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Recipe excerpted from [***Candies from Heaven***](http://amzn.to/2xPOvDz)

By Gil Hovav, Toad Publishing (2017)

**Chorva (Butterfly Soup)**

*Chorva* is a general name for soup – *ciorbă* in Romanian, *shurba* in Arabic and so on. In our home, it was the name of a sweet-and-sour tomato soup, enriched with rice. The rice plays a twofold role: It adds substance to the soup and also releases starch, thus thickening the soup. It’s important to use only long-grained rice, whose granules open into the shape of butterflies if cooked properly.

***Ingredients*** 2 finely diced onions¼ cup olive oil 2 pounds very ripe tomatoes (or 1 big can crushed tomatoes)1 small container tomato paste (2 tbsp)salt and ground black pepper10 cups water1 peeled carrot, coarsely shredded1/3 cup long-grained white rice½ cup chopped parsley

1.   Heat the oil in a pot and sauté the onions.

2.     If using fresh tomatoes, cut in half and shred on a coarse grater (and throw away the peel). Add the shredded tomatoes (or crushed tomatoes) to the pot. Add the tomato paste, salt, pepper and water. Mix and bring to a boil.

3.     Add the rice, carrots and parsley to the pot and stir. Lower the heat and cook covered, only until the grains of rice open to the shape of butterflies.

4.     Remove from the heat and taste. Season with lemon juice or a little sugar, according to the sourness of the tomatoes.

*·     Note: It’s important not to put more than 1/3 cup of rice into the pot. At first, it seems like just a little, but the rice later expands and if you put too much, you’ll end up with porridge*.