

EAST meets WEST

Few can resist the colourful dances, mesmerising music and tantalising tastes from far off lands... well, not that far. Pop down to your local shop, grocers and supermarket and see their wide ranges of colourful fruits, veg and spices. As the heat beats down on those hot summer days, indulge your senses in the flavours of the East. They're also incredibly healthy.

Falafel (serves 6)

450g cooked chickpeas
50g breadcrumbs
1 onion, peeled
4 garlic cloves
1 tsp ground cumin
1 tsp ground coriander
2 tbs finely chopped fresh parsley
black pepper
olive oil

1. Mince the onion with the garlic and put in a mixing bowl
2. Grate or mash the chickpeas and add, together with the remaining ingredients apart from the olive oil. Combine thoroughly until everything binds together
3. Take round dessertspoonfuls of the mixture and roll into balls in the palm of the hand
4. Shallow fry the balls in hot olive oil until golden, drain on kitchen paper and serve warm

Brightly Coloured Tabbouleh

(serves 2 as a main course, 4-6 as an accompaniment)

175g bulgar wheat
1 red pepper
1 yellow pepper
1 garlic clove, crushed
juice of ½ lemon
1-2 tbs olive oil
salt and freshly ground black pepper
2-3 tomatoes
4 spring onions
1 small avocado
1 small head of radicchio
8 sprigs of flat leaf parsley

1. Boil some water in a kettle and set the grill high. Put the bulgar wheat into a large bowl then cover with 350ml of boiling water. Leave on one side to swell
2. Cut the peppers into quarters, place them cut-side down on a grill pan and grill for 10 mins or until the skins have blistered and charred in places. Remove from grill and cover with a damp cloth
3. Meanwhile, put the garlic into a bowl with the lemon juice, olive oil and some salt and pepper
4. Wash and chop the tomatoes and trim and chop the spring onions. Peel, stone and chop the avocado. Wash and roughly tear the radicchio and parsley. Add all of these into the garlic
5. Peel the peppers, pulling off the skin with a sharp knife; discard the seeds and the stalks, then cut the flesh into strips and add to the other salad ingredients in the bowl
6. Fork through the bulgar wheat then add this to the salad and mix gently to distribute all the ingredients well, adding some salt and pepper to taste as you do so

Hummus (serves 4-6)

225g cooked chickpeas
2 tbs light tahini
2 tbs lemon juice
1 tbs olive oil
1 tbs water
1 garlic clove, crushed
black pepper
1 tsp olive oil
¼ tsp paprika

1. Blend the chickpeas until smooth and combine with the tahini, 1 tbs olive oil, lemon juice, water and garlic
2. Season with black pepper and spoon into a serving bowl
3. Mix the paprika with the tsp of olive oil and drizzle over the top before serving

Baba Ghanoush (serves 6)

900g aubergine
1 garlic clove, crushed
2 tbs light tahini
1 tbs lemon juice
1 tbs olive oil
1 tsp ground cumin
black pepper
chopped black olives

1. Cut the aubergines in half lengthways and put them under a hot grill, turning occasionally until the flesh is soft
2. Scoop out the flesh and blend it with the garlic, tahini, lemon juice, olive oil and cumin until smooth, adding a little water if necessary to make a dipping consistency
3. Season with black pepper and pour into a serving bowl. Cover and refrigerate until cold
4. Garnish with chopped black olives when serving

Avocado Dip (serves 4-6)

2 medium avocados
2 tbs light tahini
2 tbs olive oil
2 tbs lemon juice
2 garlic cloves, crushed
black pepper
paprika

1. Peel the avocados and mash them with the lemon juice until smooth
2. Add the tahini, olive oil and garlic and season with black pepper. Mix very well, transfer to a serving dish and sprinkle with paprika

Olivada (serves 4)

175g green olives, stoned
2 tbs olive oil
2 tbs lemon juice
2 garlic cloves, crushed
black pepper

1. Put all the ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth
2. Transfer to a serving bowl, cover and chill before serving

Recipes taken from *A Vegan Taste of the Middle East* by Linda Majzlik and tabbouleh from *Vegetarian Kitchen* by Rose Elliot.

Photography: Corin Jeavons/VVF

