



A Taste of Gaza

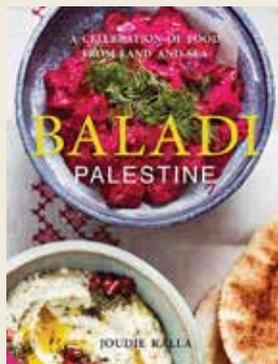
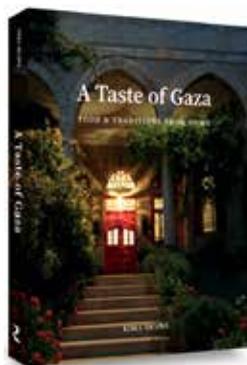
By Lima Shawa

Rimal Books, 2021, 286 pages, €38

Lima Shawa cites recipes for Gaza specialties as well as for dishes cooked and consumed by Palestinians outside Gaza and Arabs elsewhere.

She describes Gaza through its weddings, Ramadan observances, celebrations, and seasons, including traditions and food. She begins with the marriage of her paternal grandmother. Although proposed to in Jerusalem, the bride was conveyed to Gaza on horseback as the wedding had to take place in Gaza in accordance with the local traditions at that time. She relates how, during the hot, humid Gazan summers, her extended family of 150 to 200 people set up camp under the shade of the sycamore trees on the Rimal dunes above the shore.

The book continues with a description of feasts celebrated by both Muslim and Christian festivities before it delves into how Gazans respond to the four seasons and describes pottery used in Gaza kitchens. Having set the scene, she shifts to recipes. Many of the recipes that Shawa has collected are for age-old dishes made with locally grown vegetables and dried pulses. Her recipes show that Gaza's food epitomizes the Mediterranean diet by consisting mainly of healthy, affordable, popular preparations that are called "cucina povera" by Italians proud that their cuisine abounds in such dishes.



Baladi:

A Celebration of Food from Land and Sea

By Joudie Kalla,
photographs by Jamie Orlando Smith

Interlink Books, 2019, Hardback, 256 pages, US\$ 35

Baladi means "my home, my land, my country," and Joudie Kalla once again pays homage to her homeland of Palestine by showcasing its wide-ranging, vibrant, and truly delicious dishes.

Palestine is a country of different seasons and landscapes, and it is these diverse conditions that create the many and varied ingredients featured in the book. Joudie takes an entirely flexible approach to cooking, using influences from her home to create new dishes, and bringing her own twist to more traditional recipes.

Baladi features recipes according to the area that they hail from, such as the land, the sea, the fields, the orchard. Diverse and flavorful dishes include *Daoud Basha* (lamb meatballs cooked in a tamarind and tomato sauce), *khubzet za'atar* (thyme brioche twists), *samak makli bil camun* (fried fish selection with zucchini, mint, and yogurt dip), *atayef* (soft pancakes filled with cream in an orange blossom sugar syrup), and many more sublime flavor combinations.

With stunning color photographs to accompany each recipe, the book is also interspersed with shots of the landscapes, streets, and people of Palestine, reflecting the rich culinary culture that runs through the whole country.

Joudie Kalla, a celebrated Palestinian cookbook author and chef with over 18 years of experience in the culinary arts, currently runs a private catering company and hosts sold-out supper clubs.

Classic Palestinian Cuisine

By Christiane Dabdoub Nasser

Saqi Books, third edition, July 2013, 220 pages, £14.99

Classic Palestinian Cookery, which appeared in 2000, was the first recipe book to be published on Palestinian cuisine. Since then, many books have appeared, written by Palestinians from Palestine and the diaspora, but also by food lovers of various nationalities. However, *Classic Palestinian Cookery* has been a trailblazer at many levels.

More than just a book of recipes, it promotes Palestinian food as part of the Eastern Mediterranean, or what was once called *Blad a-Shām*, with its own specificities that are partly linked to its history and the experiences of its people. As such, it draws attention to a cultural space that has all but disappeared. Secondly, it reflects the openness that has marked the evolution of Palestinian cuisine, which has absorbed influences and gives it the basis to experiment in fusion and new forms of cooking. Thirdly, it presents a lifestyle in which the seasons and local products determine culinary choices and what is served on a table in the quotidian, or to mark celebratory events. Finally, it presents food culture as a palimpsest of meaningful practices and rituals and a system defined by its own intrinsic properties and the relational properties it generates.

Currently in its third edition, *Classic Palestinian Cuisine*, as it is now titled, has paved the way for an important debate on a marking aspect of cultural expression. And this debate is ongoing.





Craving Palestine:

Soulful Recipes and Inspiring Stories

By Farrah Abuassad, Lama Bazzari, Fadi Kattan

with over 100 Palestinian contributors

Story Farm Press, 2020, Hardback, 256 pages, US\$ 49.95

Over one hundred Palestinians from all over the world came together to create the cookbook “Craving Palestine.” They wanted not only to contribute to ANERA’s

mission in the Middle East but also to share their Palestinian culinary identity.

Recipes from classic to modern, always with a personal touch and very often adapted to the contributor’s location, illustrate the diversity of successful Palestinians and their culinary heritage.

Palestinian contributors – too many to name – from all walks of life share with us insights into their kitchens: businesspeople such as Raya Sbitany, Zahi Khoury, and Lana Abu Hijleh; musicians such as the Trio Joubran, Lina Makoul, and Victor Mahana; chefs such as Reem Kassis, Mirna Barnieh, Nojoud Saadeddin, and Omar Sartawi; architects such as Mohamed Hadid, Dana Erekat, and the Anastas brothers; and cinema personalities such as Annemarie Jacir, Jasmine Masri, and Najla Said.

Prior to the pandemic, the book was supposed to also inspire supper clubs, the first and only one of which was held in Jerusalem, with recipes from Mohamed Hadid, Elisabeth Kassis, Fadi Kattan, and Moeen Abuzaid that were prepared and served in the sumptuous setting of Notre Dame of Jerusalem Center, overlooking the Old City of Jerusalem.

Memorable Flavours

By Naouel Chaoui, Beibei Huang, Anita Shirodkar, Jumana Kazim Al Tamimi, Gaia Moncada Di Paterno, Hanifa Meslem, Riwa Dabbagh, Jannie Smerup Nielsen, Deepa Vinayy, Hend Saeed, Dina Spahi, and Oumkeltoum Mejbar Berrada

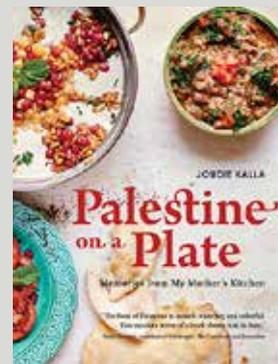
Rimal Books, 2022, 260 pages, €44

As we traveled back through memory lane – to when our grandparents and parents consumed locally grown, fresh products or preserved homemade ingredients to use during different seasons – we decided to recreate our inherited culinary habits and share our recipes.



Memories involving food are vivid and sometimes feel more evocative than other types of recollections. The nostalgia and the need to recreate the same dish that our mothers, fathers, or grandparents used to cook is associated not only with the delicious dish but also with home.

In the chapter *My Story with Thyme*, Jumana Al Tamimi writes: “I still remember, in detail, my desire to focus in an atmosphere of total tranquility, staying up all night, every night during exam time. My mother would ask me every morning to eat some food, even if just one bite, before going to the exam.” “*Zaatar* (thyme) strengthens memory,” she used to tell me as an incentive to eat. The sight of my mother standing beside me every morning on those days is still alive in my memory. As one of many famous Palestinian proverbs says: “We will remain as long as thyme and olives remain.”



Palestine on a Plate: Memories from My Mother's Kitchen

By Joudie Kalla, photographs by Ria Osborne

Interlink Books, 2017, Hardback, 240 pages, US\$ 35

Palestinian food is found not just at the stalls lining the streets of the Old City of Jerusalem but in homes, too, in the kitchens all across the country where families cook and eat together every day. *Palestine on a Plate* is a tribute to family, cooking, and home – old recipes created

with love that bring people together in appreciation of the beauty of this rich heritage. Immerse yourself in the stories and culture of Palestine through the recipes in this book.

This is a celebration of real Palestinian food, cooked with the ingredients used by Joudie’s mother and grandmother – and their grandmothers before them. “This book goes to the heart of the relationship between food and identity, and conveys a sense of belonging through beautiful, compelling and, yes, joyous recipes,” says food writer Nigella Lawson of *Palestine on a Plate*. “I just want to eat everything in it.”

The authentic and accessible recipes in this cookbook will allow you to experience the wonderful flavors of Palestine through zingy *fattet hummus*, satisfyingly spiced *makloubeh* (an upside-down spiced rice dish with lamb neck and fried eggplant), sublimely decadent *awameh* (honey dumplings), and so much more.

The Gaza Kitchen

A Palestinian Culinary Journey

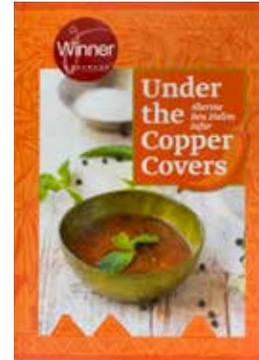
By Laila El-Haddad and Maggie Schmitt

Just World Books, third edition, 2021, 336 pages, 400 photographs, \$29.95

This timely update of a much-loved, award-winning cookbook shares with readers the little-known but distinctive cuisine of the Gaza region of Palestine, presenting 130 recipes collected by the authors in Gaza. This edition includes new stories, recipes, and photos gathered during a late-2019 visit to Gaza by co-author Laila El-Haddad.

Cooks will find great, kitchen-tested recipes for spicy stews, piquant dips, fragrantly flavored fish dishes, and honey-drenched desserts. They will be entranced by the hundreds of beautiful photos of Gazan cooks, farmers, and fresh-produce merchants at work, and by the numerous in-kitchen interviews with these women and men who tell the stories of their food, their heritage, and their families.

Anthony Bourdain, Claudia Roden, Yotam Ottolenghi, and José Andrés are among the many culinary figures who have embraced *The Gaza Kitchen*. This third edition features tantalizing new stories and recipes in a beautiful volume.



Under the Copper Covers

By Sherine Ben Halim Jafar

Rimal Books, 2017, 320 pages, €44

In the author's own words:

This book began as a simple cookbook with recipes I wished to share with my friends, my family, and, most importantly, my children in order to honor our heritage and the large variety of dishes that enrich its cuisine. But then, a quiet voice within me recognized this golden

opportunity and with increasing intensity insisted on being heard. I listened. Among the recipes in the cookbook, I intertwined stories of our family's life as exiles from Libya, fully knowing that our fate is not an exception and remains the norm for far too many.

In telling this story, I found deeply buried memories wrapped up in many protective layers that unfolded to reveal parts of a forgotten me. While at times the process was difficult, even painful, at other times, I found treasures: beautiful moments tinted with memories of my family. Being in the kitchen has given me peace and happiness. I turned to food to explain my experience of being displaced, and cooking gave me a sense of identity. I wrote an autobiographical cooking journey, a book that reveals what I consider to be the secrets of Palestinian cuisine as well as the story of how food lit the way to the discovery of my identity.

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