

Arabic Cuisine

Overview: Arabic cuisine has its roots in tent cookery. Nomadic tribes could use only transportable foods such as rice and dates, or ambulatory stock like sheep and camels in their recipes - which tended to be rough sketches rather than strict formulae.

As the caravans journeyed throughout the Middle East, new seasonings and vegetables were discovered and added to the existing repertoire. Each new discovery was incorporated into the diet in quantities palatable to a particular tribe - a fact that many cooks believe is responsible for the anomalies found in some Arabic dishes today. The nomadic Bedouin influence is broadened by other cuisines from the Arab world, notably from Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Egypt, resulting in a highly diverse food and drink culture. Lebanese contributions have been the greatest influence on modern Middle Eastern cuisine, in no small part due to the entrepreneurship of the Lebanese that has helped to spread Arabic cuisine throughout the world from its centre in the Levant in such areas as Aleppo, Damascus, Beirut and Nablus. Lebanese culinary influence and business skills provide the framework for the exotic cuisine recognised internationally as Arabic. Hospitality in the Arab world is second to none, and nowhere is it better expressed than in the age-old custom of serving freshly-brewed coffee or mint tea to every guest, whether the gathering be business or social. The foreigner who takes time to learn and experiment with this excellent cuisine will be immediately won over and rewarded with many wonderful surprises. Arabic food can rival any international gastronomy for originality and good taste, and, because it basically comprises simple, natural and easily digested foodstuffs, it ranks high in nutritional value with today's fitness-conscious society.

{mospagebreak title=Glossary of Arabic Cuisine}Glossary of Arabic Cuisine: Arabic Bread (Khubz Arabi, pita):

Flat, round bread, which can be easily split to make a sandwich, or broken apart and used as a utensil for scooping food

Arayess:

Deep-fried lamb sandwich Ataif (gatayef, kataif):

Small pancakes stuffed with nuts or cheese and doused with syrup Baba Ghanoush:

Char-grilled eggplant, tahina, olive oil, lemon juice and garlic purée - served as a dip Baharat (bjar):

Arabic mixed spices Bamia:

Baby okra and lamb in tomato stew Baklava (baklava):

Dessert of layered pastry filled with nuts and steeped in honey-lemon syrup - usually cut into triangular or diamond shapes Basboosa:

Semolina tart soaked with syrup Bukhari Rice:

Lamb and rice stir-fried with onion, lemon, carrot and tomato paste Burghul (bulghur wheat, bulgar):

Parboiled and dried wheat kernels processed into grain, used in tabbouleh and mixed with lamb in kibbeh Cardamom:

Aromatic spice, member of the ginger family, used to flavour Arabic coffee, yoghurt and stews Coriander (cilantro):

Lacy, green-leaf relative of the parsley family with an extremely pungent flavour akin to a combination of lemon, sage and caraway. Ejje:

Arabic omelette Falafel:

Small deep-fried patties made of highly-spiced ground chick-peas Fatayer:

Pastry pockets filled with spinach, meat or cheese Fattoush:

Salad of toasted croutons, cucumbers, tomatoes and mint Foul (ful):

Slow-cooked mash of brown beans and red lentils, dressed with lemon, olive oil and cumin Gahwa (kahwa):

Coffee Haleeb:

Milk Halwa (halva):

Sesame paste sweet, usually made in a slab and studded with fruit and nuts Hamour:

Red Sea fish of the grouper family Hommus:

Purée of chickpeas, tahina, lemon and garlic - served as a dip with Arabic bread Jarish:

Crushed wheat and yoghurt casserole Jebne:

White cheese Kabsa:

Classic Arabian dish of meat mixed with rice Kebab:

Skewered chunks of meat or fish cooked over charcoal Kamareddine:

Apricot nectar used to break fast during Ramadan Khubz Marcook:

Thin, dome-shaped Arabic bread Kunafi (kunafah):

Shoelace pastry dessert stuffed with sweet white cheese, nuts and syrup Kibbeh (kibbe):

Oval-shaped nuggets of ground lamb and burghul Kibbeh Naye:

Raw kibbeh, eaten like steak tartar Koshary:

Cooked dish of pasta, rice and lentils to which, onions, chillis and tomato paste are added Kouzi:

Whole lamb baked over rice so that rice absorbs the juice of the meat Kufta (kofta):

Fingers, balls or a flat cake of minced meat and spices that can be baked or charcoal-grilled on skewers Laban:

Tangy-tasting sour milk drink widely used in cooking as a substitute for milk Labenah:

Thick creamy cheese, often spiced and used as a dip Lahma Bi Ajeen:

Arabic pizza Loubia (fassulya):

Green beans cooked in tomato sauce Ma'amul:

Date cookies shaped in a wooden mould called a tabi Makloubeh:

Meat or fish with rice, broad beans and cauliflower Mai:

Water Mantou:

Dumplings stuffed with minced lamb Markok:

Lamb and pumpkin stew Mehshi:

Means stuffed - aubergines, courgettes, vine leaves or cabbage may be stuffed with a mixture of minced meat, rice and onions Melokhiyyah:

Green, spinach-like vegetable Mezze (mezza, meze, mezzah):

The Arabic word for appetiser Mish mish:

Apricots Mouhammara:

Mixture of ground nuts, olive oil, cumin and chillis, eaten with Arabic bread Moutabel:

Eggplant dip made with tahina, olive oil and lemon juice Mubassal:

Onion pancakes Muhalabiyyah:

Silky textured semolina pudding served cold Musakhan:

Chicken casserole with sumac Mutabak:

Sweet or savoury pastry turnovers usually stuffed with cheese, banana or meat Najil:

Saddle-back grouper Rocca:

Aromatic salad green with a peppery mustard flavour, used in salads or mixed with hot yoghurt Sambusek:

Triangular pies filled with meat, cheese or spinach Sayyadiya:

Delicately-spiced fish dish served on a bed of rice Seleek:

Lamb and rice dish where the rice is cooked in milk rather than the juice of the meat Shai (chai):

Tea Shaour:

Red Sea fish from the emperor family Shawerma:

A cone of pressed lamb, chicken or beef roasted on a vertical spit where the meat is shaved off from the outside as the spit keeps turning. Saudi Arabia's most popular sandwich is Arabic bread filled with shawerma meat, salad, hot sauce and tahina Sheesha (hubbly bubbly):

Pipe for smoking tobacco leaves or dried fruit through a water filter Shish Taouk:

Skewered chicken pieces cooked over charcoal Shourba:

Soup Snober:

Pine nuts Sukkar:

Sugar Sumac:

Ground powder from the cashew family, used as a seasoning Tabbouleh:

Salad of burghul, tomato, mint and parsley Taklia:

Spice consisting of ground coriander and garlic Tahina:

An oily paste made from ground sesame seeds, used in hommous, moutabel and baba ghanoush Tamr:

Dates Taratour:

A thick mayonnaise of puréed pine nuts, garlic and lemon, used as a sauce or dip Um Ali:

'Ali's mother' is a pastry pudding with raisins and coconut steeped in milk Warak Enab (warak dawali):

Stuffed vine leaves Yansoon:

Hot spiced tea, used for medicinal purposes Zatoon:

Olives Zattar:

Blend of spices including thyme, marjoram, sumac and salt

{mospagebreak title=More Resources}More Resources:http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Arab_cuisine