

URBAN

FARM & KITCHEN

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MEZZE

9 RECIPES FOR SHARING

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Hi I'm Luay!

*Hey everyone! I'm Luay Ghafari, the creator, recipe developer, writer and photographer of **Urban Farm and Kitchen**, a blog dedicated to fresh garden-to-table, Levantine and Mediterranean recipes.*

Luay shares **fresh, easy** and **delicious** recipes inspired by his garden-to-table philosophy. On his blog he includes classic Levantine and Eastern Mediterranean recipes with innovative modern twists. He is passionate about preservation and shares **preservation tips, advice and recipes** to turn beautiful and nutritious homegrown produce (or a farmer's market haul) into pickles, salsas, sauces, ferments, spice mixes and more. He resides in Toronto, Ontario.

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In 2023, Luay published his first book, **Seed to Table: A Seasonal Guide to Organically Growing, Cooking and Preserving Food at Home**. It was one of the highlights of his career and a book that has been a true labor of love and represents everything he is passionate about. Find more information about the cookbook [here](#).





welcome

There's something so impressive about a table full of mezze; small, flavor-packed dishes that bring people together to share, dip, and savor. From simple and flavorful dips, to small bites full of flavour, there is something for everyone! Whether you're hosting a Mediterranean-inspired dinner or simply love grazing boards with flair, these 9 mezze recipes will turn your spread into a true feast.



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Prep Time
15 minutes



Rest Time
15 minutes



Cook Time
10 minutes



Servings
4



Total Time
40 minutes

Mutabal (Roasted Eggplant Dip)

INGREDIENTS

- 1 eggplant, large or 2 medium
- 1-2 garlic cloves, finely minced
- 3 tbsp tahini
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 tsp cumin (optional)
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Garnish**
- Extra virgin olive oil
- Pomegranate seeds
- Fresh herbs (mint and/or parsley)
- Aleppo pepper flakes
- Sumac
- Cumin

INSTRUCTIONS

- 01 **Roasting the eggplant. Option 1:** Poke the eggplants with a fork or knife a few times to allow for steam to release during the charring process. Place the eggplants directly on the gas burner set to medium heat. Roast, turning frequently, until the eggplants begin to collapse and are charred. Transfer the eggplants to a glass or metal bowl and cover with plastic wrap. This will help the eggplants steam, allowing the skins to release. Set aside for 15-30 minutes, then remove and discard the charred skin, leaving behind the soft flesh of the eggplant.
- 02 **Roasting the eggplant. Option 2:** Cut the eggplant vertically down the middle and rub the cut parts with a sprinkle of kosher salt and olive oil. Roast cut side down on a parchment-lined baking sheet for 20-30 minutes at 400F/200C. The eggplant will be ready when the skin collapses and the flesh is soft. Cool for 15-30 minutes. Scrape the flesh away from the skin.
- 03 **Prepare the mutabal.** Place the eggplant flesh into a fine-mesh sieve set over a bowl. Allow the eggplant flesh to drain for 30-60 minutes. Discard liquid.
- 04 **Mash.** Add the eggplant flesh to a bowl and mash with a fork. Add garlic, tahini, lemon juice and cumin if using. Add salt and pepper to taste. Add more garlic or lemon juice if you desire.
- 05 **Plate.** Plate the eggplant dip in a shallow bowl or a rimmed plate and top with all or some of the garnish options listed. Olive oil is a must. Serve with pita, crackers, and/or crudité



Prep Time

10 minutes



Servings

4



Total Time

10 minutes

Tzatziki (Greek Cucumber Yogurt Dip)

INGREDIENTS

3 Persian cucumbers, grated and squeezed

1 ½ cups Greek yogurt

1-2 garlic cloves, minced

2 tbsp fresh mint, finely chopped

2 tbsp fresh dill, finely chopped

2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil

1 tbsp fresh lemon juice

Kosher or sea salt and fresh cracked black pepper

Mint leaves, dill fronds and more olive oil for garnish

INSTRUCTIONS

- 01 **Prepare the ingredients.** To a medium bowl, add the grated cucumber, yogurt, garlic, mint, dill, olive oil, lemon juice, a big pinch of salt and some fresh cracked black pepper.
- 02 **Mix and adjust seasoning.** Mix well and adjust the seasoning.
- 03 **Serve.** Serve alongside crudité like sliced cucumbers, carrot and bell peppers, as well as Greek or Lebanese pita bread.



Prep Time
10 minutes



Servings
6



Total Time
10 minutes

Muhammara (Syrian Roasted Red Pepper Dip)

INGREDIENTS

- 3 large roasted red peppers, jarred works fine
- ½ cup walnuts
- ⅓ cup unseasoned breadcrumbs
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled
- 2 tbsp tomato paste
- 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tbsp pomegranate molasses
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 tsp sumac
- 1 tsp Aleppo chili flakes (see note)
- Kosher salt and black pepper

Garnish

Garnish with crushed walnuts, olive oil, pomegranate molasses and fresh parsley

INSTRUCTIONS

- 01 Add ingredients to a food processor.** Add the red peppers, walnuts, breadcrumbs, garlic, tomato paste, olive oil, pomegranate molasses, lemon juice, sumac, chili flakes and a pinch of salt and pepper.
- 02 Process, adjust and serve.** Process until you have a fine consistency. You still want to have some bite to this dip, so don't turn it into a puree. Taste and adjust the seasoning to your liking. Transfer to a serving plate and garnish with crushed walnuts, a drizzle of olive oil, pomegranate molasses, and fresh parsley. Serve with fresh pita bread or pita wedges.

Note. Aleppo pepper flakes are ideal and are an ode to this Syrian recipe. But if you don't have Aleppo chili flakes, you can use any red pepper flakes you have on hand.



Prep Time

15 minutes



Rise Time

1 hour



Cook Time

15 minutes



Servings

8



Total Time

1 hr 30 mins

Greek Pita Bread

INGREDIENTS

1 cup warm water (240 grams)

2 ¼ tsp instant yeast (one packet/7 grams)

1 tsp sugar (4 grams)

2 tbsp olive oil (30 ml)

2 ¾ cups all-purpose flour (380 grams)

1 tsp kosher salt (5 grams)

INSTRUCTIONS

- 01 Mix the dough:** In a large bowl, combine the water, yeast, sugar and olive oil. Whisk to dissolve the yeast. Then add the flour and salt. Mix well until a shaggy dough forms.
- 02 Knead the dough.** Transfer the shaggy dough to a counter and knead until the dough comes together. It should be supple and soft. Avoid adding any extra flour to the counter. Place the dough ball in an oiled bowl, cover with a towel.
- 03 Rise.** Let the dough rise for an hour. It should double in size.
- 04 Divide and shape.** Divide the dough into 8 equal portions. You can guesstimate or use a kitchen scale to get precise portions. Shape each piece into a tight ball and let the dough rest for 5 minutes.
- 05 Roll out.** Using a rolling pin, roll out each dough ball into a 5-6 inch wide disc. They should be about ¼ inch thick.
- 06 Second rise.** Place the rolled-out pitas on a floured towel and cover with another towel. Let the dough discs rise for 15 minutes before you cook them.
- 07 Cook.** Place a cast iron pan, skillet or comal on your stove and heat on medium-high. In one swift move, place an uncooked pita disc on the hot pan. You should start seeing bubbles form on the surface of the dough. After about 20-30 seconds flip the pita over and cook on the other side for another 20-30 seconds. An air picket may form inside the pita and it will puff up. This doesn't always happen so don't worry too much if it doesn't. Keep an eye on the heat, you may need to turn it up if there's little to no browning. The pitas should be golden brown on both sides. Feel free to flip them over again to get an even coloring.



Prep Time
30 minutes



Servings
6



Total Time
30 minutes

Authentic Lebanese Tabbouleh Salad

INGREDIENTS

- ¼ cup bulgur wheat, fine or extra fine
- ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
- 3 tbsp lemon juice
- 2 cups parsley, finely minced, about 2 bunches, thick stems discarded
- ¼ cup mint, finely minced (about ½ bunch, stems discarded)
- 2 tomatoes, finely diced
- 4 green onions, finely diced
- Kosher salt and fresh cracked pepper to taste
- Romaine hearts for serving

INSTRUCTIONS

- 01 **Soak.** In a small bowl or measuring cup add the bulgur and enough boiling water to cover it by an inch. Set aside for 30 minutes for the bulgur to soak and plump.
- 02 **Prep and toss.** In a large bowl, combine the olive oil, lemon juice, minced parsley, mint, diced tomatoes, scallions, a big pinch of salt and a few grinds of black pepper. Toss lightly to combine.
- 03 **Drain.** Taste the bulgur. It should be soft. If not, repeat the soaking in boiling water step (or simply boil it in water on the stove in a small pot until tender - see note below). Using a small colander, drain the bulgur, squeeze as much water as you can, and add it to the rest of the salad.
- 04 **Mix and serve.** Toss, taste, and adjust the seasoning. Serve the tabbouleh immediately, or ideally, allow it to rest in the refrigerator for 1 hour so the flavors can blend. Serve with romaine lettuce leaves.

Note. Cooking bulgur can be tricky because there are different grades available meaning some will plump up by soaking in hot water while others may need to be boiled in a pot on the stove. When in doubt, follow the cooking directions on the package to be safe.



Prep Time
15 minutes



Cook Time
25 minutes



Servings
4



Total Time
45 minutes

Greek Meatballs (Kefteedes)

INGREDIENTS

- 1 ½ lbs ground beef (lean)
- 1 large onion, grated
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- ½ cup breadcrumbs
- 1 egg
- 1 ½ tbsp dried oregano
- 2 tbsp fresh parsley, finely chopped
- 1 ½ tsp kosher salt
- ¼ tsp black pepper
- 1 tsp chili flakes, optional
- Fresh dill, mint and lemon wedges for garnish

INSTRUCTIONS

- 01 Prep the ingredients.** Add the ground beef, onion, garlic, breadcrumbs, egg, oregano, parsley, salt, pepper and chili flakes to a large mixing bowl.
- 02 Mix well.** Mix everything together thoroughly by hand until well combined. To check seasoning, fry a small piece of the mixture and adjust salt and pepper if needed.
- 03 Make meatballs.** Form the meatballs by hand, using an ice cream scoop or spoon to keep them uniform in size. Roll them in your hand and place them on a parchment paper-lined rimmed baking sheet. This recipe will make 12 large, 18 medium or 24 small bite-sized meatballs. So portion the mixture accordingly.
- 04 Bake.** Arrange the meatballs on a baking sheet and bake at 375F/190C for 18-24 minutes. The cooking time will depend on the size of your meatballs. Always check that the internal temperature reaches a safe 160F/71C. They should be nice and golden brown.
- 05 Serve.** Serve warm and garnish with fresh mint, fresh dill and a squeeze of fresh lemon juice.



Prep Time
20 minutes



Rise Time
1 hour



Cook Time
10 minutes



Servings
12



Total Time
1 hr 30 mins

Spinach Fatayer (Savory Hand Pies)

INGREDIENTS

For the dough

- 3 cups all-purpose flour (420 grams)
- 2 ¼ tsp instant yeast (7 grams)
- 1 tbsp sugar (12.5 grams)
- 1 tsp kosher salt (5 grams)
- ½ cup water, warmed (120 grams)
- ½ cup milk, warmed (120 grams)
- ¼ cup olive oil (53 grams)

Spinach filling

- 2 tbsp olive oil (30 ml)
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 16 ounces fresh spinach (Bagged spinach typically comes in 8 oz bags. You will need 2 bags)
- 1 lemon juiced
- 2 tbsp sumac
- ½ tsp baharat spice blend (optional, you can use equal parts cinnamon, cumin and coriander spice)
- Salt and black pepper to taste

Garnish

- 1 egg, beaten

INSTRUCTIONS

- 01 **Mix.** In the bowl of a stand mixer, add the flour, yeast, sugar and salt and mix to combine. Add the warm water, warm milk and olive oil. Run the stand mixer with the dough hook until a ball of dough forms, about 5-7 minutes. If you find the dough is sticking to the sides, add more flour, one tablespoon at a time.
- 02 **Rise.** Rub the dough ball lightly with oil on all sides and let it rise, covered with a tea towel, in the bowl of the stand mixer for 1 hour in a warm place.
- 03 **Spinach filling.** While the dough rises, prepare the spinach mixture. To a pan set on medium heat, add 2 tbsp olive oil and the diced onions. Sauté for 2 minutes until translucent. Add the cleaned spinach in batches and wilt it down. Continue cooking until all the liquid has evaporated, 5-8 minutes. Add the spices and lemon juice. Season with salt and pepper to taste. It should be slightly sour. Set aside to cool.
- 04 **Divide and shape.** After the bread dough has risen to about double its original size, divide it into 12 pieces (for standard size) or 18 pieces (for minis). Use a kitchen scale here if you want your fatayer to be evenly sized. Shape each piece of dough into a tight ball and rest them on your kitchen counter for 10 minutes, covered, so that the gluten can relax.
- 05 **Flatten.** Preheat your oven to 400F/205C. Using a rolling pin. Flatten the dough balls into ¼ inch thick circles. Place the dough circles in one layer on a parchment lined baking sheet. You may need to do this in multiple steps or use multiple baking sheets. Flip them sticky side up for the next step.
- 06 **Fill and shape.** Add 1-2 tbsp of the spinach mixture to the centre of the dough circle. Pinch the dough disk to seal it to the middle and then bring the other side of the disk to the centre to form a pyramid or triangular shape. Pinch the seams well so that they don't open while baking. Brush the pastry with a beaten egg.
- 07 **Bake.** Bake in a preheated oven for 10-12 minutes or until the dough is golden brown. You may need to adjust the time and/or temperature to avoid burning. Serve warm.



Prep Time

15 minutes



Cook Time

15 minutes



Servings

3



Total Time

30 minutes



Arayes (Meat Stuffed Pitas)

INGREDIENTS

- 1 medium white onion, roughly chopped
- ¼ cup fresh parsley
- 1 ½ lbs extra lean ground beef (you can use ground lamb or chicken too)
- 1 tbsp baharat (7 spice) or 1 tsp cumin, 1 tsp coriander, 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp garlic powder (use more if you like garlic)
- 1 tsp sumac
- Salt and black pepper (start with 1 tsp salt and ¼ tsp pepper. You may need more)
- 3-4 thin pita breads
- Olive oil for brushing

INSTRUCTIONS

- 01 Process.** In a small food processor, pulse the chopped onion and parsley until fine.
- 02 Mix.** In a large mixing bowl, combine the ground beef, onion and parsley mixture, sumac, baharat/7 spice, garlic powder, salt and pepper. Mix really well. I encourage you to fry up a small tablespoon of the mixture and taste for seasoning. Adjust if necessary.
- 03 Prepare pita.** Cut your pita breads in half and very carefully open them up. You can use your fingers to open them up or a butter knife. Make sure the pocket remains intact.
- 04 Scoop.** Using an ice cream scoop, scoop out 2 portions of the ground beef mixture into each pita pocket.
- 05 Spread.** Using a butter knife, spread the meat filling evenly and all the way around.
- 06 Cooking Method 1: Grill.** Lightly oil the stuffed pita halves and grill them on both sides in a grill pan or cast iron skillet set on medium-high heat until the meat is cooked through and you have nice grill marks on the bread, about 4-5 minutes on each side.
- 07 Cooking Method 2: Bake or Air Fry.** Preheat your oven to 375F/190C. Lightly oil the stuffed pita halves and place them on a parchment paper lined baking sheet. Bake until cooked through, about 12-15 minutes.



Prep Time

15 minutes



Pickling Time

4 Days



Servings

15



Total Time

4 Days 15 mins

Levantine Pickled Cauliflower

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup water (hot)
- 1 cup white vinegar
- 1 tbsp kosher salt, pickling salt or sea salt
- 1 tbsp white sugar
- 1-2 cloves of garlic, peeled
- 1 lb cauliflower (cleaned and cut into bite sized florets, about 1 small head or ½ a large head)
- 1 small beetroot (peeled and cut into rings)

INSTRUCTIONS

- 01 Prepare the pickling liquid.** In a large measuring cup, add the hot water, vinegar, salt and sugar. Using a whisk, stir well to dissolve. The warm solution should help dissolve the salt and sugar quickly, but if not, keep whisking. Eventually, they will dissolve.
- 02 Pack the jars.** To a clean 1 qt/1L mason jar, add the garlic and beetroot slices. Pack the jar down with cauliflower florets. Make sure to pack down as much as possible without crushing.
- 03 Add the brine.** Carefully pour the pickling solution into the prepared jar. Tap the jar a few times to release any air bubbles. Make sure the brine is covering the vegetables all the way with about ¼ inch clearance from the top of the jar. Cover with a tight-fitting lid.
- 04 Pickle.** Place the jar in the refrigerator to pickle for 4-5 days. The brine will turn a vibrant pink color. Enjoy!

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Thank you

I hope these mezze recipes are
enjoyed by family and friends!

- Luay -



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