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EASTER COOKIES
in
JERUSALEM

Illustrated by: Jinan Jiha



Jerusalem was bustling with preparations for Easter. Families were getting ready to celebrate. The traditional palm leaves were everywhere, on churches, in markets and even in homes.

“Mama, why do they use palm leaves?” Salma asked.

“They remind us of the time people welcomed Jesus with palm branches,” Mama Hala explained.



“Mrs. Mary has broken her arm,” Salma’s mother informed her.

“She won’t be able to bake her special Easter cookies this year,” she said sighing.

“I wish I could help, but time is short, and she needs 100 cookies.”

“I’ll help you, Mama,” Salma said eagerly. “I can ask my friends to join, too.”

Mama Hala clapped her hands. “And I’ll invite mine!”



The next day, mothers and children arrived. Mama Hala brought out the cookie dough she had prepared. The kitchen smelled of cinnamon and butter.

She scooped a spoonful of the sweet date filling, rolled it into a ball, and wrapped it in dough.

“Now comes the fun part!” she said, pressing it into a mould to form a camel-shaped cookie



“Now it’s your turn,” she said, handing out different moulds. “Pick a shape.”

The children got to work.

“The dough is so soft and sticky!” Laila complained.

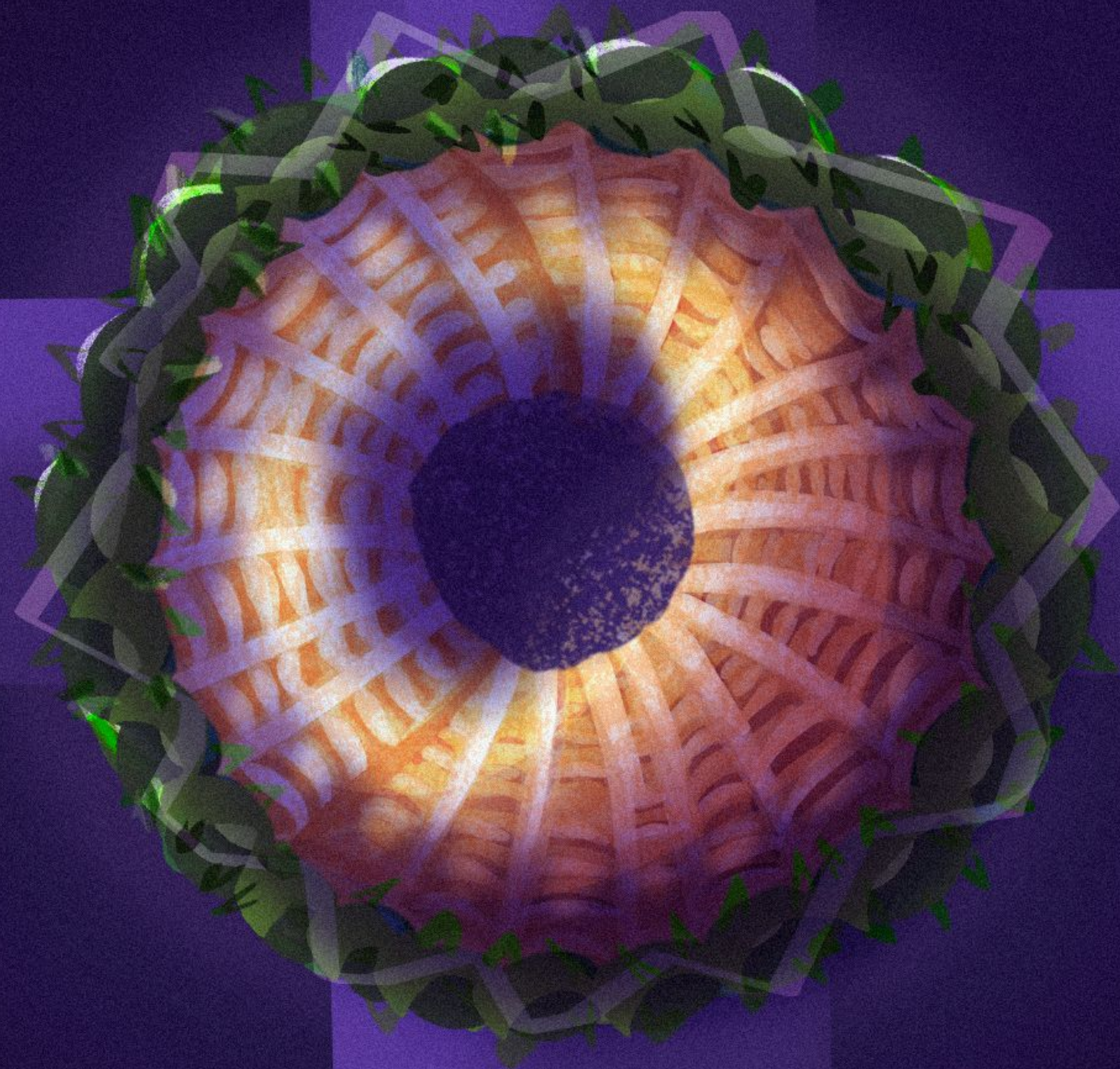
Mama Hala smiled.

“Handle it gently, like a baby bird.”

“Let’s see who can make the best one.” Mama said.

Jad held up his cookie.

“I think mine will be the best!”

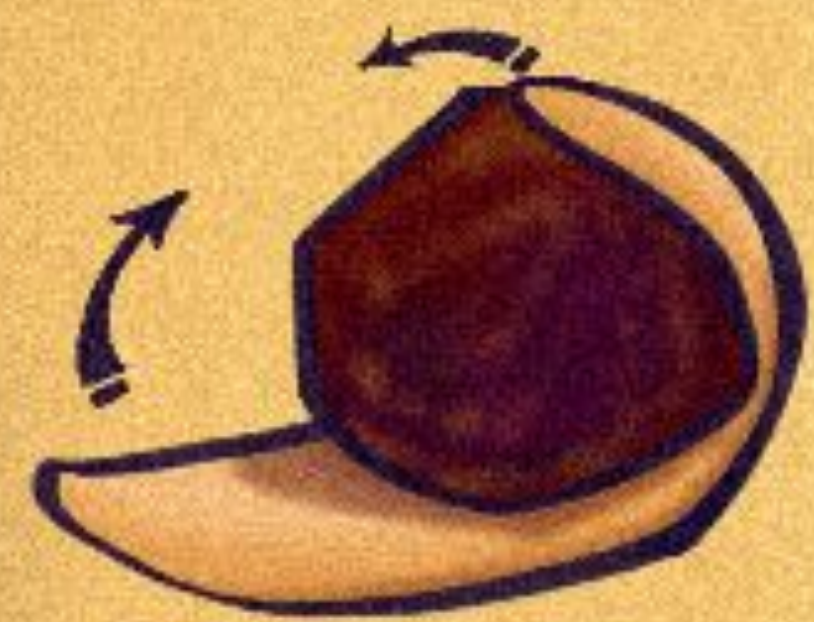


Salma noticed the adults' cookies looked different.

"Why are they different?" she asked.

"These are Ka'ek Maamoul, traditional date cookies," Mama Hala said.

"They remind us of the crown of thorns Jesus wore."



“Can I try?” Salma asked.
“Of course!” Mama Hala
smiled.

She shaped the dough
into a ring, pinched a
zigzag pattern with a
pincer, and handed it to
Salma.

Salma grinned. “I’ll make
the best one!”



Little Tania frowned as she struggled to roll her dough.

“My cookie looks more like the map of Palestine,” she said glumly.

Mama Hala chuckled. “That gives me an idea.” From a drawer she pulled out a special cookie cutter.

“Look what I found for you,” she said, handing it to Tania.

Tania’s eyes lit up. “Now my cookies will be truly special!”



The next day, the children proudly carried trays of cookies to Mrs. Mary's house.

"Thank you!" Mrs. Mary said. "Easter wouldn't be the same without them."

"I made a camel-shaped cookie for you," Jad said.

"And mine are the map of Palestine," Tania added.

"They're all amazing!" said Mrs. Mary. "Everyone is invited for the Easter party on Sunday."



That Sunday, the children joined Mrs. Mary's family for Easter fun. They eagerly decorated eggs with bright paints and paper.

Then came the "Cracking the Eggs" game - giggles erupted as shells broke!

"Now for the Easter egg hunt." "Whoever finds the golden egg wins a special surprise," Mrs. Mary announced.

The kids took off. Above and below the shrubs they peeked and pried, crouched and crawled. They darted, they dashed - hunting high and low. The fun had begun!

Date Mixture

Ingredients:

- ◇ 1 pack pitted Dates
- ◇ 1/2 tsp Ground Cinnamon
- ◇ 2 tbsp of Olive Oil

Preparation:

- ◇ Mix the dates into a paste.
- ◇ Add cinnamon and olive oil.
- ◇ Knead until oil is fully absorbed.
- ◇ Roll the paste into 1/2 inch balls.

Maamoul Dough

Ingredients:

- ◇ 2 cups Semolina
- ◇ 1 cup butter (melted)
- ◇ 1 cup Farina
- ◇ 2 tbsp granulated sugar
- ◇ Pinch Salt
- ◇ 1 pkg instant yeast
- ◇ 1 cup orange blossom water
- ◇ Combine both flours in large bowl, add melted butter and mix with hands.
- ◇ Let covered dough rest refrigerated overnight.
- ◇ Add yeast, sugar, salt, and mix.
- ◇ Add 1/3 cup orange blossom at a time, mix.
- ◇ Leave it to rise for 30 minutes.
- ◇ See page 6 for assembly.