

## Recipe for Cultural Harmony

As my eyes scanned the shelves of the pantry, I spotted an odd row of items tucked in the corner: a carton of eggs, a half-empty packet of flour, and a small jar of sugar.

Cooking, or the art of creating unique treats to eat, is one of my favorite hobbies. I wanted to make something delicious with these ingredients but what could I possibly do? Should I go for a warm omelet and pancakes or rather crispy crepes with a milkshake on the side? Each of these ingredients could create a tasty treat on their own, but I wanted to surprise everyone and make something spectacular. As a lightbulb went off above my head, I raced to stand on the stepstool and began grabbing the ingredients I would need.

Reaching for baking powder, I accidentally knocked over a packet of dates and found my memory flying back to school lunch a few months ago. Just as I was about to bite into a date my mom had packed for me, I heard a voice go, "Eww! Is that a bug?" I looked up in surprise only to hear the other girl giggle and joke "No, it looks like something from my cat's litterbox!" As they began to laugh, I felt my face grow hot in shame. The thoughts were racing through my mind. Do I need to hide my lunch now? Should I just stop eating or maybe toss the date in the trash, saying that I didn't know how it ended up in my lunchbox? I had a choice: to remain silent and move on or tell them what this snack meant for me. Doing my best to be brave, I explained how dates were actually important to me as they were a big part of Ramadan, a special month I celebrated with my family. To my surprise, everyone around me was so interested to learn about this new holiday and kept asking questions as they had never heard about Ramadan before.

After asking my teacher, I was able to give a small presentation about my culture to the class. Everyone said it was super interesting to learn about my culture and a few even tried the chocolate dates that I brought for the show-and-tell. Because I decided to speak up that lunch, I was able to

share my culture with my everyone and even got to learn something new about other cultures when someone brought a menorah and talked about what their family did for Hanukkah.

Smiling at these memories, I started adding 3 eggs, 1 cup of milk with sugar, a bar of butter, a pinch of salt, 2tsp of vanilla extract, to 3 cups of flour, mixed till the batter was ready. Just like that, if we add a gallon of respect, a pint of understanding, 3 cups of kindness, a teaspoon of willingness to listen, sprinkle of compassion, and mix with loads of love, we can help bring cultural harmony to the world.