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Chapter 2 : Chef Ramzi Lebanese Cookbook - Middle East & Africa: Cooking & Baking - eGullet Forums

*The Original Lebanese and Middle East Cookbook [Agnes N. Johns] on blog.quintoapp.com *FREE* shipping on qualifying offers.*

Doner kebab The Middle East includes the region formerly known as the Fertile Crescent the land between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers - Sumeria , Akkad , Assyria and Babylonia , where wheat was first cultivated, followed by barley , pistachios , figs , pomegranates , dates and other regional staples. Fermentation was also discovered here to leaven bread and make beer in Mesopotamia , and the earliest written recipes come from that region also. As a crossroads between Europe, Asia, the Caucasus and North Africa, this area has long been a hub of food and recipe exchange. During the first Persian Empire ca. Figs, dates and nuts were brought by merchants to conquered lands, and spices were brought back from the Orient. Religion has also influenced the cuisine; neither Jews nor Muslims eat pork, making lamb the primary meat. Chateau Ksara is also very popular for its arak , an alcoholic drink produced in the Levant and Iraq. Lebanon has always been well known in the region for its wines and arak, making it an exception when it comes to lack of alcohol in the region. Grains[edit] Grains constitute the basis of the Middle Eastern diet, both historically and today. Wheat and rice are the major and preferred sources of staple foods. Barley is also widely used in the region and maize has become common in some areas as well. Bread is a universal staple€”eaten in one form or another by all classes and groups€”practically at every meal. Aside from bread, wheat is also used in the forms of bulghur and couscous. Burghul is cracked wheat, made by partially cooking the wheat grains in water, drying it in an oven or in the sun, then breaking it into pieces, in different grades of size. Typically, it is cooked in water, with flavorings, much like rice. Burghul is also used in making meat pies and as an ingredient in salads, notably in tabbouleh, with chopped parsley, tomato, lemon, and oil. Freekeh is another common grain, made from immature green wheat. There are many types of rice produced and consumed in the region. In more complex rice dishes, there are layers of meat, vegetables, sauces, nuts, or dried fruits. Flavorings[edit] Butter and clarified butter also known as smen are, traditionally, the preferred medium of cooking. Olive oil is prevalent in the Mediterranean coastal areas. Christians use it during Lent, when meat and dairy products are excluded, and Jews use it in place of animal fats such as butter to avoid mixing meat and dairy products. Most regions in the Middle East use spices. Typically, a stew will include a small amount of cinnamon , nutmeg , cloves , cumin , and coriander. Black pepper is common, and chili peppers are used occasionally, especially as a separate sauce or as a pickle. Parsley and mint are commonly used both in cooking and in salads. Sumac is also sprinkled over grilled meat. Garlic is common to many dishes and salads. Kebab koobideh Lamb and mutton have always been the favored meats of the Middle East. Pork is prohibited in both Islam and Judaism , and as such is rarely eaten in the region. Prominent among the meat preparations are grilled meats, or kebabs. There are a wide variety of these grills, with many regional specialties and styles. The most common are the cubed cuts on skewers, known as shish kebab in most places. Chicken may also be grilled in the same fashion. Another common variety is kofta kebab, made from ground meat , sometimes mixed with onions and spices, shaped around the skewer like a long sausage and grilled. Kebabs are typically a street or restaurant food, served with bread, salad, and pickles. It is not usually prepared in domestic kitchens. Meat and vegetable stews, served with rice, bulgur, or bread, are another form of meat preparation in the region. Kibbeh is a pie or dumpling made with meat and cereal. The most common are made with ground meat typically lamb and burghul, worked together like a dough, then stuffed with minced meat that has been fried with onion, aromatics, and, sometimes, pine nuts or almonds and raisins. This can either be in the form of individual small dumplings usually shaped like a torpedo , or in slices like a cake, baked on an oven tray with the stuffing placed between two layers of the dough. One variation is kibbeh naye, raw kibbeh, which is made by pounding raw meat and burghul together with seasoning and served with dips of lemon juice and chili sauce. Tursu are the pickled vegetables of the cuisines of many Balkan and Middle East countries. Vegetables and pulses are

the predominant staple of the great majority of the people in the Middle East. They are boiled, stewed, grilled, stuffed, and cooked with meat and with rice. Among the green leaf vegetables, many varieties of cabbage, spinach, and chard are widely used. Root and bulb vegetables, such as onions and garlic, as well as carrots, turnips, and beets are equally common. Squash, tomato, eggplants, and okra are distinctive elements in the cookery of the region. Eggplant is often fried in slices and dressed in yogurt and garlic, or roasted over an open fire, then pulped and dressed with tahini sesame paste, lemon juice, garlic, and cumin, a dish known as baba ghanoush. Tomato is the most ubiquitous ingredient in Middle Eastern cookery. It is used fresh in a variety of salads, cooked in almost every stew and broth, and grilled with kebab. Beans and pulses are crucial to the diet of the region, second only to cereals. Fava beans are eaten both green and dried. Dried, they are boiled into one of the most popular Egyptian foods: Similar dishes are found in all other parts of the region. The famous Falafel, now popular in Europe and America, was originally made from dried fava, crushed and formed into a rissole with herbs and spices, then fried. It is also made from chickpeas or a mixture of the two. Green fava are cooked like other green beans, boiled and dressed in oil, or stewed with meat. The haricot beans and black-eyed beans are also common. Lentils, split peas, and chickpeas are widely used in soups, with rice, in salads, or with meat. Hummus, made from chickpeas and sesame paste, originated in Syria and Lebanon. Dishes[edit] Meze is a selection of small dishes served to accompany alcoholic drinks as a course or as appetizers before the main dish in Arab countries, Turkic countries, and Iran. Stuffed vegetables are a dish most associated with the Middle East in the popular mind. They are commonly called dolma, the Turkish word meaning "stuffed," but also the Arabic mahshi. Grape leaves, chard, and cabbage are stuffed with rice, ground meat, pine nuts, and spices, and then stewed in oil and tomato. Many vegetables are similarly stuffed and stewed or baked, such as squash, onion, tomato, eggplant, peppers, and even carrots. Mezze is common throughout the Middle East. It consists of a number of small dishes that are picked at leisure: Yogurt, a Turkish contribution, is commonly consumed plain, used in cooking, used in salad dressing, or diluted as a drink. White cheeses, like the Greek feta and halloumi, are the most common in the region. Turkish coffee Turkish coffee is the most well known beverage of the region. It is thicker than regular coffee and is made by boiling finely ground coffee in water and then letting the grounds settle. In the s, instant coffee also became popular. Aside from coffee, there is also an alcoholic drink called arak. It is most famous for its potency and milky-white color when water is added, producing the drink nicknamed "the milk of lions". Arak is colorless in its pure form and is aniseed-flavored. In the Middle East, arak is served in social settings and with mezze. The apricots are boiled with sugar and water until they are thick and placed on wooden planks left in the sun until dry. A fruit leather is left, which is then melted with water and sugar and drunk. It is made by diluting a mixture grape molasses, dates, and rose water and served with crushed ice. Some also serve it with raisins or pine nuts. Etiquette in the Middle East Dining etiquette in Arab countries[edit] In some Arab countries of the Middle East, especially in the Arab states of the Persian Gulf, it is common for people to take their food from a communal plate in the center of the table. Rather than employing forks or spoons, people traditionally dine without utensils; they scoop up food with their thumb and two fingers or pita bread. In the Arab culture, the left hand is considered unclean. This however is changing now with utensils being widely used for dining. Even left-handed people eat only with the right hand. A common exception is that the left hand may be used to hold a drinking glass when eating greasy food with the right. Similarly, it is important to try every plate on the table. If a guest does not leave food on his plate, the host generally fills it immediately. Typically, dishes are served according to savoury or sweet, rather than in courses. Food is served in various platters and dishes at a dining table, served in plates, and eaten with cutlery, as is the European tradition. In traditional Iranian restaurants, a large, low table lined with Persian rugs and with cushions around the sides is the setting for feasting; people sit cross-legged in a circle, and food is served in the centre, again eaten with cutlery in separate plates. For this reason, food is always prepared lavishly and in large quantities. An important Persian concept that applies to food and also extends to other areas of daily life is the practice of "taarof"; this is an exercise of self-restraint, whereby if one is offered any food or drink, they will initially politely decline,

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regardless of how hungry or thirsty they might be. Once the host has insisted and offered repeatedly, they will help themselves. No food and drink is to be accepted upon the first time of being offered it, lest one appears greedy. Turkey[edit] Tea is usually served in little curved glasses that you hold not by the stem, but by the lip: Coffee is generally available. The coffee is drunk carefully there are grounds on the bottom ; it is also thick and black, and each cup is individually brewed, often with the sugar already in it, and milk is usually not to be added.

Chapter 3 : Dar Anahita: Medieval Near & Middle Eastern Cookbooks

Spanning the vast region east of the Mediterranean, the Middle East's cuisine include those of Israel, Iraq, and Azerbaijan, which some call the world's last great undiscovered cuisine.

Lentils and Rice with Crispy Onions Mujadara: Today, I decided to abandon my work projects, the nagging laundry, and the suitcases waiting to be stuffed with our belongings for our upcoming move. Instead, I retreated to my cushy corner chair accompanied by my copy of Rose Water and Orange Blossoms. This time, I paused at the mujadara recipe. An immediate craving for a hearty bowl of lentils and rice loaded with onions, quickly rose. I got up and grabbed the three ingredients needed and some canola oil, and began to cook. Soon the smell of fried onions filled the kitchen; instantly, I was comforted. This mujadara is very simply spiced with salt and pepper. The main flavor maker here is onions, fried to the point of dark golden brown. This is what gives the rice the beautiful depth, both in color and taste. Where to find the right lentils for this recipe? The kind of lentils that is best for mujadara is small dark brown lentils. What to serve with mujadara? Here is the step by step for Mujadara: Bring the water to a boil over high heat, and then reduce the heat and simmer, covered until the lentils are par-boiled minutes. Remove from the heat, drain the lentils and set them aside. In a large saute pan with a lid, heat the oil over medium-high heat. Add the diced onions and cook until the onions are dark golden brown, darker than typical caramelized onions about 40 minutes , Sprinkle the onions with a teaspoon of salt as they cook. Carefully pour the remaining 2 cups of water, bring the water to a boil over high heat, and then reduce the heat to low and simmer for 2 minutes. Stir the rice and par-cooked lentils into the onion mixture. Cover and bring back to a boil. Stir in a healthy pinch of salt and the black pepper. Reduce the heat to low, cover, and cook until the liquid has been absorbed and the rice and lentils are both cooked through about 20 minutes. Remove from the heat and season with salt and pepper to taste. If you choose to add the fried onions garnish, heat the oil over medium-high heat to degrees F in a small saucepan. When a small piece of onion bubbles vigorously, the oil is ready. Fry the onions in batches until they are golden brown. Transfer the onions to a paper towel-lined plate or try, and then arrange them on top of the Mjuadara. Serve the mujadara hot, warm or at room temperature. Enjoy with a side of crisp salad such as fattoush.

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Chapter 4 : Mujadara: Lentils and Rice with Crispy Onions | The Mediterranean Dish

The Middle Eastern Vegetarian Cookbook 8 June We discovered Salma Hage 's inspiring recipes from the Middle East a few years back when we got her first cookbook: The Lebanese Kitchen - which is one of our favourites Lebanese cookbook.

History This section needs additional citations for verification. Please help improve this article by adding citations to reliable sources. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed. November Main article: Its territory was the core of the Bronze Age Phoenician Canaanite city-states. As part of the Levant , it was part of numerous succeeding empires throughout ancient history, including the Egyptian , Assyrian , Babylonian , Achaemenid Persian , Hellenistic , Roman and Sasanid Persian empires. The crusader state of the County of Tripoli , founded by Raymond IV of Toulouse in , encompassed most of present-day Lebanon, falling to the Mamluk Sultanate in and finally to the Ottoman Empire in With the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire , Greater Lebanon fell under French mandate in , and gained independence under president Bechara El Khoury in Ancient Lebanon Main article: History of ancient Lebanon Map of Phoenicia and trade routes Evidence dating back to an early settlement in Lebanon was found in Byblos , considered one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world. Archaeologists discovered remnants of prehistoric huts with crushed limestone floors, primitive weapons, and burial jars left by the Neolithic and Chalcolithic fishing communities who lived on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea over 7, years ago. The Canaanite-Phoenicians are also known as the inventors of the alphabet , among many other things. After two centuries of Persian rule, Macedonian ruler Alexander the Great attacked and burned Tyre , the most prominent Phoenician city. During the late 4th and early 5th century, a hermit named Maron established a monastic tradition focused on the importance of monotheism and asceticism , near the Mediterranean mountain range known as Mount Lebanon. The monks who followed Maron spread his teachings among Lebanese in the region. These Christians came to be known as Maronites and moved into the mountains to avoid religious persecution by Roman authorities. Though Islam and the Arabic language were officially dominant under this new regime, the general populace nonetheless only gradually converted from Christianity and the Syriac language. The Maronite community in particular managed to maintain a large degree of autonomy despite the succession of rulers over Lebanon and Syria. During the 11th century the Druze faith emerged from a branch of Shia Islam. The new faith gained followers in the southern portion of Mount Lebanon. The northern portion of Mount Lebanon was ruled by Druze feudal families to the early 14th century which was then brought to an end by the Mamluk invasion. Major cities on the coast, Acre , Beirut , and others, were directly administered by the Muslim Caliphs and the people became more fully absorbed by the Arab culture. Following the fall of Roman Anatolia to the Muslim Turks, the Byzantines put out a call to the Pope in Rome for assistance in the 11th century. The result was a series of wars known as the Crusades launched by the Franks in Western Europe to reclaim the former Byzantine Christian territories in the Eastern Mediterranean, especially Syria and Palestine the Levant. One of the most lasting effects of the Crusades in this region was the contact between the Franks i. Unlike most other Christian communities in the Eastern Mediterranean , who swore allegiance to Constantinople or other local patriarchs, the Maronites proclaimed allegiance to the Pope in Rome. As such the Franks saw them as Roman Catholic brethren. These initial contacts led to centuries of support for the Maronites from France and Italy, even after the fall of the Crusader states in the region. He soon established his authority as paramount prince of the Druze in the Shouf area of Mount Lebanon. He extended his control over a substantial part of Mount Lebanon and its coastal area, even building a fort as far inland as Palmyra. He was taken to Istanbul , kept in prison for two years and then executed along with one of his sons in April On the death of the last Maan emir, various members of the Shihab clan ruled Mount Lebanon until Approximately 10, Christians were killed by the Druzes during inter-communal violence in The Baalbek and Beqaa Valley and Jabal Amel was ruled intermittently by various Shia feudal families, especially the Al Ali Alsagheer in Jabal Amel that remained in

power until when Ottomans took direct ruling of the region. Roman baths park on the Serail hill, Beirut. On 1 September , France reestablished Greater Lebanon after the Moutassarifiya rule removed several regions belonging to the Principality of Lebanon and gave them to Syria. A constitution was adopted on 25 May establishing a democratic republic with a parliamentary system of government. The Vichy authorities in allowed Germany to move aircraft and supplies through Syria to Iraq where they were used against British forces. The United Kingdom, fearing that Nazi Germany would gain full control of Lebanon and Syria by pressure on the weak Vichy government, sent its army into Syria and Lebanon. Under political pressure from both inside and outside Lebanon, de Gaulle recognized the independence of Lebanon. On 26 November General Georges Catroux announced that Lebanon would become independent under the authority of the Free French government. Elections were held in and on 8 November the new Lebanese government unilaterally abolished the mandate. The French reacted by imprisoning the new government. In the face of international pressure, the French released the government officials on 22 November The allies occupied the region until the end of World War II. Following the end of World War II in Europe the French mandate may be said to have been terminated without any formal action on the part of the League of Nations or its successor the United Nations. The mandate was ended by the declaration of the mandatory power, and of the new states themselves, of their independence, followed by a process of piecemeal unconditional recognition by other powers, culminating in formal admission to the United Nations. Article 78 of the UN Charter ended the status of tutelage for any member state: While some irregular forces crossed the border and carried out minor skirmishes against Israel, it was without the support of the Lebanese government, and Lebanese troops did not officially invade. Israel did not permit their return after the cease-fire. Chamoun requested assistance, and 5, United States Marines were briefly dispatched to Beirut on 15 July. After the crisis, a new government was formed, led by the popular former general Fuad Chehab. The relocation of Palestinian bases also led to increasing sectarian tensions between Palestinians versus the Maronites and other Lebanese factions. Civil war and Syrian occupation Main article: Lebanese Civil War The Green Line that separated west and east Beirut, In , following increasing sectarian tensions, a full-scale civil war broke out in Lebanon. A multinational force of American, French and Italian contingents joined in by a British contingent were deployed in Beirut after the Israeli siege of the city , to supervise the evacuation of the PLO. It returned in September after the assassination of Bashir Gemayel and subsequent fighting. During this time a number of massacres occurred, such as in Sabra and Shatila , [49] and in several refugee camps. In September , the Parliament failed to elect a successor to President Gemayel as a result of differences between the Christians, Muslims, and Syrians. On 16 September the committee issued a peace plan which was accepted by all. A ceasefire was established, the ports and airports were re-opened and refugees began to return. It is estimated that , people were killed and another , wounded. Syrian withdrawal and aftermath Main article: Syrian occupation of Lebanon Demonstrators calling for the withdrawal of Syrian forces. The internal political situation in Lebanon significantly changed in the early s. After the Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon and the death of Hafez Al-Assad in , the Syrian military presence faced criticism and resistance from the Lebanese population. Under pressure from the West, Syria began withdrawing, [58] and by 26 April all Syrian soldiers had returned to Syria. At least soldiers, insurgents and 47 civilians were killed in the battle. Funds for the reconstruction of the area have been slow to materialize. Its land straddles the "northwest of the Arabian plate ". The narrow and discontinuous coastal plain stretches from the Syrian border in the north where it widens to form the Akkar plain to Ras al-Naqoura at the border with Israel in the south. The fertile coastal plain is formed of marine sediments and river deposited alluvium alternating with sandy bays and rocky beaches.

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Chapter 5 : Buy the Cookbook - Taste of Beirut

get yourself a copy of the most beautiful armenian cookbook around! prized armenian recipes and 20 special gutsy gourmet original recipes jam packed with history, full color photographs, and interesting anecdotes - a real keeper!

Place the sugar, lemon juice and water into a saucepan over a high heat and bring them to the boil. Lower the heat and simmer for about 10 minutes or until the syrup leaves a slightly sticky film on the back of a spoon. Add the rosewater, then set aside to cool. The one important point is that the tin should be at least 25mm deep. Grease the baking tin with a little of the melted butter. Lay two sheets of the pastry on top of each other in the tin, keeping those not in use covered, so they do not dry out. Brush 1 tbsp melted butter over the second sheet. Repeat this process, two sheets at a time, until you have sheets in the tin. Spread half the chopped nuts over the pastry. Spread the remaining nuts over the last sheet. Continue layering the pastry with the melted butter brushed over alternate sheets until you have used up all the pastry. Spoon any remaining butter over the last sheet, discarding the milky residue at the bottom of the pan. Lightly brush the butter all over the last sheet so that every bit is covered. Cut the baklava into lozenge shapes using a sharp knife and taking care to press as little as possible on the pastry. Set aside until completely cold. To serve, run a sharp knife along the gaps to make sure that all the layers have been completely separated, then remove from the tin.

Sweets and Desserts from the Middle East by Arto der Haroutunian
Grub Street Classic Turkish menemen
If there is an iconic food that Istanbulites would swear by, it is menemen; scrambled eggs cooked with tomatoes and green peppers and traditionally served in a copper pan. Serves 4
2 long green peppers, halved, deseeded and finely chopped
2 large tomatoes, peeled and finely diced
4 large eggs, lightly whisked
A pinch of salt
A pinch of red pepper flakes
A pinch dry thyme
Crusty white bread, to serve 1
Warm up the olive oil in a non-stick frying pan. Add the chopped green peppers and cook over a medium heat for about 3 minutes, or until the peppers start softening. Stir in the diced tomatoes and simmer for about minutes, or until most of the moisture has evaporated. If you like menemen on the runnier side, just stir the eggs times and remove the pan from the heat, otherwise continue cooking for about minutes, gently stirring. Serve with plenty of crusty white bread. Recipe supplied by Olga Irez, deliciousistanbul.

Yuki Sugiura for the Guardian
The Arabic title of this pesto-like dip, muhammara, means reddened or crimsoned. Serves 4
75g walnut halves, roughly chopped
55g fine breadcrumbs.

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Chapter 6 : Middle Eastern Recipes - blog.quintoapp.com

The Arabian Cookbook: Traditional Arab Cuisine with a Modern Twist is a bilingual book featuring fifty-five favorite recipes from Chef Ramzi Choueiry in both English and Arabic. You will find popular Lebanese dishes such as Shish Taouk (Marinated Chicken Skewers), Open Katayef (Open Lebanese).

This book was copied and recopied for at least three centuries, even into other languages, and often with additional recipes added by the transcribers or translators. It was first translated into English by A. Arberry in the 1930s. The book was first transcribed into Arabic from the original by the Iraqi scholar Daoud Chelebi. There were a number of scribal errors in it and Chelebi attempted to correct them. There were also a number of unfamiliar words and phrases and Chelebi tried to rectify them into more familiar terms, in some cases, badly misunderstanding them. This is the most familiar version. It was published by Arberry as "A Baghdad cookery book" in: *Islamic Culture*, 13, 1, 1937; and *How to Cook*, 1937. However, there are two other newer and better versions. Arberry, and Charles Perry. Arberry did not use the original manuscript, but a transcription made by Arabic scholar, Daoud Chelebi. As Chelebi made the transcription, he made decisions about what to include and what to leave out. Apparently he left out some necessary information, which Perry did not know until he looked at the original manuscript, which he did after annotating this edition. Arberry ended up concluding it was "blattes de Byzance" and made of some fragrant operculum snail shell trap door or else some sort of insect. In fact, "atraf al-tib" is called for in some of the other cookbooks, and one even includes a recipe for it. It turns out to be a blend of spices - no insects or snail shells. However for the historic cook there is a new translation of al-Baghdidi by Charles Perry from the original Arabic manuscript, not from a transcription. Toss out the old Arberry translation and wallow in this one. The book begins with a brief but informative Forward by Charles Perry. The primary text is divided into three sections: The Medieval Tradition Part Three: These include, among other things, a brief overview of known Arabic language culinary texts, ingredients, and cooking techniques, and includes some useful photos of extant cookware and serving dishes, although only a rather limited number. Much of this information has been previously available in other publications by other authors, so it is not new, but useful for those without other books on the subject. Part Two consists of recipes from four sources, three not yet available in English and one only recently available. The oldest source is the 10 c. Zaouali includes 24 recipes from this vast source, which I assume she translated herself. The other three are from the 13th century. Now we have 29 of them. And the fourth is also from the 13th C. The recipes are arranged into 14 sections by type, among which is "Bread and Broth", which is actually a section on Tharids; a section on "Pasta" with directions for making several different kinds; and a section on "Couscous" with five recipes, including the description of a pot for cooking it, which is rather like the modern couscoussiere. In the "Pastries and Jams" section is a recipe for Quince Sikanjubin from the "Kanz" - quince juice with sugar and vinegar and some optional flavorings. All the recipes are given in translation only, which we would expect. Unfortunately, however, the author often substitutes her own title for them, without including a transliteration of the original name, which I like to see. Most recipes are introduced by a brief paragraph, which may include history, discussion of techniques or ingredients, or mention of a modern recipe that is related. The recipes are not "worked out" or modernized, and so are just waiting for us to get our "redaction" chops on them, which I find exciting. But I have some issues with this book. The source books are from several different cultures and centuries. And Zaouali does not give her reasons for choosing the recipes she includes. Were they just ones she liked? Are they more representative of their respective cookbooks? Is there some relationship among them that Zaouali sees but does not specify? Are they just plain random? More analysis would have made this book much more useful. The book ends with 31 modern North African recipes, chosen because Zaouali thinks each is similar to a Medieval recipe in the book. And it is definitely useful for the SCAdian cook, especially since it includes recipes not in any other book.

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In fact, in the Middle East, mujadara is known more as "poor man's food," or peasant food. And because it is a hearty vegan option, Egypt's Copts (Christians) often serve lentils and rice during the Great Holy Fast in the spring, when "fasters" are required to eat a mainly vegan diet for 55 days.

Our panel of judges: Carrier delivered fabulously detailed and uncompromising recipes for the likes of beef stroganoff and bouillabaisse. Carrier, who died in , continued to update Great Dishes, and it remained in print for years. Though the colour plates now have a certain kitsch quality there is no doubting its reach or ambition. As well as roaming far and wide across Europe there were also recipes from China, India, the Middle East and Caribbean. I was in Chinatown a few days later, loading up on ingredients, though many are readily available in good supermarkets. The recipes veer from the incredibly simple, such as stir-fried potato slithers with chillies to the more elaborate, such as dry-braised fish with pork in spicy sauce. Clear chapters cover cold food, poultry, fish dishes and street food. The vegetable chapter includes a recipe for fish-fragrant aubergine that is so simple and yet so good that it would convert anyone to Sichuan food. Concise sections detail most common ingredients and different cooking methods. But in other matters, her influence has only ever been benign. Hazan, knowing that some pastas are most definitely not best made at home, has made cooks everywhere feel truly proud of their jars of dried spaghetti. She has also, down the years, encouraged them to chuck out their garlic presses, and use instead the blade of a knife to crush our cloves. Best of all, she has taught us to elevate what we used to call spaghetti sauce to the status of ragu, an altogether more sophisticated beast. Then, in , it was adapted for a British audience by Anna del Conte, at which point she won herself a whole lot of new fans, plus an Andre Simon Award. It is a very good book indeed: If you want to know how to make proper risotto, minestrone, or lasagne, this is where to look. But it includes other delicious things, too: As Hazan notes, the Italians like to describe such dishes as "un boccone da cardinale", or a "morsel for a cardinal". He moved to Bangkok, where he studied in the kitchens of people skilled in the noble arts of traditional cookery, pored over the memorial books that documented palace recipes, and explored the food sold on the streets. Within its gorgeous pink covers, you will find information cultural, geographical, historical, spiritual and culinary, not to mention a vast collection of recipes that range from street food through palace cooking, to exquisite desserts. As the critic Fay Maschler put it: But it is also contains hundreds of excellent recipes, the vast majority of them short, precise and foolproof. Who could resist poached turbot with shrimp sauce, or a properly made Cornish pasty? As for the puddings, Grigson delivers recipes for some of our favourite ever: Yorkshire curd tart, brown bread ice cream, queen of puddings, and Sussex pond pudding. There is also an excellent "and blissfully long" section on teatime: Nor is it his flair for innovation that makes him; even he would say his food cleaves tightly to the great European traditions. What defines him is his exquisite good taste. Nowhere is that better demonstrated than in this cleanly written, utterly reliable, delicious book. It is organised by ingredient "A is for anchovy, B is for Brains, P is for pork pieces and bacon bits" with a short essay on each. Then come the recipes, be it the roast chicken of the title "the trick is to rub it with butter and then squeeze over the juice of a lemon" one of his beloved tripe stews, or his saffron mash, pretty much the only dish he claims as his own invention. The towering writer of his generation by whom all others are judged. Or simply "a bloody genius", according to Jamie Oliver. But Kitchen Diaries is the full flowering of a mature talent , with a clear knowledge of who he is, where he comes from and what he wants to say. British food from now on would celebrate the right food at the right time. Open it on any page but start, say, with 1 January on page 4 and savour the simple beauty of the recipes and the writing. In truth it is less a cookbook than a cultural over view of the entire Jewish diaspora, with appropriate recipes attached. It is a mark of just how reliable a piece of scholarship it is that, on publication, it was greeted with almost universal acclaim; a rare achievement for any work wading into the notoriously rancorous Jewish community. Every page and, more important, every recipe bursts with the vigour of a people

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that spent 2, years on the move. The dishes of the Sephardic Jews of North Africa and Spain are as rich and varied as you would expect of a writer who made her name with the food of the Middle East. Here are instructions for Iraqi date-filled pies, Tunisian couscous cakes and quinces in wine. More compelling still is her codifying of the eastern European Ashkenazi tradition: Any edition of this book is a joy, but the beautifully illustrated American version, published by Knopf, is particularly special. My mother, a very good cook indeed, had not, to my knowledge, a book of hers anywhere in the house when I was fettling away at the Aga in my early to late teens. But no Elizabeth David. It was not until I was 21 years old when friends in West Wales gave me a set of her Penguin paperbacks for my birthday, hoping that they may further inspire me in the kitchen of my little restaurant by the sea. Although I had already worked in a French restaurant and eaten in France with my parents, nothing compared to that which I was to learn and devour from French Provincial Cooking. Nothing had previously evoked such a sense of place and time with the richest prose. It was and remains, intoxicating. Once firm, this now flat cut is sliced into thick strips, smeared with mustard, beaten egg and coated with breadcrumbs. This is a remarkably good plate of food. He was 72, and had led an interesting and fulfilling life his friends included the writer James Baldwin, the poet John Ashbery, and the painter John Craxton. He had also, unlike many people, been able to cook his own last meal. The story goes that when his brothers arrived to arrange the funeral, they found a plate and a glass by the sink. The plate contained traces of a tomato pilaff; the glass, red wine. The remaining pilaff was in the fridge. The brothers took it out, heated it up, and toasted him before tucking in. This pilaff tells you everything you need to know about Olney. People favour risottos now, but before there was risotto, there was pilaff: If the tomatoes are good and fresh, the oil sufficiently grassy, and the onions just so, this is the food of the gods. Olney was a hugely accomplished and knowledgeable cook, but his mantra was simplicity and, in this sense, he was ahead of the times. When *The French Menu* was first published in , its determinedly seasonal approach was considered revolutionary. Four years later, he published *Simple French Food*, and his reputation was sealed. Some read Olney for his uncompromising style alone. His sentences are longer than a prize pike; his salads are "composed", not tossed. Others like the way he pairs every dish with a wine. Olney lived alone, but he was a generous host, and his friends must have considered themselves truly lucky. Imagine a friend who cooked you sorrel soup, followed by frito misto, pheasant salmis with ceps, and an orange jelly. Or crayfish mousse, ravioli of chicken breast, roast leg of venison and moulded coffee custard. Or, perhaps best of all, cucumber salad, baked lobster, braised and roasted partridge, and fresh figs with raspberry cream. With this raspberry cream, we quietly rest our case. Rachel Cooke This article contains affiliate links, which means we may earn a small commission if a reader clicks through and makes a purchase. All our journalism is independent and is in no way influenced by any advertiser or commercial initiative. The links are powered by Skimlinks. By clicking on an affiliate link, you accept that Skimlinks cookies will be set.

Chapter 8 : The Middle Eastern Vegetarian Cookbook : Salma Hage :

This super-easy Middle Eastern favorite is the perfect snack or appetizer. Serve with some toasted pita wedges and enjoy! Serve with some toasted pita wedges and enjoy! Continue to 5 of 10 below.

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*"Another absolutely gorgeous cookbook from Hage (author of *The Lebanese Kitchen*) and the folks at Phaidon." â€” SFGate "A definitive, fresh and approachable collection of traditioinal recipes from an authoritative voice on Middle Eastern cooking."*