

Eastern Mediterranean Menu

Mediterranean cuisine is most commonly known for the bright flavors of Italian, Greek and Provençal cooking. And yet beyond basil and wine, there is the bold scent of intricate spices and culinary traditions of forgotten empires. The cuisine of the Eastern Mediterranean stems from the Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Turks and Venetians, whose long history of imperial colonization and trade by means of sea routes has rendered a rich blend of culture and culinary practices. Food is integral to the generous hospitality of the region's peoples and is based on the plentiful fruits of the fertile land.

The Eastern Mediterranean diet is rich in whole grains, pulses, vegetables, fish and fruit, with less emphasis on meat and dairy. Flavors are robust and clear, unencumbered by heavy sauces. At the heart of many dishes are colorful vegetables such as onions, garlic, tomatoes, eggplant, peppers and artichokes. Whole grains and pulses like rice, bulgur, lentils, fava and garbanzo beans add protein and carbohydrates. Traditionally, some form of wheat or rice accompanies every meal. In the warmth of the region, milk historically soured quickly. This led to the early development of methods to preserve milk, as in cheese and yoghurt. Cheeses such as feta are made primarily from goats or sheep milk, imparting pungent and distinctive flavors, which require only small quantities. The waters of the Mediterranean play a significant role in the foods of the region as they did in defining cultural heritage. For centuries, the sea has provided the region's inhabitants with a vast array of seafood. Grazing land is sparse, so red meat is eaten only in small amounts, and lamb is the meat of choice. It is the fresh herbs, heady spices, and natural flavorings, however, which embody the cooking of the Eastern Mediterranean. Allspice, cloves and nutmeg; mint, parsley and thyme; sumac, rosewater, lemon and tahini are but a sample of the seasonings that lend exquisite and complex flavors to the cuisine.

Meals are often served as a table of small dishes designed to be shared, known as "mezze". It is a common sight throughout the Eastern Mediterranean to see people sitting at outdoor cafes sipping a glass of arak (aniseed-flavored liquor) or strong coffee and sharing mezze before returning home after work. The following page lists our most requested mezze

Like most professional chefs, the recipes I offer stem from dishes I enjoyed growing up, prepared by my mother and other family members. Following the tradition of our homeland, we now invite you to taste and enjoy this unique and delicious cuisine, perfected by a magnificent blend of cultures over thousands of years.

Chef Moshile Rafeedie, CEC, CSEP



Suggested Mezze Menu

(for mezze table, passed mezze or served mezze)

Hummus bi tahini
Baba Ghanoush
Fava Bean Puree (Foul bi Dames)
Kibbeh Nayeh (Lamb or Filet Mignon)
Kafta Shish Kebob
Kibbeh stuffed with pine nuts
Fried Cauliflower
Zucchini Fritters

Falafel
Dolmas (stuffed grape leaves)
Sfeeha (meat pies)
Pickled mixed vegetables
Boreks
Spanikopita
Sauteed Jerusalem Artichokes
Laban

Most Requested Eastern Mediterranean Buffet Menu

Buffet tables will be beautifully decorated with deluxe linens and fresh floral centerpieces.

Mixed salad greens, bibb & romaine lettuce with tomatoes, cucumbers, lemon & olive oil dressing
Tabbouleh salad (bulgur wheat, parsley)
Sultan's Pilaf (pistachios, yellow raisins, almonds, dried apricot)
Stuffed Squash (koosa mishshee)
Grilled Roasted Leg of Lamb, laban & garlic sauce and Aegean sauce (watercress & olive sauce)
OR
Lamb Kebobs with pine nut sauce or onion relish.
Roasted Chicken with oregano, thyme & lemon
Pita Bread and Pide (Open faced pita with toppings)
Fruits (sliced seasonal fruits or hand-held fruits) and Dessert Sweets
Hot Herbal Tea and Turkish Coffee

Desserts

Baklava with pistachios or walnuts
Gribee (shortbread cookies)
Ma'moul (nut or date filled Easter cookie)
Knafee (stuffed shredded pastry fillo with cheese)
Semolina Cake with pistachio and honey
Shredded filo dough with cheese filling
Birds nests with walnuts and pistachio nuts
Yogurt cakes

