

The Cuisine of Lebanon

Chefs Amy von Lange & Jerry Pellegrino

Hommous

Ingredients

16oz. fresh chickpeas

2 garlic cloves, roughly chopped

½ teaspoon ground cumin

1 lemon, zest & juice

3 to 4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

¼ cup thick Greek-style or drained yogurt

Salt to taste

Turn on a food processor fitted with the steel blade and drop in the garlic. When the garlic is chopped and adhering to the sides of the bowl, stop the food processor and scrape down the sides of the bowl. Add the chickpeas, salt and cumin, and turn on the machine for about 30 seconds. Stop the machine, scrape down the sides, and start the machine again. With the machine running, add the lemon juice, olive oil and yogurt, and blend until smooth. Taste and adjust salt. Thin out as desired with more yogurt if necessary. Transfer to a wide bowl, and garnish with extra virgin olive oil and paprika if desired. Serve with warm pita bread.

Tabbouleh

Ingredients

½ cup fine bulgur

3 tablespoons olive oil

1 cup boiling-hot water

2 cups finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley (from 3 bunches)

½ cup finely chopped fresh mint

2 medium tomatoes cut into ¼ inch pieces

½ seedless cucumber, peeled, cored, and cut into ¼ inch pieces

3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

¾ teaspoon salt

¼ teaspoon black pepper

Tabbouleh cont'd

Place the bulgur in a bowl, pour in the hot water and cover with plastic wrap. Allow to sit for 30 minutes or until the bulgur is soft and cooked through. Using a fork, fluff the bulgur while slowly pouring in the olive oil. Add all of the remaining ingredients and mix thoroughly. Serve immediately.

Mouhammara

Ingredients

7 oz. can or jar of roasted red peppers

¾ cup bread crumbs

1/3 cup walnuts

3 cloves garlic

2 tablespoon lemon juice

½ cup extra virgin olive oil

1 tablespoon. pomegranate juice

1 teaspoon ground cumin

1 teaspoon salt

You will need a food processor for this recipe. In the food processor you will blend the drained roasted peppers, bread crumbs, walnuts, garlic, lemon juice, pomegranate paste, ground cumin, and salt. Blend all these ingredients together for about 1 minute or so and then slowly add the extra virgin olive oil.

7-Spices

Ingredients

½ cup ground black pepper

½ cup ground cumin

½ cup paprika

¼ cup ground coriander

¼ cup ground cloves

4 teaspoons ground nutmeg

4 teaspoons ground cinnamon

2 teaspoons ground cardamom

Combine all of the spices in a jar with an airtight lid. Store in a cool dry place for up to 6 months.

Sheikh El-Mehsheh

Ingredients

½ cup pine nuts
½ cup butter
1 lb ground beef or lamb
2 teaspoons of 7-spices
1 teaspoon salt (or to taste)
1 large yellow chopped onion cut into ¼ inch dice
3 large eggplant
3 cups tomato sauce
2 tablespoons dry mint

Slice the eggplant lengthwise in 1 inch strips, brush with olive oil, place in a baking dish and roast for 30 minutes in a 350°F oven or until soft. Set aside to cool. While the eggplant are roasting, melt the butter in a sauté pan set over medium high heat until just foaming. Add the onion and cook until translucent. Add the 7-spices and cook for an additional minute. Add the beef and cook until brown and done through. Mix in the pine nuts and season with salt. Remove the eggplant from the baking dish. Using the same baking dish, build stacks of slices of eggplant layered with the beef mixture three eggplant slices high. Cover each stack with tomato sauce and sprinkle with the dried mint. Return to the 350°F oven and bake until warmed through, about 15 minutes. Serve while warm over rice.

Lahmebaajeen

Ingredients for the filling

1 lb. lean ground beef
½ cup butter
1 large red onion finely chopped
1 large ripe tomato, finely chopped

¾ cup of pine nuts

2-3 tablespoons of Pomegranate Molasses

1 teaspoon of freshly squeezed lemon juice

½ cup of finely chopped Parsley leaves

2 teaspoons of 7-spices

Lahmebaajeen cont'd

Melt the butter in a sauté pan set over medium high heat until just foaming. Add the onion and cook until translucent. Add the 7-spices and cook for an additional minute. Add the beef and cook until brown and done through. Add the tomatoes, lemon juice and molasses and cook until the tomato starts to breakdown and loose its shape. Mix in the pine nuts, parsley and season with salt.

To make the meat pies – using the pita dough (recipe below) roll out circles about 10 inches in diameter. Spread an even layer of filling on one half of the circle and fold into a half moon. Pan fry the meat pies in about ¼ inch of oil in a hot skillet. Brown both sides and serve.

Snoubra

Ingredients

3 cups coarse ground bulgur, washed and drained

2 tomatoes, peeled and chopped

4 tablespoons tomato paste, dissolved in 1 cup water

3 large onions, chopped

4 tablespoons butter

- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 teaspoon white pepper
- 2 large potatoes, peeled and cut into 1 inch cubes.

Melt the butter in a large pot set over medium high heat until just foaming. Add the onion and cook until translucent. Add all of the remaining ingredients and cover with water. Bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer, covered until the potatoes are fork tender and the bulgur cooked through. Add more water during the cooking process if needed. Adjust the seasoning and serve warm with Pita Bread.

Pita

Ingredients

- 1 envelope (2 ½ teaspoons) dry yeast
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 4 ½ to 5 cups all-purpose flour, more for dusting and rolling

Pita, cont'd

- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 3 tablespoons milk
- 2 tablespoons plain Greek yogurt
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil, more for the bowl
- 3 tablespoons ghee (Indian-style clarified butter) or melted unsalted butter

In a small bowl, combine the yeast, sugar and ¼ cup warm water (110 to 115 degrees). Let stand until foamy, 5 to 10 minutes. Place 4 ½ cups flour, the salt and baking powder in the bowl of a food processor fitted with a dough blade or in mixer with a dough hook. Mix to blend. Add yeast mixture, milk, yogurt, egg, 2 tablespoons vegetable oil and ¾ cup warm water. Knead dough until smooth and elastic, 2 to 3 minutes in a processor, 5 to 8 minutes in a mixer, 8 to 10 minutes by hand. Dough should be soft but not too sticky. Add flour as needed. Place dough in a large, lightly oiled bowl, turning to coat all sides. Cover bowl with plastic wrap, then a kitchen towel. Let the dough rise in a warm, draft-free spot until doubled, 1 to 1 ½ hours. Punch down the dough and divide into 8 equal pieces. Roll them into balls, place them on a lightly floured baking sheet and cover with a slightly damp kitchen towel. Let rise until doubled in size, 40 to 60 minutes. If using the oven, place a pizza stone on the bottom rack and heat oven to 450 degrees. If using a barbecue grill, set it up for direct grilling and heat to medium-high. Roll out a dough ball on a lightly floured work surface into a disk about 6 inches in diameter. Roll and stretch one end to make a teardrop shape. Brush off any excess flour. Repeat with remaining dough. If using an oven, turn on the broiler. Lay 1 or 2 pieces of dough on the pizza stone. Cook until the bottoms are browned and the tops blister, puff and are lightly toasted, 2 to 4 minutes. Remove from oven, brush tops with ghee or melted butter, and place in a cloth-lined basket for serving. Repeat with remaining dough.

If using the grill, brush and oil the grate. Lightly brush top of dough with butter and place butter-side down on grate a few at a time (do not crowd the grate). Grill until the bottoms are browned and the tops start to puff and blister, 1 to 2 minutes. Lightly brush the tops with a little butter. Invert bread, and grill the other side until lightly browned, 1 to 2 minutes. Transfer to a cloth-lined basket, brushing tops of each with any remaining butter.