The #MedFoodHeroes Cookbook

Recipes curated by environmental NGOs using sustainable ingredients from the Mediterranean.
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The #MedFoodHeroes Cookbook

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About #MedFoodHeroes

We believe the small choices we make in our day-to-day lives can have a positive impact on the environment and people. This cookbook is filled with Mediterranean recipes from the small sustainable producers featured in the #MedFoodHeroes @RootedEveryday campaign. Created by a core team of environmentalists who are working with projects, eco-regions and partners from across the Mediterranean.

The Med Food Heroes campaign promotes small sustainable food producers offering an alternative to contemporary unsustainable agrifood systems. The recipes in this cookbook celebrate the rich cuisine the Mediterranean has to offer without costing the earth. We believe you are what you eat, and every time we buy food we are making a decision, whether to consume food that helps people and planet or not. For many of us the food that we put on our plates is as much about ethics as it is about taste, and when you choose to shop from small sustainable producers you get the best of both.

Our mission is to reverse the loss of biodiversity which is caused when people stop cultural practices that have existed for generations. By working with Mediterranean critical eco-regions and partners we aim to show the value that traditional ways of life can have in protecting our environment. We are working with the Mediterranean Institute for Nature and Anthropos (MedINA) in Lemnos in Greece, the Global Diversity Foundation (GDF) in the High Atlas mountains in Morocco, the Society for the Protection of Nature Lebanon (SPNL) and Al Shouf Cedar Society (ASC) in the Shouf Biosphere Reserve in Lebanon, WWF Spain, Associação Natureza Portugal (ANP | WWF) and Trashumancia y Naturaleza in the Dehesas and Montados in Spain and Portugal, and GOB Menorca on the island of Menorca. DiversEarth is also part of the core team looking at the culinary traditions of religious and spiritual communities.

Other campaign partners working across the Mediterranean are Yolda Initiative in Turkey and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The projects and campaign are funded by the MAVA Foundation for Nature.
Lemnos
GREECE

© Grazing among the Lemnian wildflowers by Babis Dinenis
Visitors to the island of Lemnos can experience the harmony of living off the land as it was before intensive agriculture and industry. Groves of walnut trees, stone built traditional farms (mandras), lush pastures filled with goats who are free to roam, roadside beehives, and local craft shops selling jewellery, ceramics and handicrafts tell a thousand tales of rural entrepreneurs working hard to continue with a way of life that has been lost in so many places in the Mediterranean. Delicious Lemnian smells, tastes, sights and sounds link us to the past and offer a more sustainable way of living now and in the future.

The local crop varieties of Lemnos are an essential element of sustainable development. Preserving cultural heritage and diversified agriculture create ideal conditions for mild, low-input, low-energy footprint production that responds to the challenges of the climate crisis.

Through the Terra Lemnia project, Medina is working with farmers to support traditional and environmentally friendly ways of working with the land, especially the mandra system.
© With the sheep of Antonis Lantouris (left)
© Working the fields by Athina Kavaleri (right)
A vibrant and refreshing bean salad that’s as tasty as it is easy to put together. This version uses Lemnian Aspromytika beans.

© Alexia Zafeiropoulou, Mediterranean Institute for Nature and Anthropos (MedINA)
Local producers like Athina Kavaleri continue to cultivate her family land and tend animals to supply fresh local produce. Sustainable specialities include afkos, lathouri, sesame, bspromytika beans and Melipasto Cheese.

“My dream is to be able to produce my own tahini, to professionally package my legumes and to combine it with utilising my paddock in Krinida as a tourist attraction.”

© Athina Kavaleri
Fava from Afkos or Lathouri
by Lemnian Farmer Athina Kavaleri

Prep: 5 mins | Cook: 30 mins | Makes: a large deep plate for sharing

Ingredients

- 2 cups of fava beans (Afkos or Lathouri)
- 4 cups of water
- 2 onions finely chopped
- Olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

Method

Clean and wash the fava beans. Bring water to a boil and add the beans.

When the fava beans start foaming, lower the heat and remove the foam with a big soup spoon.

Add 1 of the chopped onions and season with salt. Make sure the heat is low, as the bubbling can burn.

Stir the fava with a wooden spoon every so often so that it doesn’t stick to the bottom of the pot.

It is ready when the fava resembles a thick cream. Serve drizzled with olive oil, seasoned with salt and pepper and the remaining onion.

Did you know? Afkos are:

- The 2nd most important food group
- An alternative to meat
- Heart-healthy

Fava is a delicious and speedy creamy yellow split pea puree, made with just a handful of ingredients. This local version is made with Lemnian split pea varieties – Afkos or Lathouri. It’s best enjoyed with plenty of bread for dipping and a glass of wine.

© Fava by Alexia Zafeiropoulou, Mediterranean Institute for Nature and Anthropos

© Afkos and Lathouri by Athina Kavaleri (bottom)
Tyropitoudja
by Lemnian Farmer Raphael Giannelis

Prep: 1 hour | Cook: 30 mins | Makes: 12 - 15

Ingredients

For the phyllo pastry:
- 9 tablespoons of wheat flour
- A pinch of salt
- 1 tablespoon of vinegar
- 1 tablespoon of oil, preferably from a seed
- Water as needed

For the filling:
- A round of cheese (Kalathaki or Melipasto)
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Two green onions
- Mint and dill (fennel) finely chopped
- Two eggs

Method

Make the phyllo pastry by mixing the dry ingredients with water until it becomes a tight ball of dough.

Stretch the dough on a clean surface using a rolling pin and a little bit of cornstarch to absorb extra moisture. Roll out the dough until you have a very thin crust. This your phyllo pastry.

Crumble the cheese into a bowl and add the remaining ingredients, combining everything with a spoon.

Cut the phyllo pastry into long even strips and then into small squares.

Place a spoonful of the cheesy filling in the centre of each square and fold over like an envelope.

Fry in a pan on medium heat with plenty of oil. Enjoy them hot or cold!

Tyropitoudja are crisp and golden parcels of phyllo pastry wrapped around melted salty cheese – a popular Greek snack. These mini cheese pies are made with Melipasto cheese, a traditional Lemnian staple.

© Raphael Giannelis
Samsades
by Lemnian Farmer Raphael Giannelis
Prep: 1 - 1.5 hrs | Cook: 40 mins | Makes: 20 pieces

Ingredients

For the dough you’ll need:
9 tablespoons of wheat flour
A pinch of salt
1 tablespoon of olive oil
1 tablespoon of vinegar
Water as needed

For the filling you’ll need:
2 cups of sesame roasted and crushed or ground
1 cup of ground almonds
1 teaspoon of cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon of ground cloves
1/2 teaspoon of grated nutmeg
4-5 tablespoons of dry bread crumbs
1 1/2 cups of brown sugar

For the syrup you’ll need:
3 cups of water
2 cups of sugar
1 tablespoon of honey
1/2 a lemon
1 cinnamon stick (optional)

Samsades are a traditional Greek dessert made of golden pastry encased around nuts and soaked in a sweet, sticky syrup. This Lemnian twist uses a deeply rich sesame and almond filling.

© Raphael Giannelis
Method

Mix all the ingredients in a bowl, adding the water in slowly and kneadig until a firm dough forms.

Stretch the dough on a clean surface until it becomes a thin round crust. This is your phyllo pastry.

Cut the pastry down the middle and brush with sesame oil.

Spread half of your sesame mixture onto the pastry by hand.

Use a rod (or something with pencil-like thickness) to roll the sheet on itself (with the rod in the middle) creating a tight roll. Starting with side that has the filling.

Keeping the rod in place, push both ends in towards the middle with your hands. Your pastry should now be bunched up, with clear ruffles visible.

Remove the rod and cut into diamond shapes using a sharp knife.

Place your samsades on an oiled baking tray in the oven at 200 degrees celcius for 45 minutes and set aside.

Once cooled, pour the syrup over the sweets. They are ready to be served!

Did you know? Sesame is:

- A historical form of payment
- Used widely in local sweets
- A present-day valuable export

Raphael Giannelis is one of the last basket weavers on the island, whose speciality is making tyrvolia, the traditional handmade baskets made of rushes in which local cheeses Kalathaki and Melipasto are made.

After successfully completing an MA thesis on the kehagiades of Lemnos, he returned to his village of Varos to work on the small family farm, producing and marketing milk, cheese, sheep and goat meat using ecological farming and management practices.

© Raphael Giannelis and family
In Portugal the tree is at the heart of the agroforestry system. Our partners at Associação Natureza Portugal (ANP | WWF) support producers from Montado do Freixo do Meio, where the cork oak requires no water or fertilizer and is well adapted to the ecosystem. The acorns are gluten free and a source of healthy fat made up of oleic acid (Omega 9). The land also produces many mushrooms and mycorrhizal fungi from the rich organic soil. This sustainable landscape produces great quality food whilst being a great example of a high biodiversity system.

“When we do not till or plough the soil, we create conditions for biological diversity, recovery of pastures, dispersion of microorganisms and formation of organic matter.”

Alfredo Sendim, Manager Monte of Herdado do Freixo do Meio
Portuguese Boletus mushrooms, called *míscaros* or *tortulho* in some regions of the country, can be incorporated into Portuguese gastronomy in many different ways. Sautéing or roasting are among favourites.

© Fábio Bernardino
Boletus Mushroom Bread
by #MedFoodHeroes Ambassador Fábio Bernardino
Prep: 2 hours + 20 mins | Cook: 30 mins | Serves: 3

Ingredients
400 grams of corn flour
300 millilitres of water
100 grams of bait or 12 grams of baker’s yeast
200 grams of wheat flour
10 millilitres of olive oil
20 grams of Boletus mushrooms (dehydrated and crushed)
1 national cheese (for topping)

Method
Heat the water and scald the corn flour – taking care to stir it with a spoon until it cools.
Mix the wheat flour with the oil and the yeast.
Knead and shape the dough into a ball and place it in a bowl.
Add the mushrooms and sliced cheese on top.
Place on a tray and bake at 220ºC for 25-30 minutes.

Did you know?
35 Eco-producers guard this ecosystem
130+ Fungi provide nutrients to other plants

Are edible

Fábio Bernardino is part of a new generation of young entrepreneurs and chefs, who in addition to cooking and teaching also consults in the innovation of products and traditional Portuguese delicacies.

He actively participates in food education projects in schools, hospitals, canteens and nursing homes, as well as in long-term care medical seminars, to which he has contributed scientific works.

“We are going to celebrate sustainable food with our extraordinary Bolota and the mushrooms of our Montado.”

@chef_fabiobernardino
Acorn Coco Cake

by #MedFoodHeroes Ambassador Fábio Bernardino

Prep: 2 hours + 15 mins | Cook: 10 mins | Serves: 2

Ingredients

- 300 grams of wheat flour
- 100 grams of acorn flour
- 400 grams of sweet potatoes
- 1 egg
- 8 grams of baker’s yeast

Method

Cook the sweet potato and let it cool.

Once cooled, add the wheat flour and acorn flour to the sweet potato and mix well with the egg and the yeast.

Let it rise.

Mold it into small flat balls and mark them in a frying pan.

Finish baking them in the oven.

Did you know? Acorns:

- Are versatile
- Are rich in protein, fibre and are gluten-free
- Can be enjoyed raw, roasted or boiled

This recipe is a reinterpretation of flavours in which we compliment sweet potato – a traditional ingredient in Madeiran cake such as this – with the acorn. This combination contrasts both the flavours and colours of the cake, and also enhances the ingredients’ nutritional wealth.

© Fábio Bernardino
Mushroom and Acorn Burger

by #MedFoodHeroes Ambassador Fábio Bernardino

Prep: 10 mins | Cook: 5 mins | Serves: 1

Ingredients
100 grams of mushrooms
50 grams of acorn flour
1 onion
30 grams of breadcrumbs
1 can of red beans
1 courgette
10 millilitres olive oil
Chili
Basil

Method
Chop the onion.
Using a food processor, grind the beans together with the mushrooms.
Add the acorn flour to the mixture along with the chillies.
Using breadcrumbs mold the mixture into small hamburgers.
Drizzle olive oil into a non-stick frying pan and fry the hamburgers.
Serve with a courgette and basil salad.

This hamburger recipe features one of the main riches of the Portuguese montado – the acorn – an extraordinary culinary resource.

© Fábio Bernardino
Acorn Bread

by #MedFoodHeroes Ambassador Fábio Bernardino

Prep: 2 hours + 15 mins | Cook: 30 mins | Serves: 3

Ingredients

300 grams of wheat flour
300 millilitres of water
12 grams of baker’s yeast
100 grams of dry acorns without the shell
300 grams of acorn flour
10 millilitres of olive oil

Method

Scald the acorn flour with hot water.
Add in the wheat flour, oil and yeast, and knead well.
Let the dough stand and rise.
Knead the dough again and roll it out onto a surface.
Fill the dough with the dry shelled acorns.
Mould in the shape of a ball and dust the top with acorn flour.
Let it rise.
Once risen, place on a tray and bake at 220ºC for 25-30 minutes.

In the olden days acorns were mainly incorporated into animal feed, but the nut is also of immense biological and nutritional value for human diets. Our twist on this classic bread recipe showcases the versatility of the humble acorn.

© Fábio Bernardino
Dehesas
SPAIN

© Dehesas by Pablo and Javier Zurita, WWF España
The ecosystem of the Dehesas is unique. When well managed they offer a balance between biodiversity and sustainable agriculture that benefits the rural economy, prevents destruction of the land through soil erosion and wildfires, and continues a legacy stretching back generations.

Brothers Pedro and Juan Luis Domínguez Campa are extensive livestock farmers who produce high quality lamb and Iberian pork at their farm in south west Spain. After realising their soil had lost almost all its fertility, they began regenerative agriculture in the Dehesa and working with WWF Spain. They use the redileo technique of herding together sheep and goats at night in a portable enclosed fence so their pastures can recover and soil fertilisation improves.

The brothers have always had olive groves in their pastures, but it was only recently that they decided to produce olive oil. Unlike in intensive olive oil plantations, the Dominguez Campa’s field is not ploughed and allows sheep to graze instead. By using their livestock to fertilize the land they avoid unnecessary ploughing and make the best use of rainfall to minimise erosion. Additionally, instead of burning pruned remains, these are shredded and composted, which help to retain soil moisture and improve the soil microbiological activity, preventing soil erosion.
© A Spanish dehesa by Jorge Bartolome. WWF Spain (left)

© Olive grove 'Los Pedroches' by Jorge Bartolome, WWF Spain (right)
Remojón Andaluz is a refreshing, cold Spanish salad made with cod, salty olives and lots of fresh citrus – perfect for a hot summer’s day.

© Renato Álvarez
Remojón Andaluz

by #MedFoodHeroes Ambassador Renato Álvarez

**Prep:** 50 mins | **Cook:** 10 mins | **Serves:** 2

### Ingredients
- 500 grams of cod fish
- 2 oranges
- 1 small onion
- 4 eggs
- 60 grams of black olives
- 75 millilitres of extra virgin olive oil
- Coriander to taste

### Method

- Leave the cod to soak in water in a fridge for at least 12 hours.
- Drain the cod and roast it in the oven at 170 ° in the oven with a splash of olive oil.
- Crumble the cod and place it in a pan.
- Boil the eggs for ten minutes.
- Chop the remaining ingredients and mix together in the following order: orange, cod, onion, hard-boiled eggs, black olives.
- Season with salt, and garnish with coriander and olive oil.

### Did you know?

- Olive trees help protect the soil
- Producers use grazing instead of herbicides
- Pruned remains are composted

**Renato Álvarez** has been involved in social causes and organic agriculture since a young age. In the 90s he, along with his family, set up the Ecological Garden ‘Los Seises’ to teach ecological agriculture.

“The Mediterranean diet recovers ancestral knowledge and flavours, rescuing local varieties of vegetables and native breeds from oblivion. This is essential to transition to a safe, accessible and healthy food system for people and planet.”

www.huertaloseises.es
Menorca
SPAIN
© Menorcan red cows by David Arquimbau
There are over 12,000 km of dry stone walls in **Menorca**, which, besides separating businesses and homes provide a refuge to animal life and vegetation.

By choosing organic farming and sustainable agricultural management over intensive farming, partners working with GOB Menorca under the Land Stewardship Programme are helping the environment whilst producing high quality food. They have chosen to install and restore rainwater harvesting systems and nesting boxes, and have undertaken to improve the soil fertility. Two Menorcan specialities are the Red Cow Cheese and Sobrassada, a traditional raw cured sausage made from the Black Pig.

Farmers like Maria Tudurí were supported by the Land Stewardship Programme to restore an abandoned farm and use ecologically sustainable methods to produce organically certified food, ranging from animal products to vegetables and jam.

“We’ve adapted the amount of livestock to the land’s capacity so that the production can be self-sufficient and the external inputs are minimised. We’re also selling our products directly to consumers at a fair price.”

Maria Tudurí, Farmer and Owner at Es Capell De Ferro Farm in Menorca, Spain
Flaó (Menorcan Pastry)

by #MedFoodHeroes Ambassador Rosa Rotger

Prep: 30 mins | Cook: 30 mins | Makes: 12

Ingredients

For the dough:
600 grams of flour
200 grams of pork fat (can be substituted with half oil and half fat)
200 millilitres water
20 grams of baker’s yeast

For the cheese filling:
600 grams of Menorcan cheese
3 eggs
2 tablespoons of oil
2 teaspoons of flour (add more depending on how wet the cheese is)
Salt to taste
Flaons moulds

Flaó (plural flaons) is a savoury pastry typical of Menorcan gastronomy. While in the past it used to be prepared mainly at Easter, it can now be found at most bakeries all year round. It’s characteristically peculiar shape owes itself to the typical mould used for flaons.

© Rosa Rotger
Method

Pre-heat your oven to 180 degrees.
Dissolve the yeast in a little water, add the flour, fat and knead. Keep adding a little water as you knead. You should end up with a smooth and well bound dough. Let it rest.
While your dough is resting, grate the cheese and mix it with the other ingredients.
Take small amounts of filling (about the size of an egg) and shape into balls. If the filling is too soft, add a little more flour.
Use a rolling pin to flatten pieces of dough into thin disks (you’ll need two disks per flaó).
Place a portion of filling in the center of one of the disks. In the center of the other disk, make incisions resembling an asterix. This is where your cheesy filling will rise out of the pastry.
Press the edges of your disks together and use the mould to cut and shape the dough.
Place the flaons on a baking sheet and leave them to rest.
Bake in the oven until the cheese filling has risen and the pastry takes on a golden colour. Be careful not to open the oven door too early or the filling will collapse.

Did you know?

Menorcan cow’s milk is perfect for making cheese
Menorcan cows are free to roam
Producers under the Land Stewardship Programme promote animal welfare

Food blogger Rosa Rotger’s love for Menorcan history and tradition has led her, over the years, to document near-forgotten recipes on her blog Tiberis. She is the co-founder of Fra Roger, an organisation that promotes Menorcan traditional cuisine, and can also be found participating in various cooking related events, competition judging panels, and in the media for the Institute of Menorcan Studies.

www.tiberisacasa.blogspot.com
Sobrassada Cake
by #MedFoodHeroes Ambassador Rosa Rotger

Prep: 20 mins | Cook: 40 mins | Serves: 12

Ingredients

- 500 grams of flour
- 2 eggs
- 200 grams of sugar
- 25 grams of melted butter
- 50 grams of pork fat
- 200 grams of boiled potato
- 50 grams baker’s yeast
- Sobrassada
- Icing sugar

Method

Dissolve the yeast with a little warm water from boiling the potatoes, and set aside.

Using a fork, mash the potatoes with sugar, cooked butter and pork fat.

Add the eggs, the flour, yeast and knead well. The dough can be sticky so add a little more flour as needed.

Leave the dough to double in volume. Once the dough has risen, transfer to a greased container and let it rise again.

Cut the sobrassada into little pieces and distribute evenly on top of the cake.

Sprinkle over a little sugar and bake in the oven for 40 minutes or until it is golden brown.

Tip: if you prefer to use icing sugar instead, dust it onto the cake after it has been baked.

The sobrassada cake is unique to the Balearic Islands, where sobrassada has a long tradition and history. This recipe combines sweet and salt, a surprising yet pleasant combination.

© Rosa Rotger
High Atlas
MOROCCO

© Pastoralism in the High Atlas by Inanc Tekguc, Global Diversity Foundation (GDF)
Morocco’s High Atlas Mountains rich biodiversity hosts endemic, endangered and economically important plant species for food and medicine. The Global Diversity Foundation (GDF) are working with local partners producing almonds, barley, couscous, walnuts and wild thyme to strengthen traditional practices and conserve the landscape whilst ensuring communities have sustainable livelihoods. Taking this holistic approach is central to the preservation of the ecosystem and the people who’ve lived there for centuries.

“These plants are an important source of income for communities in the High Atlas. Thyme is used to prepare coffees and teas, you can add it to yoghurt or mix it with butter or add it to bread dough for a lovely flavour.”

Hamid Ait Baskad, wild thyme and lavender producer from High Atlas
© Almond blossoms by Pommelien da Silva Cosme, Global Diversity Foundation (left)
© Harvesting wild thyme by Pommelien da Silva Cosme, Global Diversity Foundation (right)
Couscous is an essential element of the Maghreb cultural identity. The couscous in this recipe from the High Atlas is made from barley, a staple crop of the region.

© Louisa Aarrass, Global Diversity Foundation
Barley Flour Couscous with Eggs (Toumiyte N’tasksoute)

by Aicha from Anname in the High Atlas

Prep: 40 mins | Cook: 40 mins | Serves: 4

Ingredients
Barley flour
6 Eggs
100 grams of butter
Oil for drizzling
Salt to taste

Method
Making the couscous:
Remove any hulls that may remain in the barley flour by sifting it through a sieve. The sifted flour should be a fine, uniform powder.

Put the flour in a large, low tagine plate.

Fill a cup with 150 ml of water.

Add a little water to the flour stirring the mixture with your hand, pressing down and moving the palm in a circular motion. This creates the couscous grains.

Tip: It’s better to have too little moisture than too much to avoid the mixture becoming a dough.

Continue adding water and mixing until tiny grains form without clumping.

Once the dish is filled with small grains, pass it through a sieve in order to separate out larger clumps.

Cooking the eggs and couscous:
Place six unshelled eggs into a pot of boiling water.

Place the couscous in a steamer above the pot. Steam uncovered for about ten minutes (while the eggs boil).

After ten minutes, return the couscous to a large dish. Toss the grains with 100ml of oil and a splash of water. Sprinkle with a generous pinch of salt and fluff/stir the couscous with your hands.

Place couscous back in the steamer for another ten to 15 minutes.

Use some of the larger leftover couscous chunks that didn’t sieve to seal the gap between the steamer and pot (if needed).

Place a fist sized piece of butter in the middle of a large serving dish.

Take the couscous off the steamer and spread on top of the butter in the dish.

Drain and shell the eggs, and once the couscous is evenly distributed in the dish, place the boiled eggs on top.

Break up the eggs with your hands to incorporate them into the couscous, mixing the butter in as well at the same time.

Gather with family and friends around this steaming masterpiece and eat with your hands.

Did you know? Couscous:
- Is varied across regions and climates
- Symbolises sharing and solidarity
- Is recognised by UNESCO as heritage
High Atlas Bread (Toumirte)

by Nezha from Annamer in the High Atlas

Prep: 1 hour | Cook: 10 mins | Makes: 2-3

Ingredients

400 grams of Barley flour
1 tablespoon of active dry yeast or instant yeast (can be used interchangeably)
300 millilitres of warm water
1 and a 1/2 teaspoons of fine grain salt

Method

Start the fire under your wood burning stove.
Sieve the barley flour to filter out impurities. Add one to two tsp of salt to the flour, followed by the yeast.
Add warm water (around 300 ml in total) little by little – enough to make a soft but not wet dough.
Knead the dough for at least five minutes, and place it in a lightly oiled bowl. Let rise for about a half hour.
At this point your fire should be nice and hot, full of broken down coals and with some larger pieces of wood still burning.
Remove the bigger pieces of charcoal from the stove (leave the small ones).
Using water and a rag you don’t mind ruining, wipe down the insides of the stove, removing soot and preparing the surface for cooking.
Stretch out the dough in your hands, changing the shape from round to more of a flat disc.
Using wet hands, fix the dough to the inside of the clay stove structure.
Cook for ten minutes. Once the bread starts to loosen from the stove, it’s nearly ready.
Finish it off by holding it over the hot coals so the sides get crispy edges.

Did you know? Barley:

- Is a symbol of food security
- Knowledge is passed down from generation by generation
- Is harvested manually

Toumirte is a traditional Moroccan bread characterised by it's distinctive round and flat shape. It’s a delicious accompaniement to any tagine.

© Louisa Aarrass, Global Diversity Foundation
Almond Ghoriba Cookies
by Ilham from Asni in the High Atlas

Prep: 1.5 hours | Cook: 15 mins | Makes: 18

Ingredients
- Zest of 1 lemon
- 250 grams of almond flour
- 125 grams of caster sugar
- 2 teaspoons of orange blossom water
- Whole almonds for decoration
- Powdered sugar for decoration
- Pinch of salt
- 1 egg
- 1/2 teaspoon of baking powder

Method
Combine the almond flour, caster sugar, a pinch of salt and the zest of a lemon in a bowl.
Add in one egg white (save the yolk) and the orange blossom water, and mix together with your hands for a few minutes until you have a paste. If the paste is too dry, add some more orange blossom water.
Cover the almond paste and place it in the fridge for one hour.
After one hour mix in the egg yolk and the baking powder.
Pre-heat your oven to 200°C (180°C fan-assisted).
Grease a large oven tray with butter and line with a piece of baking parchment.
Moisten your hands with either some orange blossom water or plain water, and shape the paste into small walnut sized balls.

Roll the balls in caster sugar, flattening them slightly, and place them on your oven tray.
Place a whole almond in the center of each cookie, and bake 15 minutes.
Let the cookies cool and enjoy!

Did you know? Almonds are:

- The 2nd most popular fruit-tree in Morocco
- Used in pastries and as almond oil
- Made into cookies and amlou

Ghoriba are yummy bite-sized Moroccan pastries, usually made with nuts, honey and sugar. This recipe uses almonds.

© Pommelien Da Silva Cosme, Global Diversity Foundation
Zaalouk is a traditional aubergine salad that can be prepared in hundreds of different ways. It can be eaten as a side dish or as a main dish – with fresh baked Moroccan bread and a drizzle of some olive oil. Make it extra special by sprinkling pomegranate seeds on top when they’re in season.

© Sahar Elhallak
Zaalouk (Moroccan Aubergine Salad)
by #MedFoodHeroes Ambassador Sahar Elhallak

Prep: 5 mins | Cook: 12 mins | Serves: 4

Ingredients
- 3 medium-size aubergines – diced into small cubes
- 2 large tomatoes – grated
- 3-4 garlic cloves – crushed
- 1-2 tablespoons chopped cilantro
- 1 teaspoon coriander
- A handful of crushed walnuts (optional)
- 4-5 dried tomatoes (optional)
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Olive oil for sautéing

Method

In a large deep skillet with a lid, sauté on a medium-high the small cubed aubergines after sprinkling with a bit of salt until soft and translucent.

Make a well in the middle of the pan and add a bit more olive oil, add garlic to this and cook for about a minute.

Grate the tomatoes (a trick locals use) with a cheese grater. Slice the tomato in half and grate, tossing away the skin. Add the tomato juice to the aubergine mix.

Add salt, pepper, and coriander.

Let it cook, occasionally stirring with the cover on for about 10 min.

Add the fresh cilantro and diced dried tomatoes and walnuts if using.

Serve garnished with green olives and drizzle with olive oil.

Sahar Elhallak, private chef, specialises in Middle Eastern and Moroccan plant-based cuisine. She runs her kitchen from her home in Fez, where she welcomes diners into her beautifully restored house for unique culinary experiences.

“My favorite recipe that I like to share often on my Instagram account is Zaalouk. I add different ingredients to it according to the season, and I love it when it’s a day old. I had made it when I was in Greece using sun-dried tomatoes, and it came out fabulous. I also like to add walnuts and olives to it to enjoy it as a full meal.”

athomeinmorocco.com
This tajine makes use of wild foraged young figs, still green and in which the fig’s natural sugars have not yet fully developed. The resulting flavour is unlike what you’d expect from a fruity summer fig, and rather more reminiscent of asparagus or artichoke.
The oak and cedar forests of the Al-Shouf Cedar Nature Reserve in Lebanon are home to 2000 year old trees, and are a haven for wolves, the Lebanese jungle cat, the Nubian Ibex, and many species of birds, reptiles and amphibians (some of which are threatened).

The area is also home to over 70,000 people living around the core zone of the reserve in 24 different municipalities. The Society for Protection of Nature in Lebanon (SPNL) and Shouf Biosphere Reserve work with these communities to monitor biodiversity and provide training conservation reporting in the Biosphere Reserve.

The Shouf Mountains offer a sustainable place to live and work. Producers are able to set up small enterprises and supply traditional Lebanese food making sirdeleh or ambarees, pomegranate molasses, rose water, orange blossom and grape molasses.
© Selling cherries at the Cherry Festival by the Hima Hammana Community (top)
© Clay pots full of Sirdeleh (or Ambarees) cheese by Abla Majed (bottom)
The Raheb salad was created by communities who lived in the Lebanese mountains as a substitute for meat and dairy during the 60-day Christian observance of Lent.

© Ali Fakhry
Raheb Salad (the priest’s salad)
by #MedFoodHeroes Ambassador Ali Fakhry

Prep: 15 mins | Cook: 15 mins | Serves: 2

Method

To make the dressing combine lemon juice, olive oil, pomegranate molasses, black pepper and salt.

Roast the aubergine whole in an oven with the peppers and onion for 15 minutes (or until done).

Remove the vegetables from the oven and cut the aubergine and peppers in half. Let them rest for 15 minutes in a strainer so that the excess water drains. Peel and de-seed the vegetables.

Transfer your aubergine, peppers and onions to a dish and add in the tomatoes, green bell pepper, green onions and sprinkle with parsley and 1/4 of the dressing. Mix well.

Arrange the roasted vegetables on the outside of your dish, and place the raw salad in the centre. Chill in the fridge for 30 minutes if desired.

Drizzle with the remaining dressing, decorate with fresh pomegranate seeds, and serve with Lebanese bread.

Ali Fakhry is a food blogger and social activist from Lebanon. He believes that food culture reflects a nation’s social, historical and spiritual roots.

“Lebanese food is a huge part of who we are. It represents us in the diaspora as our individual stories are exported on small plates. The first time we travelled, we took with us our alphabet, wine, herbs, spices and cuisine – conquering the world in our own way. #MedFoodHeroes shows how our food flies above barriers, from a small nation to the world.”

@AliBattaEats

Ingredients

1 aubergine (roasted)
1 red bell pepper (roasted)
1 onion (roasted)
1/4 cup of pomegranate molasses
1/4 cup of lemon juice
1 cup of extra virgin olive oil
1/4 teaspoon of salt
2 medium tomatoes (diced)
1 green bell pepper (diced)
1/2 cup of green onions (diced)
1/2 cup of parsley (chopped)
1/4 cup of pomegranate seeds
1 garlic clove
2 red radishes (chopped)
Black pepper to taste
Imad Bazzi is an activist, advocacy expert and food & travel blogger. He was recognised as among the most influential people online by Foreign Policy Magazine in 2011.

"#MedFoodHeroes will reshape how we look at what we put on our plates and how sustainable it is. Think of it as ‘changing the world one meal at a time’."

imadontour.com

Pomegranate Molasses

by #MedFoodHeroes Ambassador Imad Bazzi

Prep: 10 mins | Cook: 1 hour | Makes: a lot

Ingredients

- 4 cups of pomegranate juice
- 1/2 cup of sugar
- 3 tablespoons of lemon juice

Method

In a large, wide, uncovered saucepan, heat up the pomegranate juice, sugar, and lemon juice on medium high until the sugar has dissolved and the juice simmers.

Keep the heat on low and simmer for about an hour, or until the juice has a syrupy consistency. The quantity should reduce to one to one and a quarter cups.

If you want your pomegranate molasses to be sweeter, add more sugar to taste while you are cooking.

Once cooled to room temperature seal your freshly made molasses in a tight jar in your refrigerator.

Did you know? Pomegranates:

- Are made into molasses used to flavour stews and meat dishes
- Are picked in September
- Grow in two varieties in Lebanon

© Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon (SPNL)
Rose Water Rice Pudding (Riz Bi Haleeb)

by Alia Zoghib from Lebanon

**Prep:** 20 mins  |  **Cook:** 1 hour  |  **Makes:** 6

**Ingredients**
- 100 grams of pudding rice
- 700 millilitres of milk
- 100 grams of sugar
- 1 tablespoon of rose water
- Cornstarch (to thicken)
- Crushed pistachios (to decorate)

**Method**

Cook the rice and set it aside.

Heat the milk on a low setting in a saucepan, stirring occasionally.

Add cornstarch and stir constantly to thicken.

Dissolve the sugar and rose water in the milk, and add the cooked rice. Keep stirring until it resembles thick custard.

Put into small serving bowls and chill in the fridge.

Decorate with crushed pistachios and serve.

This simple, creamy, delicate rice pudding flavoured with rose water and dotted with crunchy pistachios is a Lebanese favourite. It’s best served chilled on a summer’s day.

© Divya Venkatesh, DiversEarth
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#MedFoodHeroes
15-27 June 2020

Let's Celebrate Sustainable Food

rootedeveryday.org/medfoodheroes
Cook sustainability and try out recipes from the #MedFoodHeroes campaign using regional delicacies from artisan producers and environmental NGOs.

The biodiversity of our ecosystems, like climate change, is in crisis. The survival of our world is dependent on urgent action from individuals, businesses and governments. Conservationists are asking people everywhere to do their bit to protect the environment by choosing good quality food from local sustainable food producers.

Now is the time to invest in better shopping habits and make a direct contribution to the green economy by saying ‘No’ to intensive farming that uses pesticides and is devastating the countryside.

Enjoy cooking, because eating well doesn’t have to cost the earth.

Be #RootedEveryday