

Trying Food from Another Culture

Feasting plays an important role in the Middle East but I'm going to focus on food from Persia. Smells are so important when I am cooking and eating and the food of Persia sends exotic smells around my kitchen which almost transports me to a far off land! In Persian households there are always lots of huge platters of food on the table and it reminds me of my own childhood celebrations. I wonder what culture will inspire you?

Slurping your noodles: slurping your noodles is not only acceptable in Japan but also welcome. Not only does it suggest a person can eat hot foods quicker but the Japanese believe it makes food taste better.

Leaving food on your plate: in China an empty plate means that the guest was not served enough food and so they keep bringing more each time your plate is emptied!

Asking for Salt and Pepper: in Portugal asking for salt and pepper in a restaurant is a huge offence to the chef and their cooking abilities.....it is in Mrs Duff's kitchen too!!!!

Pouring drinks: in Korean culture it is customary to never pour your own drink but wait or request someone else pour it for you.

Here's my Sharing Persian Inspired Feast

Blackened Spatchcock Poussin

Vine-baked Seabass with Coconut, Turmeric, Lime, chilli and Coriander

Grilled Corn in Harissa Mayo with Feta, Mint, Coriander and Chilli

Baked Halloumi

Orzo and Tomato salad with Capers and Kalamata Olives

Served with Homemade Wraps or Toasted Pitta Breads

Raspberry and Pistachio Frozen Yoghurt Pots

Click here to watch Mrs Duff's Food Tech lesson:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1kgstrm1NTrJMX5JWwMirYEnfsv-7MUGkA/view?usp=sharing>

Blackened Spatchcock Chicken

1.5kg chicken
1 tablespoon cumin seeds
2 teaspoons ground coriander
6 seeds from cardamom pods, finely ground using a pestle and mortar
1 tablespoon pul biber chilli flakes
1 tablespoon dried thyme
Grated zest and juice of 1 lemon
2 garlic cloves, crushed
1 tablespoon caster sugar
3 – 4 tablespoons olive oil
Maldon sea salt flakes and black pepper to taste

To spatchcock the chicken, place the whole chicken breast side facing down on a chopping board. Use a sharp knife and make incisions on either side of the top of the spine. Pull down the knife to cut down the spine on either side and remove it. Turn the bird over so the breast side is facing upwards and press down firmly on it to flatten the carcass. Combine the remaining ingredients in a bowl to make a spice paste and then rub over the chicken. Cover with clingfilm and either marinate over night, or if you have no time leave at least 20 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 230C. Line a roasting tin with baking parchment. Place the chicken in the tray, skin side up. Roast for about 45 minutes, or until the chicken is cooked and the skin is nice and crispy. Leave to rest for 10 minutes before serving. This can also be cooked on a BBQ.

Vine-baked Seabass

75g fresh coconut, finely grated
Finely grated zest of 1 lime
1 small bunch coriander, finely chopped
1 red chilli, deseeded and very finely chopped
2 garlic cloves, crushed
10cm fresh turmeric, finely grated
Olive oil
30 to 36 vine leaves (vacuum packed or in brine)
6 seabass fillets with skin on, 80 to 100g each
Maldon sea salt flakes and black pepper

Preheat to 240C. Line a large baking tray with baking parchment. Put the coconut, lime zest, coriander, chilli, garlic and turmeric into a bowl and season generously with salt and pepper. Add a little olive oil and mix to form a paste. Using 5 to 6 vine leaves per fillet, make a sheet of vine leaves on your work surface. Place a seabass fillet on top with the skin facing down. Divide the topping mixture into 6 portions and spread 1

portion over the flesh of each fillet. Carefully wrap the fillets up in the vine leaves, ensuring the fish and topping are well sealed. Transfer the wrapped fillets to the baking tray and roast for about 10 minutes. Serve immediately, unwrapping the parcels to serve.

Grilled Corn

4 corn on the cobs
200g feta cheese, very finely crumbled
1 teaspoon chilli flakes
A handful of fresh coriander, finely chopped
6-8 large mint leaves, roughly chopped

For the Harissa Mayo

3 tablespoons mayonnaise
1 tablespoon rose harissa
Zest of 1 lime, finely grated
A squeeze of lime juice

Combine the ingredients for the harissa mayo in a bowl, stir well and set aside. Cook the corn in boiling water for 10 minutes (do not add salt to the water as it toughens the kernels of corn). Meanwhile, heat a griddle pan over a medium-high heat. When the cooking time has elapsed, drain the corn and pat it dry with kitchen paper. Place the corn cobs on the hot griddle pan and immediately increase the heat to high. Cook for 6–8 minutes, turning occasionally, until char marks appear and the corn is blistering in parts. Spread the feta crumbs on a plate. Divide the mayo into 4 portions and spread 1 portion all over each cob. Roll the coated cobs in the feta. Sprinkle over the chilli flakes, fresh coriander and mint. Serve immediately.

Baked Halloumi

250g block of halloumi cheese
2 tablespoons rose harissa
2 tablespoons clear honey
Juice of ½ a lime
Bread to serve

Pre-heat the oven to 220C. Take a large square of kitchen foil and line it with baking paper. Place the cheese in the centre of this double layer. Mix the harissa, honey and lime juice together in a bowl and pour the mixture over the cheese. Draw up the baking paper around and over the block. Repeat with the foil and seal the parcel tightly at the top. Place on a baking tray and bake for 30 minutes. Serve immediately with bread.

Orzo and Tomato salad with Capers and Kalamata Olives

350g orzo pasta

2 x 290g deli packs of sunblush tomatoes, drained & cut into strips – reserve the oil

400g green beans, trimmed & halved

200g pitted Kalamata olives, roughly halved

50g flat-leaf parsley, leaves and stems finely chopped

400g feta cheese, crumbled into small chunks

100g pine nuts

240g capers in brine, drained

Cook the orzo according to the pack. Rinse well in cold water and leave to drain in a sieve for 10 minutes. Put the drained orzo into a large mixing bowl. Add 2 tablespoons of oil from the tomatoes and mix well. Cook the green beans in boiling water until tender. Drain and run under cold water to stop them cooking. Add the green beans to the orzo along with the rest of the ingredients and mix well. Add some more of the tomato oil and season generously with salt and black pepper.

Raspberry and Pistachio Frozen Yoghurt Pots

150g fresh raspberries

1 teaspoon vanilla bean paste

300g Greek yoghurt

75g pistachio nuts, chopped

2 tablespoons clear honey

To decorate:

6 frozen raspberries

25g pistachio nuts, cut into slivers

Using a blender, puree the raspberries, vanilla bean paste, yoghurt, pistachios and honey together until smooth. Divide the mixture into 6 small ramekins and freeze overnight. Remove the pots 10 minutes before you want to serve them, Crumble over a frozen raspberry on top of each pot and sprinkle over a few slivers of pistachio before serving.