



MEET THE FAMILY

Manal and Samer's family came to Canada from their native country of Syria, in December of 2016. They have four children: Sobhi (13) who enjoys playing soccer and riding his bike; Majid (11) who loves to exercise and runs often; Wafaa (9) who creatively draws her own illustrations and hosts fashion shows; and Masa (2) who likes to listen to and sing children's songs. Mom describes her children as trustworthy, well-mannered, funny, and smart. Samer has relatives living in Windsor, including a cousin who moved to Canada ten years ago. Samer's mother, brother and his family arrived in Windsor soon after Manal and Samer's family relocated to the region. The Dali family enjoys spending time together. They often visit local attractions, such as the beautiful gardens, the Riverside, Point Pelee, Leamington and Niagara Falls.

BEST MEMORIES FROM SYRIA

Manal was born and raised in Damascus, Syria. After Manal and Samer were married, they moved to Aleppo (Halab). Manal loved her home in Aleppo; she described it as being very lively, and filled with family. Every Friday, Manal and Samer either enjoyed dinner together or visited Samer's family. Two years after moving, Manal's family joined the couple from Damascus to Aleppo. Weekends and vacations were always spent with the whole family. Together, the family travelled Syria, dined in restaurants, went to amusement parks, and enjoyed beaches. Manal's favourite memory is when her family went to Al-Zabadani, a city in Syria filled with tourist attractions.

JOURNEY TO CANADA

Before coming to Canada, Manal and Samer's family moved to Lebanon, and lived there for four years. Samer's sister lives in Lebanon, and she insisted that Samer should have his family reside nearby. When Manal and Samer's family moved to Lebanon, Manal's parents and siblings relocated to Turkey. Since then, Manal has only seen her family virtually, on FaceTime. After four years in Lebanon, UNICEF approached Samer and the family, and asked if they would like to leave the country. When they agreed, UNICEF picked Windsor, Ontario, Canada, as their destination. Six months later, they were on their way to their new home. Samer and Manal were very excited to begin their new life in Canada.

FAVOURITE HOLIDAY TRADITION

The Dali's favourite holiday are the two Muslim Eids: Eid Al-Fitr and Eid Al-Adha. Eid Al-Fitr (the Festival of Breaking the Fast), is a celebration that marks the end of Ramadan (a month-long of fasting). Eid Al-Adha (the Festival of Sacrifice) is celebrated after Hajj, the Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca. The family celebrates these two Eids by decorating the house, wearing new clothes, sharing gifts, seeing their relatives, and having dinner at restaurants. A day before Eid, Manal usually buys sweets, or bakes them at home, for her family to enjoy.

LIFE IN CANADA

Even though their destination was chosen for them, the Dali family are very thankful for their life in Canada. Manal explained that everyone in Canada respects each other, no matter their culture or identity. Manal is grateful that children are well taken care of here; their priority is the children's education and well-being. After finishing LINC classes, Manal intends to go to college and study to become an Early Childhood Educator. The family credits their success to the support and services, which they have received at NCCE Inc., including from the Children's Programs and Services, LINC classes, and SORS departments, which all have contributed to the integration of their settlement in our community.

FAMILY RECIPE

MLOUKHEYE

A few dishes the Dali family love to eat is Kabab, Shish Barak, and Sambusa. However, their favourite family recipe is a dish called Mloukheye.

INGREDIENTS:

Mloukheye

- 400 grams of dried Mloukheye leaves (jute leaves)
- ¼ cup of ghee or vegetable oil
- 1 tablespoon of olive oil
- 1 frozen sweet red pepper
- 4 tablespoons of ground coriander
- 17 cloves of garlic
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 tablespoon Seven spices
- 2-3 Bay leaves
- 5 whole cardamom pods
- 5 cloves
- ½ onion, chopped
- 1 whole chicken cut into quarters, or 6 chicken thighs
- 2 lemons
- 2 litres of water

Rice

- 3 cups of basmati rice
- ½ cup of Vermicelli noodles
- Salt
- 4-5 cups water

DIRECTIONS:

Rice:

- Soak the rice in cold water for approximately one hour, and rinse until the water runs clear.
- In a deep pot, heat one tablespoon of vegetable oil over medium-heat.
- Break the Vermicelli noodles and put them in the pot. Cook for 3-5 minutes until golden brown.
- Add the washed rice into the pot and mix it with the Vermicelli noodles. Add the water and salt, and cook over medium heat until it begins to boil.
- Once the water begins to boil, reduce the heat to low and cover the pot with the lid. Cook the rice for 12-15 minutes.

Mloukheye:

- In a medium sized pot, heat one tablespoon of olive oil. Add the chicken inside the pot, and season it with cardamom, seven spices, salt, bay leaves, cloves, and onion. Add water until the chicken is covered, and leave to boil. When the chicken is cooked, take the chicken out of the water and shred it into small pieces. Leave the chicken broth on the side.
- Soak Mloukheye leaves in water for 10 minutes. Drain the water, and squeeze the Mloukheye. Repeat this process until the leaves are clean. Put the frozen dried sweet red pepper into the food processor blend it into small pieces.
- Peel five cloves of garlic, and cut them in thirds.
- In a pan, add the ground coriander, garlic, and the pieces of red pepper, and sauté them. Once done, put them to the side.
- Peel the rest of the garlic, and crush it until no chunks remain.
- In a large deep pot, heat ghee and vegetable oil. Slowly add the washed Mloukheye leaves, lemon juice, salt, and the crushed garlic, and then sauté them.
- After sautéing, using a strainer, pour the chicken broth on top of the Mloukheye. If necessary, add additional water to cover the Mloukheye leaves, and then add salt and seven spices. Add the sautéed coriander mix into the pot, and leave to boil. Let it cook over medium heat for 20 minutes.
- Taste the Mloukheye, and make sure the leaves are cooked. If needed, put salt and spices to taste. Add the shredded chicken on top of the Mloukheye, and let it simmer for 5 minutes.
- Once done, serve Mloukheye and rice with lemon juice and salt to taste. Enjoy this delicious meal!