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COOKING SCHOOL

### *Middle Eastern Mezze*

Hibiscus & pomegranate kombucha spritz

Lebanese Manakeesh with za'atar & cheese

Ottolenghi's filo spinach halloumi cigars

Ottolenghi's creamy dreamy hummus

Muhamarra red capsicum & walnut dip

Beetroot tzatziki

Garden pickles

Lemony cauliflower with pine nuts over labneh

Charred sprouting broccoli with sweet tahini

Potatoes batata harra

Garden kisir

Sticky spiced harissa & lime roasted carrots

Mejadra lentil & rice pilaf

Pita breads

Ottolenghi's Chocolate Fridge cake

Persian Love Cake with rosewater marscapone

Cinnamon tea



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## Ottolenghi's spinach filo 'cigars' (Makes 24)

### Ingredients:

7 sheets of French filo  
¼ cup olive oil  
¼ cup each parsley and mint, chopped  
2 T sumac  
2 tsp pomegranate molasses

### For the filling:

3 red onions, diced  
5 cloves garlic, minced  
5 T olive oil  
4 T sumac  
1 tsp cinnamon  
200 g spinach, blanched and chopped  
½ cup pine nuts, toasted  
1 ½ cups halloumi, grated  
½ cup chopped mint  
1 ½ cups feta, grated  
Grated zest of one lemon

1. Make the filling by frying onions, adding garlic, then sumac and spinach. Add the rest of the filling ingredients and leave to cool.
2. Heat oven to 200c.
3. Take a sheet of filo with short side facing you. Cut the sheet lengthwise in 3.
4. Add 2 T of the filling toward one end. Tuck the sides over the filling, brush a little oil on the end, then roll all the way up into a cigar shape.
5. Place on a parchment lined sheet, brush with oil and sprinkle with sumac.
6. Bake for 25 minutes.
7. Serve with herbs and a drizzle of pomegranate molasses.

## Creamy Dreamy hummus, adapted from Ottolenghi's Test Kitchen

### Ingredients

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| 200g               | dried chickpeas, soaked overnight in plenty of water and $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp bicarbonate of soda |
| OR                 |  |
| 2 tins             | chickpeas (800g), drained (480g)   |
| $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp  | bicarbonate of soda (if using dried)   |
| 1 pinch            | ground cumin   |
| 120–<br>150g       | tahini   |
| 1                  | garlic clove, crushed, or more to taste  |
| $1\frac{1}{2}$ tbs | lemon juice, or more to taste  |
|                    | salt   |

### Method:

1. If using dried chickpeas, drain them well after soaking, then put them into a medium saucepan, for which you have a lid, with the  $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp bicarbonate of soda and enough water to cover by about 4cm. Bring to a simmer on a medium-high heat, skimming the scum from the surface as needed, then turn the heat down to medium-low, cover with the lid and simmer from anywhere between 30 and 50 minutes. This will differ greatly depending on your chickpeas, so check them at the 20-minute mark. Towards the last 15 minutes of cooking time, salt the water nicely and add the cumin. Cook your chickpeas until they are very soft.
2. Using a slotted spoon or spider, agitate your chickpeas, giving them a gentle shake in the water, allowing the skins to be released and rise to the surface. Discard the skins (don't worry too much if you don't catch them all). Skip to step 5.
3. If using tinned chickpeas, spread them out between two tea towels and use your hands to vigorously rub the towels together for a few minutes. Don't press down too hard on the chickpeas; you don't want to crush them. Lift the top towel, to see how you're doing – the friction should have caused the chickpea skins to be released. Discard the skins. Put the tinned (and now peeled) chickpeas into a saucepan with enough water to cover, 1 teaspoon of salt and a pinch of cumin. Simmer for 15 minutes, until soft.



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4. Drain the chickpeas over a bowl, saving the water. Put the warm chickpeas into a food processor with 120g of tahini, the garlic, lemon juice, a couple of ice cubes (25g worth), 2 tablespoons of reserved chickpea water and a good pinch of salt. Blitz until smooth(ish), then check on your hummus. You might need more tahini, garlic, lemon and salt and very likely more chickpea water. Add a bit of each as you need. Don't be shy about adding more tahini – each brand differs and may require you to use more. Blitz the hummus until very smooth, a few minutes at least. Don't worry about the hummus being too loose; it will thicken as it sits.
5. When ready, spread the hummus in a shallow bowl, creating a well in the centre. (If not serving right away, store in a sealed container in the fridge for up to 2 days.) Top with a generous glug of olive oil, then personalise your hummus as you wish. We sometimes add herbs, toasted nuts or rose harissa, but these are just suggestions. Once you get the base right, hummus knows no bounds.

## Muhamarra dip

### Ingredients:

4 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 and bread crumbs if desired

**Method:** 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.

## 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. Beetroot offers numerous health benefits, including improved cardiovascular performance. It is also rich in antioxidants, anti-inflammatory compounds, fiber, and essential vitamins and minerals like folate, manganese, potassium, and vitamin C, which support brain health, digestion, and overall cellular health.

### Ingredients:

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, minced  
1 T lemon juice

**Method:** 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. Add remaining ingredients, stir to combine, and taste. Season as necessary with salt. 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.



# SAVOUR™

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## Lemony cauliflower over labneh

In restaurants all over Israel, you'll find deep-fried cauliflower or *cruvit*, its edges crisp, its sweetness intensified by high heat. I oven-roast it instead and add a generous lashing of lemon juice before roasting, which helps the lemony punch permeate every bite. Serving the warm cauli over cool, creamy labneh allows you to multiply the number of textures and flavours you get in one bite.

1 medium cauliflower (we are multiplying x4)  
¼ cup olive oil  
1 lemon, zested and juiced  
¼ tsp dried red pepper flakes or Aleppo pepper  
¼ cup dried barberries  
¼ cup toasted pine nuts  
1 garlic clove, minced  
Chopped parsley for garnish

### Method:

1. Preheat oven to 450F
2. Halve and core the cauli and cut into florets.
3. In a bowl, toss the florets with oil and half the lemon juice and zest, salt and pepper and dried red pepper flakes.
4. Spread evenly over a large tray and roast for about 20 minutes until it starts to char.
5. Move around the florets and roast another 10 minutes until the cauli is golden and crispy.
6. Remove from the oven and add the remaining lemon, barberries, pine nuts. Toss. Taste, and season.
7. To serve, stir the garlic into the labneh and spread in a shallow bowl. Place the cauli in the center of the platter and garnish with chopped parsley.

## Labneh

750g thick Greek yoghurt and 1 T Salt

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. You can roll into balls and store in olive oil in the fridge. Remove from fridge a few hours before serving or the oil will be hard.

## Charred sprouting broccoli with sweet tahini

### Ingredients

- 550g purple-sprouting or regular broccoli
- 1 tbsp olive oil
  - salt and black pepper
- 40g tahini
- 1½ tsp honey or maple syrup
- 2 tsp lemon juice
- 1 small garlic clove, peeled and crushed
- 2 tsp white sesame seeds, toasted

### Method

1. Trim any big leaves off the broccoli and cut off the woody base of the stems. Blanch for three minutes in boiling, salted water until al dente, refresh, drain and leave to dry.
2. Toss the broccoli in the oil, a teaspoon of salt and a large pinch of pepper, then spread on a large oven tray and roast until slightly charred. Set aside to cool.
3. Whisk the tahini, honey, lemon juice, garlic and a pinch of salt, and slowly start to add water half a tablespoon at a time. At first, the sauce will look as if it has split, but it will soon come back together. Add just enough water to make the sauce the consistency of honey – around three tablespoons in total. Arrange the broccoli on a platter, drizzle with sauce and scatter with sesame seeds. Serve at room temperature.



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**Spicy roasted new potatoes with lemon and herbs** (aka Batata harra) from my Egyptian chef's family recipe.

## Ingredients:

3 T olive oil

1 tsp cumin seeds, crushed

1 tsp coriander seeds, crushed

1 tsp turmeric

4 large garlic cloves, chopped finely

1 red chilli, chopped

500 g potatoes, parboiled until slightly tender and cooled completely

½ tsp caster sugar

1 large lemon, finely zested and juiced

Small bunch fresh herbs such as mint, parsley, or coriander/dill, chopped

Salt and pepper

## Method:

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C and line a tray with parchment paper.
2. Chop the cooled, parboiled potatoes into cubes. Place the potatoes on the baking sheet in one layer, drizzle 1 tablespoon olive oil on top and season with salt. Roast until the potatoes reach a golden brown color and crisp, about 10-15 minutes, flipping halfway through.
3. Meanwhile, heat the remaining olive oil in a large saucepan. Add the cumin and coriander, and red chili. Sauté until the garlic is golden in colour being careful not to burn it! Add garlic and then sugar, 1 tsp salt and a generous grind of black pepper. Give everything a good stir. This should take no longer than a minute or the garlic will burn. Remove from heat and set aside.
4. Place potatoes in a large bowl and pour the spiced oil over top and toss well.
5. Transfer onto a lined baking tray and roast for 10 minutes until crispy.
6. Remove from oven and set aside to cool before adding the lemon zest, juice, and fresh herbs.



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## Garden kisir

Kisir is Turkish tabbouleh. When all the vegetables are chopped finely as in this tabbouleh, it's so easy to eat lots of them! There are all the usual tabbouleh flavours: mint, parsley, lemon, olive oil, a few spices to give it sweetness (allspice, cinnamon). Sharpen your knives and start chopping!

### Ingredients:

200 g fine bulgar wheat  
250 ml boiling water  
2 tsp harissa or tomato paste if you don't like it spicy  
80 g kale/spinach, finely chopped  
40 g parsley, finely chopped  
40 g mint, finely chopped  
One red onion chopped, or a few spring onions, chopped  
1 cucumber, seeds removed and diced  
Tomatoes, diced

### Dressing:

½ cup olive oil  
2 T pomegranate molasses  
Juice of ½ lemon  
2 garlic cloves, crushed  
½ tsp allspice  
½ tsp cinnamon  
1 tsp cumin  
1 tsp salt  
Black pepper

### Method:

1. Pour boiling water into a jug with the harissa and stir to dissolve.
2. Pour the hot liquid over the bulgar and cover to allow it to absorb the liquid. Don't let it sit too long! The bulgar should retain a bit of bite.
3. Add the chopped veg and herbs.
4. 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.

## Sticky spiced harissa and lime roasted carrots

Adapted from Persiana Everyday

If you're a fan of roasted carrots, these are next level yummy! They prove that there aren't many things that a sticky glaze won't improve. When we trialled the recipe, the whole tray was eaten up immediately!

### Ingredients:

1 kg carrots, peeled and cut diagonally into 1.5 cm thick slices  
1 tsp coriander seeds  
1 teaspoon cumin seeds  
3 T olive oil  
1 tsp black mustard seeds  
2 T dried barberries  
Sea salt flakes and black pepper  
100 g feta  
Fresh coriander seeds to garnish  
Generous handful of flaked almonds

### For the glaze:

2 T clear honey  
2 T harissa  
Finely grated zest and juice of 2 unwaxed limes

### Method:

1. Preheat oven to 220c. Line a roasting tray with baking paper.
2. Place the carrot slices in a bowl and toss with oil and seeds. Spread evenly out on tray in a single layer.
3. Bake carrots for 20-30 minutes.
4. Meanwhile, mix the glaze ingredients in a small bowl.
5. Remove carrots from oven, toss in the glaze, then roast for another 10 minutes until nice and sticky.
6. Remove from oven, toss again, and place on a nice platter.
7. Crumble the feta over, then sprinkle with the fresh coriander seeds, flaked almonds and barberries.

**Mejadra**, adapted from Ottolenghi's *Jerusalem*

This popular Levantine dish is Middle Eastern comfort food. It's a childhood favourite of Yotam Ottolenghi and most Middle Easterners, evoking memories of heaps of this stuff being sold both in restaurants and by street vendors. Whether eaten hot or cold, the combination of sweet spices and bitter-sweet onion is as comforting as can be.

**Ingredients:**

250ml sunflower oil  
4 medium onions, thinly sliced and tossed in cornflour  
250g green or brown lentils  
2 tsp cumin seeds  
1½ tbsp coriander seeds  
200g basmati rice  
2 tbsp olive oil  
½ tsp ground turmeric  
1½ tsp ground allspice  
1½ tsp ground cinnamon  
1 tsp sugar  
Salt and black pepper  
350ml water

**Method:**

1. Heat the sunflower oil in a medium-size heavy-based saucepan. When very hot, carefully add a third of the sliced onion. Fry for five to seven minutes, stirring occasionally with a slotted spoon, until the onion takes on a nice, golden-brown colour and turns crispy. Use the spoon to transfer the onion to a colander and sprinkle with salt. Repeat with two more batches of onion.
2. Meanwhile, put the lentils in a small saucepan, cover with plenty of water, bring to a boil and cook for 12-15 minutes, or until the lentils have softened but still have a little bite. Drain into a colander.
3. Wipe clean the saucepan in which you fried the onion and drop in the cumin and coriander seeds. Place over a medium heat and toast the seeds for a minute or two, until they release those distinctive aromas. Add the rice, olive oil, turmeric, allspice, cinnamon, sugar, half a teaspoon of salt and plenty of black pepper. Stir to coat the



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rice with oil, then add the cooked lentils and water. Bring to a boil, cover and simmer on very low heat for 15 minutes.

4. Remove from the heat, lift off the lid and cover the pan with a clean tea towel. Seal tightly with the lid and set aside for 10 minutes. Finally, tip the rice and lentils into a large mixing bowl. Add half the fried onion and stir gently with a fork. Pile up in a shallow serving bowl and top with the rest of the onion.

## Quick Refrigerator Spicy Garlic-Dill Pickles

Servings 2 pint-sized jars

### Ingredients

- 2 picking cucumbers, scrubbed & sliced into thick coins
- 8 cloves of garlic, peeled & smashed, divided
- 2 handfuls of fresh dill, to taste, divided
- 1 tbsp coriander seeds, divided
- 1 tbsp peppercorn seeds, divided
- ½-1 tsp crushed red pepper flakes, to taste, divided
- 1 tbsp sugar
- 1 tbsp salt
- ⅔ cup vinegar
- 1 cup water

### Method:

1. Wash two mason jars and lids in hot, soapy water, rinse, and dry.
2. Clean the English cucumbers well, then trim the ends before slicing them into thick coins.
3. Place four cloves of smashed garlic, a large handful of fresh dill, 1½ teaspoons of coriander seeds, 1½ teaspoons of whole peppercorns, and ¼-½ teaspoon of crushed red pepper flakes, to taste, into each jar.
4. In a large bowl, combine the sugar, kosher salt, and white vinegar. Whisk vigorously until the sugar and salt have completely dissolved.
5. Add the water to the mixture and mix.
6. In the two clean mason jars, tightly pack the cucumber coins into each jar. Once full, pour brine evenly over the cucumbers.
7. Tap the jars on the counter to release any air bubbles and top off the jars with extra water if any cucumbers are exposed.
8. Place the lids on the jars and screw on the rings until they are tight.
9. Leave the jars in the fridge for 24 hours before tasting. The pickles last up to one month refrigerated.

**Pistachio chocolate fridge cake** (adapted from Ottolenghi's *Simple*)

300 g dark chocolate

120 g unsalted butter

100 g golden syrup

Pinch salt

100 g raisins soaked in 1 T rum or vanilla extract and one shot espresso

170 g digestive biscuits, roughly broken into 2 cm pieces

100 g pistachios, chopped

1. Line a 28 x 18 cm baking tray
2. Put chocolate, butter, golden syrup and salt into large bowl and set over saucepan of hot, gently simmering water.
3. Melt until combined
4. Add the raisins and rum, biscuits and  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the pistachios.
5. Combine everything and spread onto prepared tray.
6. Smooth the top and sprinkle pistachios on top.
7. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours or until set.
8. Cut into bars. You should get 24.



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**Persian Love Cake** Think those golden baklava-ish flavours, but in a moist cake with sticky, dark caramelised sides. This is a cake to make if you are usually bad at making cakes. Two plusses: it uses a muffin method (what I call a 'bung-in-and-stir'), which requires very little to no technique, and is a wonderful gluten-free option.

#### Crumb base

- **300 g** (10½ oz/3 cups) almond meal
- **185 g** (6½ oz/1 cup) caster (superfine) sugar
- **220 g** (7¾ oz/1 cup firmly packed) soft brown sugar
- **120 g** (4¼ oz) unsalted butter, melted

#### Cake batter

- **2** eggs, lightly beaten
- **250 g** (9 oz/scant 1 cup) natural or Greek-style yoghurt
- **1/8 tsp** salt
- **1 tsp** ground cardamom
- **2 tsp** rosewater
- **6-12** saffron threads, bloomed in a bit of hot water
- **3 tbsp** flaked almonds
- **3 tbsp** pistachio nut kernels, roughly chopped

#### Method:

1. Preheat the oven to 170°C (325°F) fan-forced. Grease the ring of a 24cm (9½ inch) springform tin, then line with strips of baking paper. Turn the base upside down, so it no longer has a lip. Place a piece of baking paper over it, then clamp the ring around it to secure.
2. To make the crumb base, combine the almond meal, caster sugar, brown sugar and butter in a large mixing bowl, and rub together until you have an even, sandy consistency. Divide the mixture in two, and tip half into the prepared tin. Using the back of a spoon or a spatula, press the crumb mixture evenly over the bottom of the tin
3. To make the cake batter, add the eggs, yoghurt, salt, cardamom, rosewater and saffron to the remaining crumb mixture and whisk until there are no lumps. Pour over the crumb base and sprinkle the flaked almonds and pistachio nuts over the top.
4. Bake for about 30 minutes until golden and fully risen. If the top is colouring too quickly, cover with foil, then bake for a further 20-30 minutes. Cool completely, before removing from the tin and cutting to serve. Decorate with edible rose petals, and a very light dusting of icing sugar.