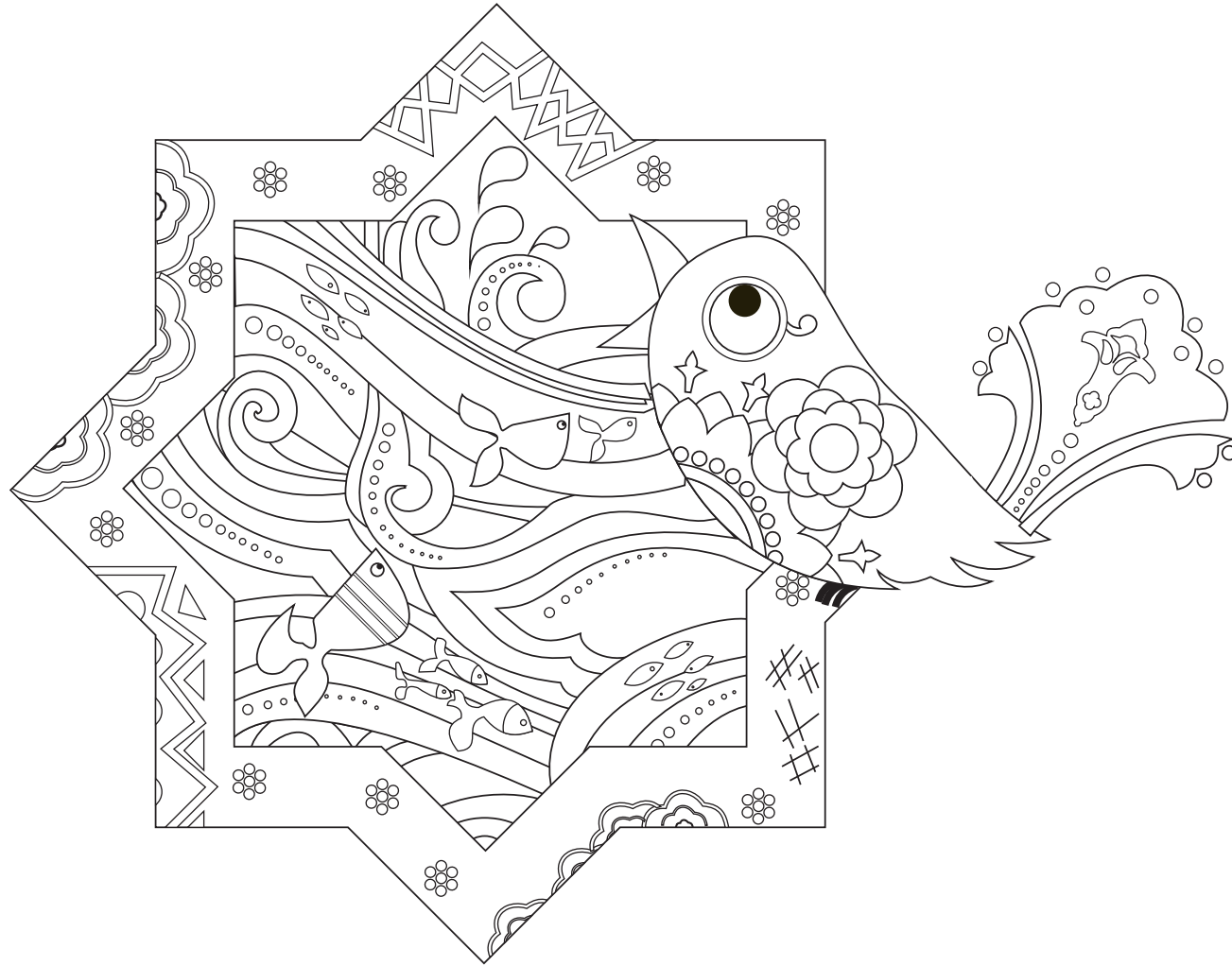




NEWROZ

KURDISH NEW YEAR





Newroz piroz be!

HAPPY NEWROZ

WHAT IS NEWROZ?

Newroz is the Kurdish celebration of the Persian new year holiday "Nowruz." Kurdish Newroz coincides with the Spring Equinox and celebrates the beginning of spring. Over the years, Newroz has come to represent new beginnings.

The festival is important in terms of Kurdish identity. Though celebrations vary across the Kurdish region, people generally meet up with friends and family, wear colourful traditional clothes, prepare special foods, read poetry and dance.

According to Kurdish legend, Newroz celebrates the return of Spring after the evil Assyrian king, Zuhak, who had serpents growing from his shoulders, was killed by Kaveh, a blacksmith who lost six sons to the king, after a thousand year reign of terror in Kurdistan. Kaveh set fire to the hillsides to celebrate the victory. This legend is now used by the Kurds to remind themselves that they are a different, strong people, and the lighting of the fires has since become a symbol of freedom. It is a tradition to jump over a fire at Newroz. Fire also symbolizes the passing of the dark season, Winter, and the arrival of Spring, the season of light.

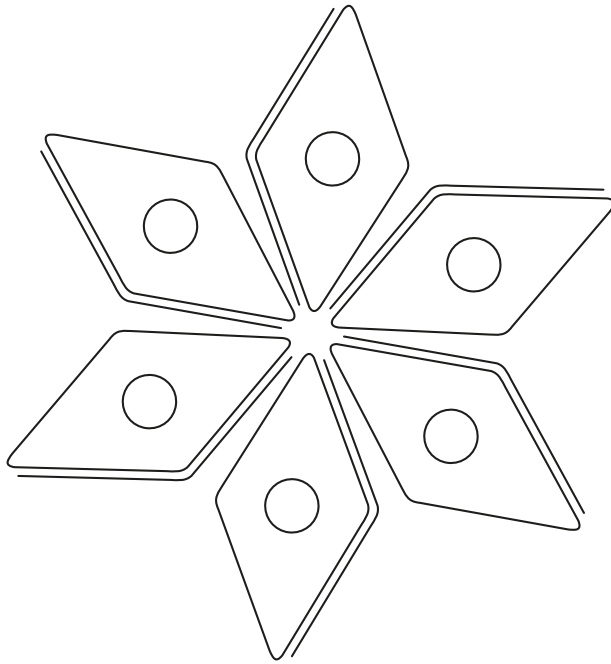
Kurds that have moved around the world, continue to celebrate wherever they have set up home as a way of uniting themselves with their fellow people. In Australia, Newroz is not only celebrated as the beginning of the new year but also as Kurdish National Day. The Kurds in Finland celebrate the new year as a way of demonstrating their support for the Kurdish cause. In London, organisers estimated that 25,000 people celebrated Newroz in March 2006.

March begins with spring cleaning. Families plant small pots of wheat, barley or lentils that quickly germinate into lush green sprouts.

Sweets are often brought as gifts to Nowruz festivities, and Gaz is a popular choice. A type of nougat filled with pistachios, it originated in the city of Isfahan. It's usually shop-bought, packed in a decorative box, but many people make their own.

Families often can celebrate Newroz for two or three days in various public and private settings. On the final day of Newroz, Kurds often drive to the countryside for day-long picnics with family and friends to enjoy the Spring air,





MAKE BAKLAVA

Baklava, or paklava as its known in Kurdish households is a nutty, buttery, sticky, sweet, spiced pastry popular across the Middle East.

Recipe makes around 50 pieces

Preparation time:
50 minutes

Cooking time:
25 – 30 minutes

Requires a pastry brush
and 2 baking trays

Recipe from www.kurdish-kitchen.com/baklava

INGREDIENTS

375g pre-made filo pastry
200g unsalted butter

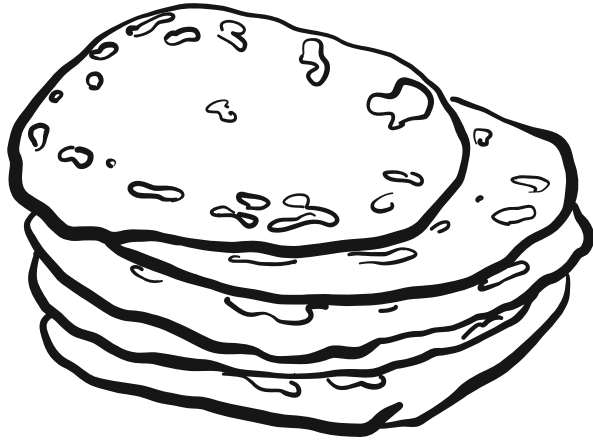
NUT FILLING
450 – 500g (4 cups) nuts of your choice (ie. walnut, pecan, pistachio)
100g (1 cup) icing sugar
1 tbsp ground cardamom

SYRUP
100g (1cup) sugar
160g (½ cup) honey
375ml (1½ cups) water
2 tbsp lemon or lime juice
1 tbsp rose water

METHOD

1. Remove cardamom seeds from around 20 pods and grind them until you have 1 tbsp of fine powder. Set this aside.
2. Grind the nuts in a food processor being careful not to over mix.
3. Pour the nuts into a large bowl and add icing sugar, cardamom and salt. Mix until the spices and sugar coat the nuts evenly then set aside.
4. Melt 200g butter over a low heat.
5. Heat your oven to 170 degrees Celsius (fan oven).
6. It is now time to start assembling the baklava: use a pastry brush to butter the first baking tray and place the first two sheets of filo down with care. Apply another thin and even spread of butter to the pastry, then apply the next two layers of filo. Repeat until you've lay down 6 filo sheets in total, applying a final layer of melted butter.
7. Spread about a quarter of your nut mixture evenly over the pastry, then add two more sheets of filo, then melted butter. Add another quarter of your nut mixture and spread evenly again, before adding the top layer of filo sheets (3 pairs of sheets, applying a layer of melted butter to each pair).
8. Once you've added your final layer of melted butter, put the baking tray in the fridge for 30 minutes to set the butter, making it easier to cut before putting in the oven. Repeat this process for the rest of your mixture in the second baking tray.
9. Remove the baklava from the fridge and cut into your desired shape for serving using a sharp knife. Bake for 25 – 30 minutes, until golden brown.
7. Add the sugar, honey, water, rose water and lemon or lime juice to a saucepan and simmer over a medium heat for around 15 minutes, stirring until it resembles a syrup. Set aside once made.
8. Once out of the oven, leave the baklava to cool down for 10 minutes. Pour your syrup slowly and evenly over both trays. Ideally leave for 24 hours for the baklava to soak up all the delicious syrup before enjoying.





MAKE NAWSAJI

Nawsaji could be described as a cross between breakfast pastry, doughnut, and Indian naan bread. Lightly fried in oil, it's not for every day, but with its bready texture and gentle sweetness offset by aromatic nigella seeds, nawsaji is the ultimate breakfast treat, and such a fun way to start your day.

Enjoy nawsaji with natural yogurt, honey and walnuts. Or, if you fancy a savoury breakfast, serve it alongside a fried egg with a runny yolk.

INGREDIENTS

430g (3 cups) strong white bread flour
250 – 310ml (1 – 1¼ cup) warm water
24g (2 tbsp) sugar
10g (1 tbsp) dried active yeast

8g (1 ¼ tsp) fine salt
10g (1 tbsp) nigella seeds
2 tbsp sunflower oil
Enough oil for shallow frying

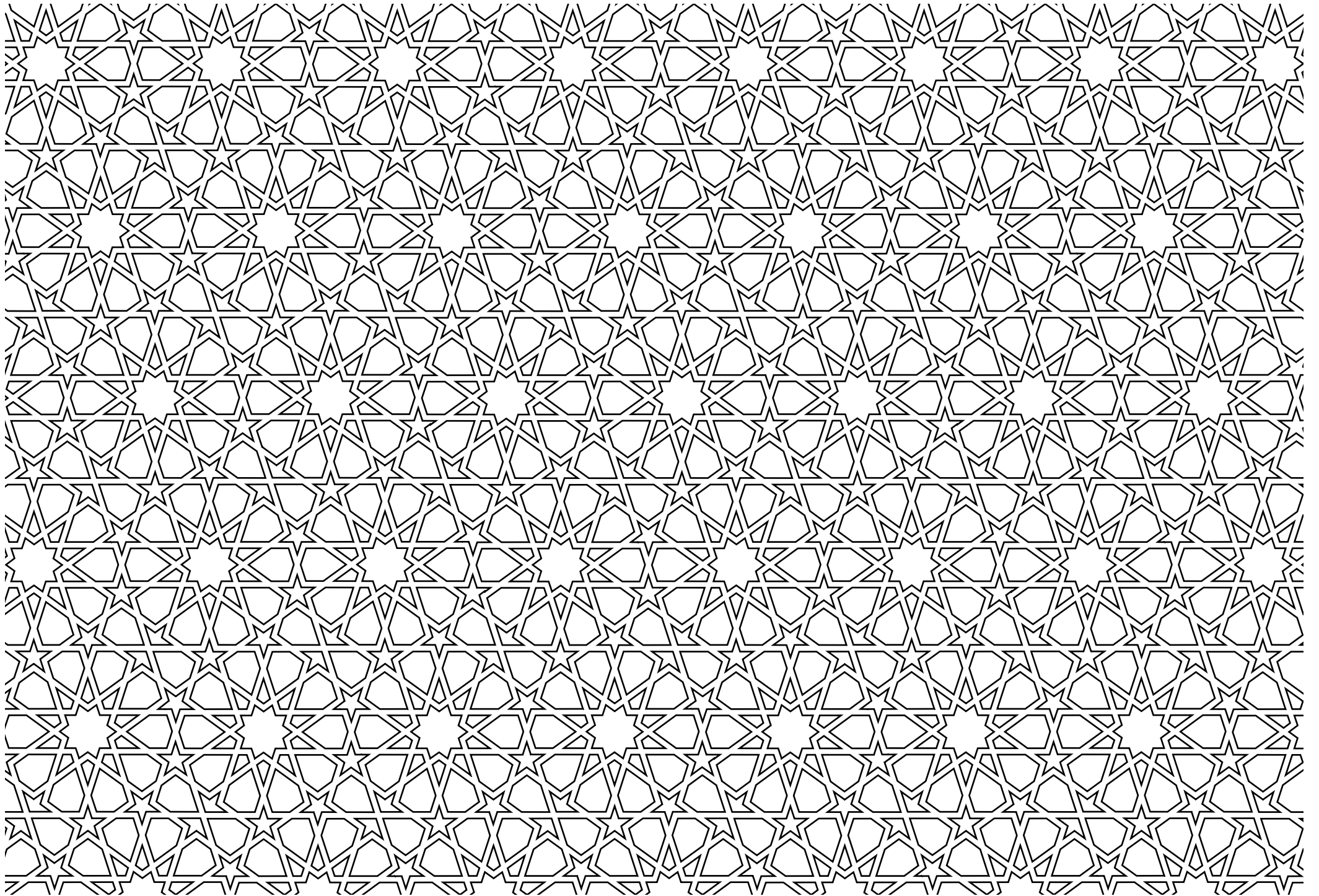
Preparation time: 10 minutes (plus 1 hour for proving)

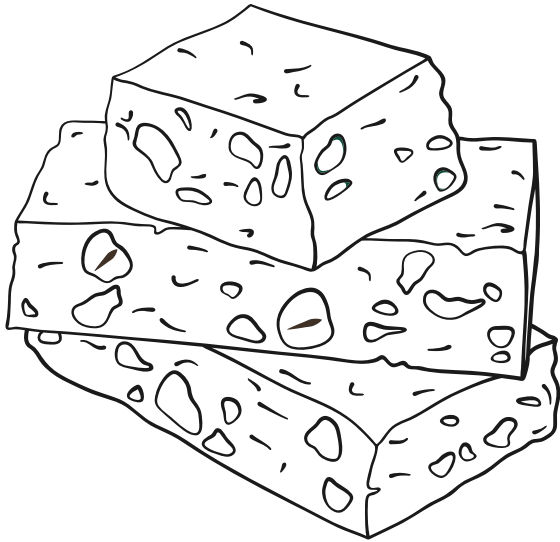
Cooking time: 20 minutes

Makes 8 nawsaji

METHOD

1. Add the bread flour to a large bowl.
2. In a separate bowl add in the yeast, sugar, salt and 1 cup of warm water. Stir for a few minutes until it all mixes together, then make a well in the flour and pour the yeast mixture in. Slowly stir together with a spoon.
3. Add 2 tbsp sunflower oil and 1 tbsp nigella seeds to the mixture and knead the dough with your hands for a few minutes until it forms a smooth, elastic ball. Add some more warm water to the dough at this point if you feel it needs it.
4. Cover the bowl with cling film or a tea towel and leave to prove in a warm place for about an hour.
5. Once proved and double the size, tip out your dough mixture onto a floured surface and divide into 8 equal portions.
6. Put enough oil into a pan to shallow fry your nawsaji, and turn the heat on high.
7. Using your fingers, gently press down on the first portion of dough to form a flat piece that is no more than 5mm thick. Once the oil in the pan is hot, put the dough into the pan and fry, pressing down on the dough with a spatula if necessary to ensure that it browns evenly. Allow 1 minute on each side, or until both sides are golden brown.
8. Whilst one nawsaji is frying, shape the next portion of dough, or if you prefer, you can shape all your dough pieces before you start frying.
9. Once all the nawsaji are made, serve and enjoy!





MAKE GAZ (NOUGAT)

Gaz or Persian nougat is one of the favourite sweets in the Persian region.

It is made of egg whites, sugar and nuts.

INGREDIENTS

300g sugar
100g pistachio (you can take any nuts you want but traditionally pistachio is used)
100ml water
80g honey
1 egg white

You will need a Thermometer

METHOD

1. Line square cake tin with parchment paper and dust the base with flour.
2. Toast the pistachios in a dry pan for 3-4 minutes and set aside to cool down.
3. Set aside 1tbsp of sugar and put the rest of sugar in a pan with 100ml water. Stir well.
4. Heat the sugar mixture until starts to boil. When the sugar syrup reaches 110c stir in the honey.
5. When syrup reaches to 130c, whisk the egg white on a low speed.
Add the remaining 1tbs of sugar and keep whisking until it is thick and meringue like.
6. While you are whisking the egg white, continue to boil the sugar syrup to boil until it reaches 135-137C
7. While whisking the egg white at high speed, slowly pour in the hot syrup.
Continue to beat the mixture until it is firm and thick.
8. Add the nuts into the egg white mixture and use a spatula to mix nuts them in.
9. Spread the mix, into the prepared tin and press down the mixture. Dust with some flour and leave the gaz to set for 4-5 hours or overnight.
10. Turn out and cut the Gaz into square or rectangle shapes.
11. Gaz can be stored in an airtight container in a cool and dark place for up to 2 months.



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