






Create an authentic Syrian feast for World Refugee Day!

Imad Alarnab, award-winning refugee restaurateur in London, has put this menu together especially for Wycombe Refugee Partnership, who offered him life-changing support when he had nowhere else to turn.



So why not put your apron on and invite your friends round to savour the ways our culture is enriched by the flavours and tastes of our international refugee brothers and sisters.



Do share Imad's story with your dinner guests and ask them to consider donating to refugees and asylum-seekers in need: www.wycombe-refugees.org/get-involved or scan the QR code.



Musabaha

Hummus is a traditional dish in the Middle East and this is a Syrian version, the one I used to do at home. In this variation, we serve the hummus warm after cooking the chickpeas and always topped with a Tahini sauce for a fresh finish.

Serves 4–6
Prepare 20 minutes + soaking overnight
Cook 45 minutes

250g dried chickpeas
½ tsp cumin
½ tsp salt
½ tsp paprika
1 clove garlic, crushed
1 vine tomato, roughly chopped
¼ x 25g pack flat-leaf parsley, leaves picked
1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
½ lemon, juiced
Flatbreads, to serve



TAHINI YOGURT

1½ tbsp Greek yogurt or vegan substitute
1 clove garlic, crushed
50g tahini

- 1 Before you start cooking, soak the chickpeas in large bowl of water for 24 hours. Make sure the chickpeas are completely submerged—you may need to top up the water.
- 2 To make the tahini sauce, in a medium bowl, combine the Greek yogurt, garlic and season. Add the tahini and a squeeze of lemon juice, then mix until combined. If the sauce stays thick while mixing, use 25–35ml cold water, adding little by little to make it creamier.
- 3 Bring a large saucepan of water to the boil, then cook the chickpeas until soft (about 45 minutes). Drain, reserving 150ml of the water, then tip into a large bowl. Use the back of a large spoon, or a potato masher, to mash the chickpeas, adding a little of the reserved water if needed



to loosen the mixture. Add the cumin, salt, paprika, lemon juice and garlic and mix until combined. Spoon into a serving dish and top with the tahini yogurt. Scatter the tomatoes and parsley over and drizzle with the oil. Serve with the Batata Harra, Kabab Hindi and Diquh Bundura.

Batata Harra

This side dish is renowned in Daraa, located in south Syria near of the border of Jordan. It is so simple to make and yet delicious and comforting.

Serves 4–6
Prepare 5 minutes
Cook 40 minutes
750g new potatoes
15g unsalted butter or vegan substitute
1 tsp ground cumin
1 tsp salt
½ x 25g pack coriander, leaves picked and roughly chopped
¼ tsp chilli flakes
1½ tbsp olive oil

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180C, gas mark 4. In a large saucepan, boil the potatoes for 25–35 minutes, depending on their size, until they're tender to the points of a fork. In a small pan, melt the butter then stir in the salt and cumin; set aside.
- 2 Drain the cooked potatoes and tip into a large roasting tin. Add the melted butter mixture and stir to combine. Roast for 20 minutes, until crisp. Top with the chopped coriander, chilli flakes and olive oil. Serve alongside the Musabaha, Kabab Hindi and Diquh Bundura.



Kabab Hindi (lamb kofta)



This recipe has endless variations but the one below is the one I used to make back home. I have an emotional attachment to this recipe. It is perfect to share for celebration, and easy to make!

Serves 4–6

Prepare 20 minutes

Cook 1 hour 15 minutes

500g lamb mince (20% fat) or veggie/vegan mince

1½ tsp salt

1½ tbsp Cooks' Ingredients Lebanese 7 Spice or Garam Masala

1½ tsp freshly ground black pepper

1 onion, finely chopped

1 clove garlic, finely sliced

50g pine nuts, toasted

SAUCE

3 tbsp olive oil

2 medium onions, chopped

1 tsp cumin seeds (optional)

1 tsp Cooks' Ingredients Lebanese 7 Spice or Garam Masala

½ tsp freshly ground black pepper

1 tsp salt

1 tbsp tomato purée

1.2 kg fresh tomatoes, chopped

1 To make the sauce, heat the oil in a medium frying pan then add the onions and cumin seeds (if using) and cook for 15 minutes until turning golden. Add the 7 spice or garam masala, black pepper, salt and tomato puree and mix together. Stir in the tomatoes and cook for about 30 minutes, stirring from time to time, until the tomatoes have broken down to a soft puréed texture.

2 Preheat the oven to 200C, gas mark 6. In a large mixing bowl, combine the lamb, salt, 7 spice or garam masala, black pepper, onion and garlic. Use your hands to fully combine everything then shape the mixture into balls.

3 Pour the tomato sauce into a medium baking dish (about 25cm x 25cm) and arrange the meatballs on top. Cook for 35 minutes, until the meatballs are cooked through with no pink meat. Sprinkle the pine nuts over it and serve with the Musabaha, Batata Harra, and Diquh Bundura.

Diquh Bundura

This is a Mediterranean dish, commonly from the coastal city of Tartus. This dish is also well known in Palestine but under a different name. It's a perfect salad for spring, with a nice kick of chilli.

Serves 4–6

Prepare 15 minutes

2 green chillies

4 cloves garlic

1 lemon, juiced

4 medium tomatoes, finely chopped

A bunch of salad onions, sliced

100g flat-leaf parsley

100ml olive oil

1 Finely slice the green chillies and garlic, and grind in a pestle and mortar with the lemon juice and a pinch of salt. In a large bowl, combine this mixture with the tomatoes, salad onions, parsley and oil. Serve with the Kabab Hindi, Musabaha and Batata Harra.



About Imad

Imad was a successful chef, owning three restaurants in Damascus, Syria, until his world was turned upside down when the Arab Spring uprising broke out in 2011. His home and businesses were destroyed. His family was in danger.



His journey to safety took nearly three months, where he crossed ten different countries on foot, by overcrowded boats and on trucks. In fear of danger for his family, he took this journey alone.

In the UK, when Imad was at last granted asylum and a family reunion visa, Wycombe Refugee Partnership found a house for the family and helped them to resettle here.

Imad has now opened an award-winning restaurant, Imad's Syrian Kitchen, in Carnaby Street's Kingly Court, London. You can read more about his story and book a meal via his website: imadssyriankitchen.co.uk.

About WRP

Wycombe Refugee Partnership was launched in 2016 with love and kindness, to help resettle refugees and support asylum seekers in and around the High Wycombe area.

They have a half-way house to accommodate refugees who have little or no financial networks. A holistic package of support sets people on the path to independence. They also support asylum seekers with supermarket vouchers and an Activities and Hardship Fund.

Donate to Wycombe Refugee Partnership today, to help others like Imad start a new life after unimaginable beginnings:
www.wycombe-refugees.org/get-involved

