

NAFA'S STORY

I don't remember arriving in the UK. I came to this country at the age of 46 in 2013 – accompanied by my 16-year-old son – after fleeing torture and persecution in Sri Lanka. Memory loss, I now understand, is a common reaction to trauma. To this day, much of my life remains a blur to me – and I have trouble speaking to people too. My first months in London were among the most difficult I have experienced. Unable to speak the language and plagued by the horrors of my past, I could not properly look after myself. I was terrified of strangers and found myself unable to speak to anyone. I did not know who to ask for help. As I had no money, I would often attend a Tamil temple, which would provide me with a hot meal. A Tamil doctor who also attended the temple recognised that I was showing symptoms of trauma. She and her husband helped me complete my asylum application and secure accommodation at a hostel. From there, I was referred to Freedom from Torture. As I got to know my therapist, Elena, I started to rebuild my sense of self. For the first time, I felt I had found someone who understood what I was going through. After four years of therapy, I had made great strides in my recovery, but I still

struggled to talk to anyone unless I knew them. To help me start talking again, my therapist encouraged me to join Freedom from Torture's baking group and bake bread with fellow survivors. When I first started attending, I stood in the corner and wouldn't speak to anyone. As my confidence in baking grew, an extraordinary thing happened. Memories of my old life began to emerge out of the fog of my past. I remembered my mother making curry powder from a jealously guarded recipe, full of rare and secret ingredients. I remembered the smell of the hemp seed she would grind to make her special beef stew. I remembered my father's restaurant, where people from the neighbourhood would queue to grab a bite to eat. It was then I decided I wanted to be a chef. After I excelled at baking, the leader of the bread group, Kirstin, recommended me to a hotel school that specialises in training refugees and others facing disadvantages finding employment. I felt so proud that my talent and hard work were being recognised. During my training course, I worked in the kitchens at two famous five-star hotels in central London. I passed my training course and now am working towards building my own catering company, with my sons.

*"When I cook, all my fears and worries melt away.
I feel like there is nothing I cannot do." - Nafa*



Nafa and Joanna Lumley, showcasing
Nafa's beautiful hand-made batik aprons

NAFA'S HIBISCUS RICE

செம்பருத்தி பூ ாதம்

Picked from the Garden: Garlic, Cumin, Fennel, Bay Leaves, Onion

Serves 4 as a side • Prep time: 15 minutes • Soaking time: 1 hour • Cook time: 45 minutes

INGREDIENTS

- 30 ml olive oil
- 200g onion, peeled and finely chopped
- 15g ginger, peeled and finely grated
- 3 garlic cloves, peeled and crushed
- 2 green chillies, stems removed and cut in half lengthways
- 1 cinnamon stick
- ½ teaspoon cumin seeds
- ½ teaspoon fennel seeds
- 10 curry leaves, (5g) or 2 bay leaves
- 25g dry hibiscus, soaked in 350ml of boiling water for 30 minutes
- 200g white basmati rice, washed until the water runs clear and soaked in plenty of cold water for 1 hour
- Flaked sea salt

METHOD

1. Add the first 9 ingredients to a medium saucepan and cook, stirring frequently for 10 minutes until the onions have softened and the mixture is fragrant.
2. Reserving the liquid, add the hibiscus to the pan. Stir well and cook for 3-4 minutes until fragrant. Sieve in the soaking liquid and bring to a boil. Mix in the rice with 2 teaspoons of salt, reduce the heat to low and simmer for 15 minutes.
3. Turn the heat off and set aside to steam for 15 minutes. Serve hot.

"In Sri Lanka this is a village food, there are other flowers we add to make colourful. It has a lovely sour taste, and is very nutritious and good for digestion. We eat this with fried fish or vegetable curry."



TOM KERRIDGE'S FETA AND GREENS FILO TRIANGLES

Picked from the Garden: Chard, Garlic, Spinach, Sesame Seeds, Onion

Makes 6 • Prep time: 20 minutes • Cook time: 1 hour

INGREDIENTS

- Olive oil spray
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 4 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 250g cavolo nero, trimmed of thick stems and roughly chopped
- 250g spinach, roughly chopped
- 250g chard, chopped (including stems)
- 250g reduced-fat feta cheese, crumbled
- 50g pine nuts, toasted
- 20g dill, roughly chopped
- ½ nutmeg, freshly grated
- 1 unwaxed lemon, finely grated zest only
- 6 sheets of filo pastry, each 45cm x 25cm/17½ in x 9½ in
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 tsp sesame seeds, for sprinkling

FOR THE TOMATO CHILLI SAUCE

- 50g caster sugar
- 50ml red wine vinegar
- 400g tin chopped tomatoes
- ½ tsp dried chilli flakes

METHOD

1. Heat 10 sprays of olive oil in a large frying pan over a high heat. Add the onion and fry for 4–5 minutes, or until softened, adding a splash of water if it starts to stick. Add the garlic and cook for another 2 minutes. Add the cavolo nero and cook for 2–3 minutes until soft. Stir through the spinach and chard, then take off the heat; the spinach will have wilted only a little. Season with salt and pepper. Leave to cool completely.
2. Meanwhile, for the sauce, put the sugar in a small saucepan over a medium-high heat and swirl gently until melted and starting to turn to a caramel. Take off the heat and immediately add the vinegar, stirring to make a syrup. Add the tomatoes, chilli flakes and a pinch of salt. Simmer for 20 minutes, or until thickened.
3. Preheat the oven to 220°C/200°C Fan/Gas 7. Mix the feta, pine nuts, dill, nutmeg and lemon zest into the cold greens.
4. Divide into six portions. Unroll the filo; keep under a damp tea towel to stop the sheets drying out. Lay a sheet of filo on your work surface with a short edge facing you and brush the edges with a little oil. Place a portion of filling at the lower end, about 15mm/½ in from the bottom and left hand edges and form into a triangular shape. Fold over the right half of the pastry sheet, then fold the bottom left corner over the filling to make a triangle. Fold the parcel up to form another triangle. Keep folding over and up until you reach the top. Seal the edge with a little oil. Spray with a little oil, sprinkle with sesame seeds and place on a baking tray. Bake for 20–25 minutes, or until golden and crispy.
5. Serve with the warm tomato chilli sauce.

"When I was a teenager, I'd have rugby training every Sunday morning, and lunch after that was brilliant. Half the team would come back to the house, so Mum would have to knock something up. If we were lucky it'd be a joint of meat. Either way, there'd be all the veg - not forgetting the gravy and the roast potatoes!"



ABOUT FREEDOM FROM TORTURE

NO GOVERNMENT SHOULD EVER COMMIT OR TOLERATE TORTURE.

It is the most terrible abuse of power towards a defenceless person, a violation of their human rights and dignity. To deliberately cause pain, suffering and mental anguish. To instil total fear and humiliation. To seek to crush someone's spirit.

That torture is illegal is a fundamental principle of international law, and governments are required not just to refrain from using torture, but to actively prevent it from happening.

And yet in the 21st century, around the world, we see the incidence and acceptance of torture rising, as authoritarian governments seek to suppress popular movements and protest, and use torture to silence activists and destroy people.

WHO WE ARE:

Freedom from Torture is one of the largest torture rehabilitation charities in the world, founded more than 35 years ago. Thanks to our generous community of supporters, we have helped tens of thousands of torture survivors in the UK to overcome their trauma and rebuild their lives in safety.

But our work is more important today than ever. Here in the UK, of those arriving seeking asylum, **an estimated one person in three has experienced torture** in their home country, causing them to flee.

People who have survived torture experience ongoing trauma for years.

Physical pain, problems sleeping, concentrating, trusting others, and memory. Flashbacks and panic attacks sparked by sounds, smells, corridors, water, darkness.

We are here for people as they put themselves back together and rebuild their lives. Across five specialist treatment centres, our clinicians work with survivors to rebuild their physical and mental health. Our doctors document evidence of torture. Our lawyers and welfare advisors help survivors with their asylum cases and living conditions.

Alongside one-to-one therapy, many survivors find complementary group therapies – such as gardening, baking and creative writing – hugely valuable.

By coming together to nurture plants, bake bread from their homelands, or express themselves through writing, survivors are able to open up about their experiences, build lasting friendships and begin to heal.

It is only through the kindness of our supporters that we can continue to help those who have survived such cruel abuse. Thank you for your humanity, compassion and solidarity with survivors of torture.