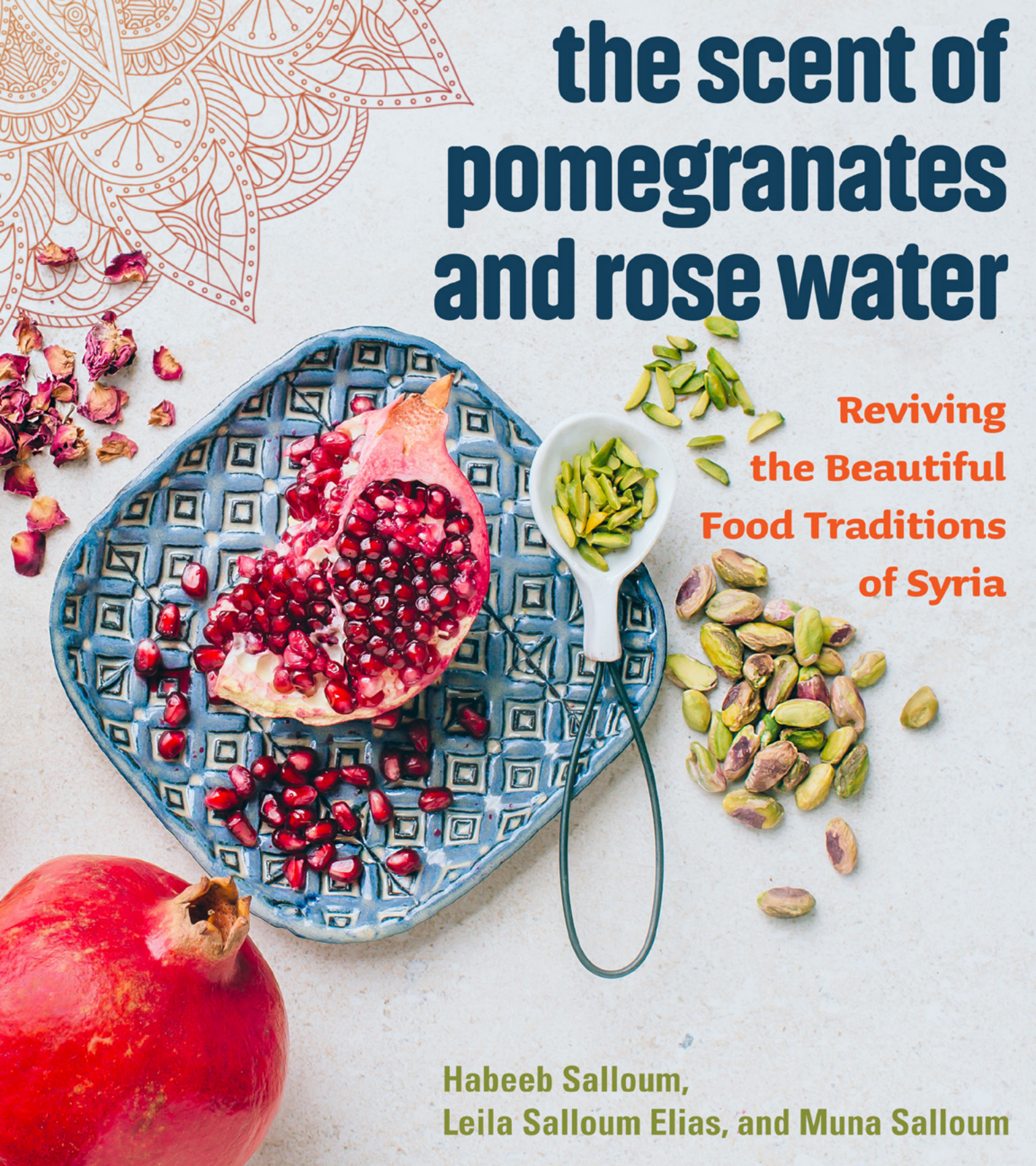


the scent of pomegranates and rose water

Reviving
the Beautiful
Food Traditions
of Syria

Habeeb Salloum,
Leila Salloum Elias, and Muna Salloum



Sample Recipes

The Basics

Bulgur Mufalal – Basic Bulgur

Labna – Creamy Yogurt Cheese

Kishk – Powdered Cheese

Qawarma – Preserved Meat

Taratour – Tahini Sauce

Qatr – Sugar Syrup

Mezza

Baba Ghannouj – Eggplant Dip

Muhammara – Red Pepper Dip

Thoum – Damascus Garlic Dip

Hummus bi-Tahina – Chickpea Dip

Hummus wa Rummaan – Chickpea and Pomegranate Dip

Hummus bi-Zayt – Chickpeas in Oil

Makdous – Preserved Eggplant

Salads

Fattoush – Fried Bread and Fresh Vegetable Salad

Tabboula – Parsley and Bulgur Salad

Salatat Soureeya – Syrian Salad

Salatat al-Rummaan – Pomegranate Salad

Safsouf – Chickpea and Bulgur Salad

Salatat 'Adas – Lentil Salad

Salatat Hindba – Dandelion Salad

Salatat Shamandar – Beet and Tahini Salad

Khiyaar bi-Laban – Cucumber in Yogurt

Salatat Shankleesh

Soups & Stews

Labaneeya – Yogurt Soup

Shawrabat 'Adas ma'a Silq – Lentil and Swiss Chard Soup

Shawrabat Hamra – Red Chicken Noodle Soup

Shaakreeya – Yogurt and Meat Stew with Rice

Meat

Freeka ma'a Fakhd Ghanam – Leg of Lamb with Freekeh

Kabaab bil-Karaz – Barbecued Meatballs with Cherries

Kafta – Damascus Meatloaf

Kubba Qaraas – Stuffed Kibbeh

Kubba Nayya – Raw Kibbeh

Shish Barak – Dumplings in Yogurt

Mihshee Malfouf – Cabbage Rolls

Maqlouba – Upside-Down Lamb and Rice

Mufarrika – Syrian Frittata

Fattat Makdous – Eggplant and Ground Meat Fatteh

Maariyaa – Spicy Grilled Lamb Sandwich

Chicken & Fish

Salloum's Syrian Fried Chicken

Dajaaj ma'a Thoum – Garlic Chicken

Dajaaj ma'a Bulgur wa Banadoura – Chicken with Bulgur and Tomatoes

Dajaaj ma'a Dibs Rummaan – Chicken with Pomegranate Molasses

Dajaaj Mihshee bi Lahm wa Mukassaraat – Chicken Stuffed with Rice and Nuts

Kubbat Samak – Fish Kibbeh

Samak Harra – Spicy Stuffed Whole Fish

Vegetables

Foul Mudammas – Fava Bean Potage

Mujaddara – Lentil Potage

Kousa Miqleeya ma'a Dibs Rummaan – Fried Summer Squash with Pomegranate

'Ijjat Kousa Miqleeya – Zucchini Fritters

'Ijja – Syrian Omelette

Savory Pies

Fataayir bi-Sabaanikh – Spinach Pies

Manaqeesh bi-Za'tar – Thyme and Sumac Pies

Sfeeha – Open-Faced Meat Pies

Desserts

Baqilaawa – Baklava

Baraazik – Crispy Sesame Cookies

Ma'moul bi-Tamar – Date-Stuffed Shortbread

Karabeej Halab – Whips of Aleppo

Zalaabeeya – Fareeda's Fritters

Ma'mouneeya – Semolina Pudding

Raa'ihat al-Rummaan bi-Maa' Ward – The Scent of Pomegranates and Rose Water

Drinks

Qahwa 'Arabeeya – Arab Coffee

Shaay Souree – Syrian Tea

Sharaab Dibs Rummaan – Pomegranate Drink

Shaneena – Yogurt Drink



Fattat Makdous

Fatteh dishes use toasted Arab bread as the base upon which to showcase other ingredients, such as chickpeas, chicken, and the most popular in Damascus—eggplant.

16 baby eggplants, 1 to 1 ½ in (2.5 to 4 cm) long
1 cup (250 mL) *labna*
4 tbsp tahini
2 tbsp pomegranate molasses
4 garlic cloves, minced
1 ½ tsp salt
4 tbsp butter
2 tbsp pine nuts
4 tbsp coarsely ground walnuts
4 tbsp olive oil
1 lb (500 g) lean ground beef
1 tsp black pepper
vegetable oil (for deep-frying)
6 small loaves of Arab (pita) bread, split open, cut into 1 ½-in (4-cm) pieces, and toasted
8 tbsp tomato paste diluted in 3 cups (700 mL) water
1 cup (250 mL) yogurt
4 tbsp finely chopped parsley

Rinse eggplants well, remove stems, and slice off tops. Peel eggplants, leaving some strips of peel so that they are striped. Rinse eggplants then sprinkle lightly all over with salt. Set aside on a plate.

For the sauce: In a bowl, mix together *labna*, tahini, pomegranate molasses, garlic, and ½ tsp salt. Set aside.

In a frying pan on medium-low heat, melt butter then add pine nuts and stir-fry until golden. Remove pine nuts with a slotted spoon, leaving the butter in the pan, and drain them on paper towel. In

the same frying pan, stir-fry walnuts until golden. Remove walnuts with slotted spoon and drain on paper towel. Set aside.

For the stuffing: In a frying pan on medium, heat olive oil. Add beef and stir-fry until cooked through, about 10 minutes. Stir in remaining 1 tsp salt, pepper, pine nuts, and walnuts. Set aside.

In a saucepan on medium, deep-fry eggplants in enough vegetable oil to cover them by ½ in (1 cm) until they begin to brown (about 5 to 8 minutes). Drain on paper towel. Let cool 5 minutes. With a knife, slit each eggplant vertically down the middle to create a pocket, making sure not to cut right through. Stuff the eggplants with the beef mixture and gently close the opening. Set aside to cool.

On a serving platter, evenly spread the toasted bread pieces and set aside.

In a bowl, mix the sauce with the diluted tomato paste. In a saucepan on medium heat, bring mixture to a soft boil, stirring occasionally.

Pour hot sauce over bread pieces, then spoon yogurt over top. Carefully place stuffed eggplants on top, then sprinkle with parsley.

Serve immediately.

Makes 8 Servings

Labna

Labna, a tangy yogurt cream cheese, can be purchased in Middle Eastern markets, but why not make it at home?

4 cups (1 L) yogurt
¾ tsp salt

In a medium bowl, stir salt into yogurt. Pour yogurt into a small fine-woven cotton bag (such as cheesecloth, or even an old clean pillowcase) and tie with a string. Suspend the bag over a bowl so that the water can drip out for 2 days, or until the consistency resembles cream cheese. Remove *labna* from the bag and place in a small bowl. Cover, refrigerate, and use as needed.

Makes 1 cup (250 mL)



Samak Harra

This showstopper of a dish is a whole fish rubbed with spices then stuffed and taken to the table straight out of the oven. Make sure to have a batch of *taratour* ready to dribble over each serving.

3- to 4-lb whole salmon or red snapper, cleaned
2 ½ tsp salt
1 tsp cumin
1 tsp black pepper
1 tsp *baharaat* (Syrian seven spice blend found in Middle Eastern groceries; garam masala can be substituted)
2 cups (50 g) finely chopped cilantro
8 garlic cloves, crushed
2 medium carrots, grated
1 large red bell pepper, seeded and julienned
1 tbsp finely chopped, seeded jalapeño (or similar hot pepper)
1 tbsp pomegranate molasses
2 tbsp olive oil

Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C).

Cut slits ½ to 1 in (1 to 2.5 cm) long into the fish's skin, then rub the fish inside and out with 2 tsp salt, cumin, black pepper, and *baharaat*.

In a bowl, combine cilantro, garlic, carrot, bell pepper, hot pepper, pomegranate molasses, and remaining ½ tsp salt. Stuff the fish with this mixture, then close with toothpicks. Brush fish all over with olive oil then wrap with tinfoil. Refrigerate for 4 hours.

Place wrapped fish on a baking tray. Bake for 40 minutes. Remove from oven and uncover the top of the fish. Return to the oven and bake uncovered for 10 minutes.

Transfer to a serving platter and carefully unwrap. Serve hot with *taratour*.

Makes 6 servings

Taratour

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For Syrians, grilled, baked, or fried fish is lonely without the ultimate condiment—a simple tahini-garlic sauce. Drizzle it over raw or cooked vegetables, such as cauliflower, potatoes, or eggplant.

4 garlic cloves, crushed
¼ tsp salt
½ cup (125 mL) tahini
½ cup (125 mL) water
½ cup (125 mL) lemon juice

In a food processor mix garlic, salt, and tahini while adding water and lemon juice one after the other until a smooth sauce forms. Place taratour in a covered container and refrigerate until needed. Use within 2 or 3 days.

Makes 1 cup (250 mL)



THE SCENT OF POMEGRANATES AND ROSE WATER

Reviving the Beautiful Food Traditions of Syria

Habeeb Salloum, Leila Salloum Elias, and Muna Salloum

The traditions of Syrian cooking, which go back hundreds of years, are notable for their sensory components, in which aroma and texture are as important as taste and nutrition. Over the centuries, the unique dishes of Greater Syria (*bilaad al-shaam*) were preserved by those who cooked them. For cooks in imperial households, family homes, or on simple peasant farms, recipes were handed down from generation to generation. Despite centuries of occupation, economic hardships, and political strife, the people of Greater Syria continued to cook their bulgur, lentil, chickpea, *kishk*, and yogurt dishes as if life around them never changed.

Syrian-born Habeeb Salloum and his daughters, Leila and Muna, have researched and explored the far reaches of Syrian cuisine for many years (and in Habeeb's case, decades). Their resulting cookbook provides a succinct window into the dining tables of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Syria, when the region was influenced by the Ottoman Empire's reach into Persia and the Arab world. The book includes delectable, heart-healthy recipes—some familiar, some never before published in English—many of which have been updated and simplified for modern sensibilities. The book also provides a poignant window into Syrian culture and everyday life then and now—bound together by ageless and truly beautiful food traditions.

Habeeb Salloum was born in Syria and emigrated to Canada when he was a child. For the last thirty years he has been a full-time writer specializing in food, history, and travel. He lives in Toronto.

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