



S A V O U R

Middle Eastern Mezze Menu

Roasted Cheese Polenta Cubes

Beetroot tzatziki

Magical Hummus

Labne balls with sumac and sesame

Egyptian za'atar eggs

Kale tabbouleh

Broccoli with miso dressing

Spicy roast new potatoes with lemon & herbs

Miso onions

Spinach and toasted orzo with feta and chickpeas

Ottolenghi's Sticky Date pudding with caramel sauce



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Roasted Cheese Polenta cubes

Ingredients:

1 litre water

2 tsp salt

250 g instant polenta

75 g parmesan,grated

100 g soft cheese such as Fontina or Taleggio, cut into cubes

3 tsp chopped rosemary

Ground black pepper

Olive oil

Method:

1. Bring the water to a boil with the salt in a large pot. Pour in the polenta and whisk vigorously for about 3 minutes (you may need to reduce the heat). Make sure there are no lumps, then add the cheese and rosemary and pepper and whisk until smooth. Cover, reduce heat, and cook for about 5 minutes, stirring occasionally so it doesn't stick to the bottom of the pot.
2. Line a 30 x 20cm tray with baking paper and brush with olive oil. Pour the polenta into the tray and press it into a layer, then brush the top with oil. Cover and refrigerate for at least 2 hours.
3. Half an hour before serving, heat oven to 240C. Cut the polenta into cubes, pour some oil onto a tray and toss the cubes on the tray till well coated in oil. Roast for 20 minutes until crisp and golden. The cubes will shrink! Serve hot.



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Beetroot tzatziki

The key to a great tzatziki is stripping the cucumber of all its moisture so it remains crunchy and fresh. We love the earthy sweetness that beetroot brings to this classic Greek dish.

200 g fresh beetroot (roasted 45-50 minutes at 180c: I wrap them in foil and roast till tender).

Small piece of cucumber, grated

1 t salt

200 g natural Greek yoghurt

1 garlic clove, finely chopped

1 T lemon juice

Method:

1. Place the cucumber and salt in a colander and allow to drain for 10 minutes. Squeeze to remove excess liquid and place in a bowl.
2. Add remaining ingredients, stir to combine, and taste. Season as necessary with salt.
3. Store in the refrigerator no longer than 24 hours. Can be eaten cold or room temp.

Note: if your beetroot has leaves attached, don't throw them away! They are super tasty and good for your kidneys. Make a salad or sautee them with olive oil.

Magical Hummus

Recipe adapted from Sababa by Adeena Sussman from a celebrity chef in Tel Aviv who runs the restaurant Hakosem (Hebrew for 'the Magician').

1 1/3 cups dried chickpeas, soaked overnight, then drained and rinsed the next day



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Method: Cook the chickpeas in 6 cups of water with 1 tsp baking soda. Then after about 20 minutes, remove about a ¼ cup of the chickpeas to garnish the hummus with later. Then keep cooking the chickpeas until they are nearly disintegrated, another 45 minutes. Cool them in their liquid.

To make the hummus: Place 1 1/3 cups cooked chickpeas in a food processor with 1.5 tsp citric acid (you can buy this at Moore Wilsons), 1.5 tsp salt and 1 garlic clove, minced. Drizzle in half the tahini with the food processor running. The original recipe calls for 1.5 cups of tahini but I find this too tahini-ish so I only put ¾ cup in. As you add the tahini, also gradually add 1 cup ice water. The final hummus should have the consistency of buttercream icing. To serve: Spoon the hummus into a serving plate, top with cooked chickpeas, then garnish with good olive oil.

Egyptian eggs

Boil some eggs until halfway between soft and hard boiled. Cool then half lengthwise. Place on a platter then sprinkle with za'atar.

Labneh

750g thick Greek yoghurt and 1 T Salt

Toppings to roll balls in: za'atar, sumac, sesame, or chili flakes

Method:

To make the labneh: Place the Greek yoghurt in a cheese cloth, tie it with a string to compact it into a rough ball, add some salt and let it hang in your fridge above a container to catch the excess liquid. Leave it anywhere between 2-5 days. The longer you leave it, the thicker it will turn out.

When ready, transfer to a container and store in the fridge up to 7 days. Mix with a spoon to loosen slightly before using.

Oil your hands and roll labne into large marble-sized balls. Coat with toppings of your choice. Go for variety and colour!



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Spicy roasted new potatoes with lemon and herbs (aka Batata bil filfil) (adapted from *Falastin*)

Ingredients:

3 T olive oil
1 tsp cumin seeds, crushed
1 tsp coriander seeds, crushed
7 large garlic cloves, thinly sliced
1 red chilli, chopped
750 g potatoes, quartered and parboiled until slightly tender
½ tsp caster sugar
1 large lemon, finely zested and juiced
10 g coriander leaves, chopped
5 g dill leaves, chopped
Salt and pepper

Method:

1. Preheat oven to 200c fan.
2. Put the olive oil in a large saucepan on high heat.
3. Add the cumin and coriander and cook for 30 seconds.
4. Add garlic and cook a further 30 seconds.
5. Add chilli and then sugar, 1 tsp salt and a generous grind of black pepper.
6. Give everything a good stir, then pour onto the potatoes (a large bowl works well for this).
7. Transfer onto a lined baking tray and roast for 20 minutes until crispy.
8. Remove from oven and set aside to cool before adding the lemon zest, juice, coriander and dill. Serve warm.



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Spinach and toasted orzo with dill yoghurt (adapted from *Falastin*)

This is a quick and easy dish to make for a midweek supper. It works well as a veggie main or as a side to a roast chicken or grilled salmon.

Ingredients:

500 g orzo
100 ml olive oil
2 onions, chopped
500 spinach
Salt and pepper
2 cups cooked chickpeas
½ cup crumbled feta

Dill yoghurt:

200 g Greek yoghurt
¼ tsp cayenne
1 garlic clove, minced
10g dill, chopped
1 T lemon juice
1.5 T olive oil

Method:

1. Place a large saute pan on a high heat and add orzo and toast for 5 minutes stirring constantly. Tip the toasted orzo into a bowl and set aside.
2. Return the same pan to a medium heat and add onions and olive oil. Cook for 5-8 minutes until golden.
3. Add the spinach in batches until wilted. Add 2 teaspoons of salt, a grind of pepper, and 500 ml of water. Bring to a gentle boil then add the orzo back to the pan. Give it a stir then reduce heat and cover. Cook for 10 minutes until orzo is just cooked but retains its bite. Add in chickpeas. Place on a platter.
4. Meanwhile, mix together all the ingredients for the dill yoghurt with ¼ tsp salt and set aside.
5. Top with dill yoghurt. Serve with a drizzle of olive oil.



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Miso onions (Ottolenghi, *Flavour*)

These onions are a revelation! Easy as, but packed full of flavour. Two things are vital though: the roasting tray must be big enough to fit 16 onion halves. If not, roast fewer). And the onions must be basted well so they remain moist.

8 medium onions, skinned and halved lengthways so that the root still holds the onion halves together

100 g butter

100 g white miso paste

Method:

1. Heat oven to 260c (or 240 c fan)
2. Whisk the butter and miso with one litre of warm water.
3. Place the onions cut side down on a high-sided tray. Cover with the miso liquid. Cover tightly with foil and bake for 35 minutes. Then remove foil, flip the onions, and baste well.
4. Return to oven and bake uncovered for a further 45 minutes, basting every 10 minutes or so until a soft, deep brown.

Muhamarra dip

3 large red capsicum, roasted and peeled

3 cloves garlic, roughly chopped

1 mild red chilli, deseeded and chopped

150g walnuts, toasted, roughly chopped, plus 50g for garnish

2 teaspoons salt

2 tablespoons lemon juice

2 tablespoons pomegranate molasses

4 tablespoons olive oil

Steps:

Put all the ingredients except the lemon juice, pomegranate molasses, olive oil in a food processor and blend until very smooth. Add the lemon juice and pomegranate molasses, blend further then slowly stream in the olive oil. To serve: Spread thick layer over a flat plate, making a dip in the middle. Fill the dip with the remaining olive oil, sprinkle with chopped walnuts.



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Kale tabbouleh

I was inspired by the Nov 2022 Cuisine magazine recipe from Marc Weir “freekeh Kale Tabbouleh”. I adapted the recipe and changed some things and the result was sooo delicious! I made it last week for a vegan friend who was getting out of hospital and there’s currently lots of cavolo nero in the garden.. When it’s chopped finely as in this tabbouleh, it’s so easy to eat lots of kale! There are also all the usual tabbouleh flavours: mint, parsley, lemon, olive oil, a few spices to give it sweetness (allspice, cinnamon, nutmeg). Sharpen your knives and start chopping!

Ingredients:

1 cup bulgar wheat, boiled till just done (leave a bit of bite to it)
80 g kale, finely chopped
40 g parsley, finely chopped
40 g mint, finely chopped
One red onion chopped, or a few spring onions, chopped
½ cucumber

Dressing:

½ cup olive oil
¼ lemon juice
2 garlic cloves, crushed
½ tsp allspice
½ tsp cinnamon
¼ tsp nutmeg
1 tsp salt
Black pepper

Method:

Put cold bulgar in a bowl with the chopped veg and herbs. Mix and add the dressing, then mix again. You may need to adjust the flavours, maybe add more salt, lemon or whatever you think it needs to balance the acidity.



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Charred broccoli with miso dressing (this recipe is adapted from delicious. Magazine, April 2019, from Ottolenghi's Nopi head chef, Rameal Scully)

3 heads broccoli sliced 2 cm thick

¼ cup miso paste (I use the one made in Nelson with no msg, available at commonsense organics)

140 ml mirin

2/3 cup sake

2 T caster sugar

1/3 cup tahini

¼ cup olive oil

Method:

1. Blanch broccoli, drain and rest in iced water. Drain and pat dry.
2. Place broccoli on a baking tray lined with baking paper. Don't pile it up but keep the florets spread out. Brush with olive oil.
3. Preheat oven to 200c.
4. Combine mirin, sake, miso and sugar. Heat 10-15 minutes until reduced to 100ml.
5. Remove from heat and stir in tahini and 1 T water. Cool.
6. Roast at a high temperature until you get char marks.
7. Present on a platter, with dressing on top.



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Sticky date pudding with caramel sauce (recipe adapted from *Sweet* by Yotam Ottolenghi and Helen Goh)

1 ½ pitted dates, chopped
1 ½ cups water
1 t baking soda
60 g unsalted butter
¾ cups sugar
2 eggs
1 cup sifted self-rising flour

Sauce: combine all ingredients in a saucepan at low heat. If the butter separates out (which sometimes happens), you can put the sauce in the food processor and blend to combine.

1 cup cream
1 cup brown sugar
200 g butter

Method:

1. Preheat oven to 180c.
2. Combine dates and water in a saucepan and bring to a boil.
3. Remove from heat, add baking soda. Puree the mix in a blender or food processor.
4. Cream the butter and sugar. Add eggs. Fold in the flour, pureed dates.
5. Pour in a buttered baking tin (22 cm).
6. Bake for 45-50 minutes or until skewer comes out clean.
7. Leave in tin for 10 minutes before turning out.
8. Serve with warm sauce, ice cream or cream if desired.