, of course.

Sobia is made by soaking bread, sugar, and oats/barley in water for 24 hours and allowing it to ferment. The strained



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The Cicerone Certification Program certifies and educates beer professionals in order to elevate the beer experience for consumers. cicerone.org.



The Craft Beer Networking Group is comprised of professionals from a wide variety of industries, and we meet approximately every 6 weeks at different breweries or craft beer bars in Chicago for two main reasons:

1. Networking
2. Enjoying craft beer

Email cbngchicago@gmail.com for more info and to become part of the group.



Eater is the source for people who

liquid is then boiled and flavored with spices and sweeteners. It is sold in clear plastic bags and served chilled. Kind of sounds like a beverage I talk a lot about. Some are colored red, yellow, or purple and flavored with tamarind or raisins/dried fruit.

It also has similarities with another drink that becomes commonplace during the Lawn Tennis Season-barley water. I mentioned this a while back, but since it's summer, I thought I would refresh your memories.

By the way, I did get a little enamored with another drink on my last trip. I think it is time for another Pimm's Cocktail! Enjoy the summer!

Here is a recipe that I found and modified for Sobia:

Ingredients

- 1 ea Large Stale Whole Wheat Pita Bread or 2 Cups Dried Bread Cubes
- ¼ Cup Flaked Barley or Oatmeal
- 12 Cups Water
- 1 ½ Cups Sugar
- 1 tsp Ground Cinnamon
- ½ tbl Ground Cardamom

Directions

1. Cut the bread into small pieces and place in a stainless steel bowl. Add the barley or oatmeal, ½ of the sugar, and 6 cups of water. Cover and soak 24 hours in a warm spot such as an oven or in a bright corner of the kitchen.
2. Strain the bread and grains, reserving the liquid. Using cheesecloth or a towel, squeeze out any excess liquid into the reserved liquid and then allow the bread to drain for another 30 minutes.
3. Place the drained liquid in a pot and add the remaining water, sugar, and spices. Bring to a boil and simmer for 15-20 minutes.
4. Strain again, place into a clean container, and allow to cool at room temperature for another 24 hours.
5. Chill overnight and serve over ice.

*Note: Ground dried fruit can be added to the bread and oats in step one. Use approximately 2 cups of fruit.

- Chef John Reed, CEC, CCA

BEVERAGES

Robertson's Barley Water

care about dining and drinking in the nation's most important food cities, like Chicago. A favorite of industry pros and amateurs alike, Eater has an uncanny knack for finding out what's opening where, who's serving what, and how it's all going down. Find out [what's new](#) in Chicago.



I have found this in quite a few grocery stores in my neighborhood with a large [international selection](#).

Pimm's



Here is the [other one](#) you can enjoy this summer. Yes, add all the garnishes, especially fresh borage flowers, for a true fruit salad in a glass.

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