

## المطبخ الفلسطيني: العامية

In the Arabic culture, proverbs and sayings play an important role in everyday language. Often times these are similar or very close to proverbs and sayings in other languages. The following Palestinian proverbs and expressions are related to food and cooking, and some are shared by other dialects. Enjoy!

أعطِ الخبز لخبازه ولو  
أكل نصّه

**Give the bread to the baker, even if he eats half of it**

This proverb urges us to seek help from those who are good in their profession when we need a job done. It comes from traditional Palestinian life when daily living involved seeing the baker. The proverb means, in a literal sense, give the unbaked bread to the baker to bake it for you even if he ends up eating half of it. This way a person will not burn the bread if he or she does the baking.

إذا كثروا الطباخين..  
بتنحرق الطبخة  
وبتشيط

**Too many chefs burn the food**

*Too many cooks spoil the broth*

This proverb explains that putting too many people in a position of authority can create conflict and confusion. Usually the differing attitudes stagnate the resolution of the actual issue at hand.

خابزه وعاجنه

**I have baked and kneaded him**

*I know him like the back of my hand!*

This proverb refers to someone that you have intimate knowledge.

إن كان حبيبك عسل..  
ما تلحسوش كله

**If your beloved one is made of honey, do not lick him all at once**

*Everything in moderation*

This proverb likens the host to honey, which is a delicious and nourishing food but should not be taken in excess. Honey is mentioned in the Qur'an and it is said that it has great benefit to people's health. This proverb reminds people not to take advantage of the sweetness of dear friends and citing this phrase can serve to criticize a person who abuses the generosity of others.

زي السمن ع العسل

**Like butter on honey**

*Like two peas in a pod*

An expression that describes two people that are perfect for each other. It can also be said when two friends have an argument and are later reconciled. When another person asks one of the two friends, "How is it going between the two of you now?" he or she may respond by saying زي السمن ع العسل.

شو فهم الحمير في  
أكل الجنزيبيل

**What do donkeys know of preserved ginger?**

*Do not cast pearls before swine*

Said when an ignorant person lays claim to knowledge he or she doesn't have.

شو هنية؟ لحسة  
حلاوة؟

What do you think it is? A sweet lick?

*It is not as easy as you think it is!*

This may be said to indicate that a situation is not as easy as one thinks it may be.

يا داخل بين البصلة  
وقشرتها، ما نابك غير  
صنتها

O' you who enter between the onion and its peel, you will gain nothing but its bad smell

*Mind your own business!*

This may be said to someone who interferes or meddles in other people's business when they were not invited to do so.

طبّاخ السم بيدوقه

A cook tastes his own cooking, even if it is poison

*He that cooks the poison, prepares it for himself*

Similar to the English expressions "A taste of his own medicine" and "What goes around, comes around".

يا مسترخض اللحم  
عند المرّق تندم

He who buys cheap meat will regret the broth

This may be said when someone makes a bad decision. It is frequently used when price is the only consideration in making a purchase. The item may be less expensive than others, but one may regret their purchase as they will surely find the quality of the product to be lacking.

كَبّ القهوة خير

Spilling coffee is a good omen

*Bad luck often brings good luck in its wake*

An expression often said by a host when a guest literally spills coffee.

يوم غسل ويوم بصل

A honey day and an onion day

*Some days are diamonds, some are stones*

As with the English expression, this saying is used to reference the ups and downs of everyday life; some days are better than others.

The proverbs and expressions above appear in Nasser M. Isleem's book Popular Proverbs: An entrance to Palestinian culture. (Khallina would like to thank the author and the publisher for granting permission to reproduce them here)