

A TOUR AROUND THE WORLD'S GASTRONOMY



EGYPT

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# A TASTE OF EGYPT'S GASTRONOMY



## A NATION'S GASTRONOMY IS ITS BEST AMBASSADOR

**A 7000 years old tradition.** The lush and fertile banks of the Nile have long given Egyptians an exuberance of fresh products to create dishes with unique flavours.

From the ancient Egyptians, who strived to ensure good food for the afterlife and placed food offerings in their tombs, through medieval markets, centuries record all the products valued and used until present days. The history of Egyptian cuisine is witness to a millennia-long story of innovation and adaptation.

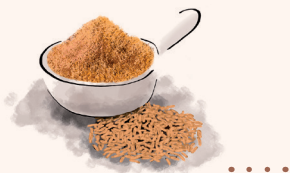
Contemporary Egyptian cuisine is rich in vegetables, leafy greens and animal protein, including beef, lamb, poultry, and rabbit. Stews are the protagonist, especially vegetable stews of okra or potatoes, cooked in a richly flavoured tomato sauce, served alongside with rice cooked with fried vermicelli. In the coastal cities fish is cooked in different ways and the Nile has blessed inland areas with Nile tilapia.

Soups are also very popular, especially spiced lentil soup in winter. For the more adventurous eaters, stuffed pigeon is a delicacy that some Egyptians eat as a whole, including the bones. Bread is literally life to the Egyptians: the Egyptian word for bread is *'aish*, meaning 'to live', and no meal is complete without it.

Egyptian street food is as delicious as it is varied. Intrepid gastronomes can sample fava bean-based dishes such as *ful* and *ta'meyyah*; *koshary*, a tangy mix of rice, lentils, and pasta; or *hawawashi*, a spicy minced meat baked in a bread loaf; nicely paired with freshly pressed mango or sugar cane juice available at brightly decorated stalls on every street corner.

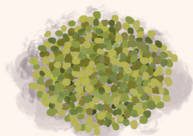
# TAKE YOUR PALATE ON A TOUR

## SPICE UP YOUR LIFE WITH PRODUCTS FROM EGYPT



### CUMIN

Dried seeds used in both whole and ground, to season cooked dishes or to flavour white cheese dips and salads.



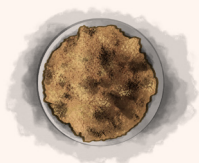
### CORIANDER SEEDS

The dried fruits, commonly called 'coriander seeds', are fried with garlic in butter or ghee to create a sizzling sauce called *ta'leyyah* poured over many dishes for added flavour and aroma.



### CARDAMOM

No soup or stew is complete without dried cardamom seeds. Make sure to remove them before serving, because they can taste bitter if chewed.



### BOHARAT

Literally meaning 'spices', *boharat* is a mix that is the cornerstone of modern Egyptian cuisine. It is added to meat, poultry, and all sorts of vegetables.



### CINNAMON

From savoury rice dishes to sweet puddings and hot tea, cinnamon is the ultimate versatile spice in Egyptian food.

## WANT TO BRING SOME BACK HOME?

Spice stalls are found in all markets. Usually, the eye-catching mounds of colourful powdered spices hypnotize passers-by with their rich colours and scents. To ensure quality and freshness, however, it is always best to buy the spices whole and grind them as needed, except for *boharat*, which is only sold powdered. Plants and flowers such as dried hibiscus blossoms can also be bought to make a refreshing sugary drink.

# TOP 5 LOCAL BITES TO TASTE



*FUL AND TA'MEYYAH* (also known as falafel)  
*Served with flat bread accompanied by pickles, salad, and tabini.*

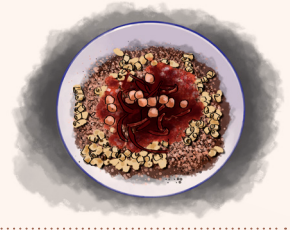
**Main Course** (breakfast, lunch, or a filling snack). Fava beans are used for both dishes, which can be eaten together or separately. For *ful*, the beans are stewed overnight to create a creamy dish you can spice to your preference. The beans have been part of Egyptian cuisine for a thousand years at least. *Ta'meyyah* (or falafel) are shelled fava beans patties with an array of green herbs fried to a crispy exterior and a fluffy inside.

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## *KOSHARY*

*Served with tomato sauce, garlic sauce, and chili sauce.*

**Main Course.** Lentils, rice and pasta mixed with whole chickpeas and sprinkled with fried onions come together for a filling carb-rich dish that ends in a very tasty sensation. It may have distant origins in Indian *kitchari*, but it is today a uniquely Egyptian dish.



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## *MOLOKHEYYAH* (mallow soup)

*Served with rice, meat, and bread.*

**Main Course.** *Molokheyyah* is a vibrant green soup made with a beef, chicken or rabbit stock. Its flavour is enriched with *ta'leyyah*, a sizzling, aromatic fried garlic and coriander oil added into the soup at the last minute, accompanied by a 'gasp' from the cook for supposed extra flavour.



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## *FIREEK* (toasted cracked green wheat)

*Baked with meat or poultry.*

**Main Course.** *Fireek* is wheat harvested while green, toasted and rubbed together until it breaks into smaller bits. It has a tangy, smoky flavour that nicely balances fatty meats. It is often mixed with meat and slow cooked in earthenware pots or used as stuffing for grilled pigeons.



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## *OMM ALI* (filo pastry and milk pudding)

*Served with nuts and raisins.*

**Dessert.** A warming dessert full of texture, *Omm Ali* is made of crispy filo pastry layered with sugar and nuts, covered in milk and cream, and cooked in a clay pot. The result is a creamy and crunchy dessert served on special occasions.



## DID YOU KNOW?

No Egyptian meal is complete without a glass of tea, an habit which Egyptians refer to as 'locking', because you 'lock' the meal you enjoyed with tea. Usually served black with sugar and sprigs of fresh mint, the tea leaves are occasionally also boiled in milk.

# MOUSTAFA ELREFAEY

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Chef Moustafa Elrefaey is the executive chef and cofounder of Zööba, a fast-casual chain on a mission to bring Egyptian street food to the world. Founded in 2012, Zööba has eight restaurants in Egypt and New York.

Mostafa's early memories of time spent in his grandmother's kitchen in a northern Egyptian village, combined with the culinary skills he acquired at the Henry Ford College in Michigan, United States, paved the way for him to introduce the world to Egyptian flavours.



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«Growing up, I spent a lot of time in my grandmother's village amidst plentiful fields and abundant products. I developed a close relationship with the land and helped my grandmother cook, always using what was fresh and in season. As a chef, I was eager to continue the culinary journey I started as a child and reaffirm my identity through my cuisine».

**E**gyptian cuisine is a hidden treasure, like the antiquities that have lain for centuries beneath the desert sand. There is so much to discover and explore, and as it garners more international attention, it gains more devotees impressed by its variety and flavours.

Egyptian street food is particularly close to Chef Moustafa's heart, as it reflects the diversity of Egyptian heritage. One of the most popular items on the street is *ta'meyyah*, also known as *falafel*. It differs from *falafel* in other parts of the Arab world as the Egyptian version is made of shelled fava beans instead of chickpeas, and the beans are mixed with an array of fresh herbs, which give it a vivid green colour.

Chef Moustafa is especially proud of the recipe below: with this recipe he won the first place at the 2016 Falafel Festival in London.

## TA 'MEYYAH (FAVA BEAN PATTIES)



### INGREDIENTS

- 1kg shelled fava beans
- 75g onion
- 40g fresh coriander
- 40g fresh parsley
- 25g garlic
- 25g salt
- 5g ground dried coriander seeds
- 5g ground cumin

### STEP BY STEP

- 1 Soak shelled fava beans in water for 12 hours at room temperature. Change the water every 4 hours (the beans will double in volume). Rinse and strain.
- 2 Grind onion, garlic and herbs in a food processor on high speed for 2 minutes.
- 3 Add beans. Blend for 4 minutes.
- 4 Add salt and spices and blend for 2 minutes.
- 5 Use a tablespoon to scoop the batter, form it into a ball then press it down with your fingers to form a 1 cm thick patty.
- 6 Heat oil to 176°C and fry patties for 2 minutes on each side.
- 7 Serve in flat bread with salad and pickles. (Batter can be frozen).

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