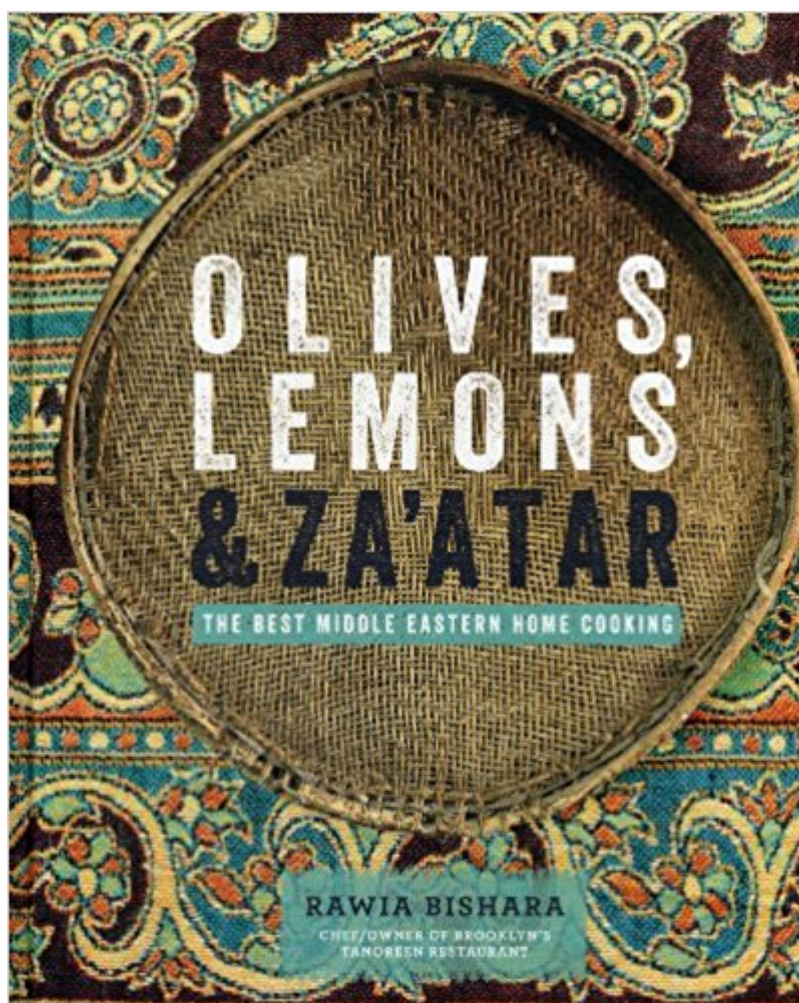


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Olives, Lemons & Za'atar: The Best Middle Eastern Home Cooking



Synopsis

Rawia, in Arabic, means storyteller. And that is what I am. I tell the stories of my life's journey, culture, and family through my cooking. A delicious meal is the greatest companion to the memories we cherish most. I was born into a food-loving Palestinian-Arab family in Nazareth, a beautiful town in the southern Galilee. Though the words "organic," "locavore," and "sustainable" were unknown then, my parents' approach qualified on all counts. My respect for the sources of food, how it is grown and prepared, originates in my early years at home. My grandmother had ceramic urns filled with fruity olive oil, pressed from the trees on her family's land picked by my aunts and uncles. My mother, too, made her own olive oil, and used the remaining "crude" oil to make soap; she also distilled her own vinegar, sun-dried her own herbs and fruits, made fresh batches of goat cheese, as well as sweet wine from our vineyards, and jarred jewel-colored jams from the bounty of the local orchards. After moving to New York, I opened my restaurant Tanoreen to honor my mother and her imaginative cooking as well as the rich Middle Eastern gastronomic culture that is rarely experienced outside the region. Tanoreen is unique because it showcases Middle Eastern home cooking as I experienced it growing up. The 135 recipes in this book celebrate tradition and embrace change. I cook without rigidly following recipes, though I do respect tradition. My dishes are based on our culture's recipes that are flexible enough to accommodate both adventurous and conservative contemporary palates. Organized by Breakfasts, Mezze, Salads, Soups and Stews, Main Courses (including vegetarian, fish, chicken, lamb and beef), Sides, Pickles and Sauces, and Desserts, in each chapter I maintain the authenticity of a dish, re-creating it as it has been made for generations; but sometimes I might opt to experiment a bit, to make the recipe more contemporary, perhaps adding a spice or offering a few shortcuts. My favorite examples of these are my preparation of Brussels Sprouts with Panko (and tahini), Spice Rubbed Braised Lamb Shank (marinated in ginger and rose buds), Tanoreen Kafta Roll, (a reconstructed classic) or Eggplant Napoleon (baba ghanouge layered between crisp eggplant and topped with basil and tomatoes). A dish like Egyptian Rice with Lamb and Pine Nuts shows this cookbook goes beyond Nazareth, and is more of a bible of Middle Eastern food, sharing my culinary journey from Nazareth to New York, with many stops in between.

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Customer Reviews

Bishara's cooking combines Middle Eastern techniques with Mediterranean flavors. But she takes cues from other cuisines, too. An eggplant napoleon is an ode to its principal ingredient, as well as an inspired marriage of textures: layers of feathery fried eggplant rest daintily between smears of baba ghanoush. Musakhan—flatbread topped with sumac-spiced chicken, slow-cooked onions, and almond slivers piled high, and sliced like a pizza—is a near-perfect harmony of sweetness and pungency. (Katherine Stirling, *Tables for Two* The New Yorker, 7/5/2010)Ms.

Bishara's translation of Middle Eastern cooking has Mediterranean accents, and occasional North American ones from her decades in the United States. And so the tang of cilantro enlivens some of her dishes, and the musk of basil, the welcome zing of jalapeño. (Sam Sifton, *Tanoreen* The New York Times, 2/23/2010)A strong contender for "Favorite Cookbook of the Season" is Brooklyn Chef Rawia Bishara's *Olives, Lemons & Za'atar: The Best Middle Eastern Home Cooking*. Her Bay Ridge restaurant, Tanoreen, has been recognized by critics and media alike as one of the best Middle Eastern restaurants in New York. Update your "must-visit" list and make these vegetarian stuffed eggplants, potatoes, tomatoes and squash for a memorable Meatless Monday. (Food Republic, 2/10/2014)It's no big surprise that we've been drooling over the pages of Rawia Bishara's beautiful new cookbook *Olives, Lemons and Za'atar*. Taking inspiration from her cosmopolitan childhood growing up in New York and holidaying in the Med, Rawia has created a book full of cross-cultural cooking. With chapters dedicated to breakfast, mezze, salads, soups and stews, main courses, sides, pickles and sauces and desserts you're guaranteed to find something to satisfy your spice craving. For a fresh but filling salad the classic tabbouleh is a must try, packed with fragrant parsley and sweet plum tomatoes, no mezze would be complete without it! Or for the ultimate winter warmer the spiced lamb shanks are perfect. Tender slow cooked meat in a richly spiced sauce, all that's needed is

a crispy warmed flatbread and you have the ultimate comfort food. (Grace Parry Eat. Travel. Live) This is the first cookbook from Rawia Bishara, whose Brooklyn restaurant Tanoreen serves what she refers to as Middle Eastern home cooking. The book will focus on Bishara's personal experience with Middle Eastern food growing up in Nazareth, as well as food from across the region. As she calls it, it will be 'a bible of Middle Eastern food.' (Paula Forbes Eater.com, 1/16/2014) Olives, Lemons and Za'atar [is] the story of how the food of a Nazareth childhood became destination cuisine. [Rawia Bishara's] food has been called 'narcotic,' but now there's relief for some of the far-flung junkies. (Katherine Lanpher Aljazeera America, 2/14/2014) For 16 years, Bishara—whose first name means 'storyteller' in Arabic—has been telling stories through the recipes she serves up at her popular Bay Ridge restaurant, Tanoreen. Now, Bishara is really living up to her name by putting those dishes down on paper, with her debut cookbook, *Olives, Lemons & Za'atar*. The book, which Bishara will sign at the BookMark Shoppe on March 4, is comprised of 135 recipes that celebrate her Middle Eastern roots, while also spicing up some old favorites. For Bishara, creating dishes that are delicious is more important than being entirely authentic. A staple in Bay Ridge since 1998, Tanoreen's menu is inspired by the food that Bishara, a Palestinian, experienced growing up in Nazareth in northern Israel. Fans of the eatery will find many of their favorite dishes in *Olives, Lemons & Za'atar*—such as Bishara's knafeh, her take on a sweet cheese-filled pastry, which was featured on the Food Network show "The Best Thing I Ever Ate." But Bishara also concocted many new recipes just for the cookbook. (Sarah Iannone Brooklyn Daily, 3/3/2014) Why It's Worthy: 'Originally when I first came [to this country], everyone had the idea that Middle Eastern food was all about hummus and falafel and shish kebab,' Bishara told us. 'People did not know that we really have a healthy, fantastic kitchen.' Even the book's most impressive-looking dishes are relatively easy to execute, she stressed. 'People are always afraid to try and cook new things; it's really much easier than they think,' Bishara said. You won't have to run here, there and everywhere in search of exotic ingredients, either; Bishara said you can find them at any good-sized supermarket. (Rachel Tepper, One for the Library: "Olives, Lemons & Za'atar" Yahoo Food, 2/28/2014) These recipes from the cookbook *Olives, Lemons and Za'atar* by Rawia Bishara, owner and chef at Tanoreen, showcase the unique flavor of Middle Eastern cuisine. (Reader's Digest) Bishara's book looks at the foods of her native Nazareth as well as the amped-up riffs that she serves at Tanoreen. Time and again throughout the book, she mentions adding more spice, more herbs, more flavor to a dish than her mother would have. Similarly,

vegetarian options are given for many recipes. On a Cauliflower and Lamb Stew, for example, Bishara notes the recipe 'doesn't rely on its meat for its flavor; simply use vegetable broth, omit the meat and enjoy it just the same, ladled over fragrant basmati rice.' (Paula Forbes Eater.com National, 2/18/2014) Olives, Lemons & Za'atar: The Best Middle Eastern Home Cooking was released last week. It's filled with more than 100 recipes for soups, salads, breakfast dishes, main courses, sides and desserts. While the recipes reflect traditional preparations that Bishara learned cooking with her family in Israel, there are also contemporary flourishes and influences from other cultures, such as the tagine djaj (chicken tagine), a popular Moroccan dish, and salmon in pesto, which Bishara started cooking when she arrived in the U.S. Bishara's book isn't just a compendium of recipes—it's also a personal scrapbook of sorts, with reminiscences of her Palestinian upbringing in the town of Nazareth in northern Israel. (David Chiu Brooklyn Based, 2/17/2014) The record-breaking cold has turned you into one hungry s.o.b. But your recipe rotation (chili, lasagna) is weighing you down—literally. Ditch the usual winter suspects and warm up with a Middle Eastern classic from Nazareth native Rawia Bishara's (of Brooklyn's beloved Tanoreen) debut cookbook, Olives, Lemons & Za'atar. (Meghan Rooney, A Fried Tomato Recipe to Warm You Up: A hot Middle Eastern classic Daily Candy, 2/24/2014) In Olives, Lemons & Za'atar, Rawia Bishara takes you on a culinary journey from Nazareth to New York, with dishes that honor and expand on her mother's unique approach to Middle Eastern home cooking. (Table Matters, 2/28/2014) I have long been a fan of Tanoreen, Rawia Bishara's Palestinian restaurant tucked away in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, where her inventive mezze, like fried Brussels sprouts drizzled with fresh tahini and pomegranate seeds and eggplant napoleons slathered in babaganoush cream, make the forty-five minute trek from Manhattan well worthwhile. So, I was thrilled when I finally got my hands on her cookbook, and the secrets behind the delectable dishes I'd eaten at her restaurant. The recipes for my favorites turned out to be shockingly easy, 5-ingredient affairs, and as I flipped through the pages of mouthwatering photographs and lovely asides about local culinary folklore and her own food memories, I also discovered simplified recipes for many Palestinian classics. For example, her recipe for Musakhan, a complicated festival dish of sumac-rubbed roast chicken served on rounds of fresh-baked taboon bread, is transformed from weekend project to weeknight meal with a simple pizza-like flatbread recipe and smart substitutions like quick sautéed boneless chicken breast. Bishara's modern, approachable take on classic Palestinian food makes Olives, Lemons, & Za'atar a book I'm glad to have on my shelf as a source for doable, exciting dishes and tried and true favorites that I will be reaching

for again and again. (Felicia Campbell, Books Worth Buying: February and March's Best Food and Drink Releases *Saveur*, 3/6/2014) I know it sounds over the top to say a recipe was life-changing, but Eggs with Za'atar? Life-changing. You see, I often find eggs totally unappetizing yet force myself to eat them because they give me energy. Choking down eggs is not fun and I've really been struggling with breakfast lately. But as soon as I tasted these eggs, I wanted seconds. I think about them all the time! The recipe is basically eggs in a basket topped with savory za'atar and tangy sumac – so simple yet so flavorful. Eggs with Za'atar captures what I like most about the cookbook: the easy ways that everyday, home-cooked ingredients can be transformed with a sprinkle of herbs, spices, and Middle Eastern condiments. Roasted cauliflower is dressed up with tahini and pomegranate molasses. Sautéed kale gets an aromatic hit of coriander and cumin. Boiled beets become exciting with pesto and fresh herbs. Za'atar, sumac, pomegranate molasses – these are things I already had in my pantry and it was fun to discover new ways to use them. With its focus on home cooking, the scope of this book goes much deeper than typical Middle Eastern restaurant fare in the US. I really appreciated Bishara's approach, which is not rigidly authentic but rather defined by creative flourishes. The recipes in her book honor tradition while keeping things fresh. As a result *Olives, Lemons & Za'atar* may be useful to a range of cooks who are more or less familiar with Middle Eastern cuisine, looking for classics as well as new inspiration. (TheKitchn.com, 3/10/2014) I've been to Tanoreen just once, but *Olives, Lemons and Za'atar* makes me want to run right back. In all honesty, it's worth buying this book just for the chapter on breakfast. Could there be any more perfect way to start the day than eggs with za'atar, the addictive Middle Eastern blend of wild thyme, oregano, sesame seeds and tart sumac? Maybe tahini yogurt with cumin-spiced chickpeas and flatbread, also in the chapter, tops it. And then there's the mezze chapter with its flurry of dips, savory breads and a pickly things. What I love about Bishara's approach is that it's not at all dogmatic – she's a joyful and intuitive cook. For example, she shares her mother's recipe for a hummus without tahini, which could seem like downright blasphemy to some, but to her, it's a nice lighter, brighter alternative. She also encourages readers to experiment with seasoning, admitting she likes a lot of lemon while someone else might want more, say, nutmeg. (Kristin Donnelly Food & Wine, 3/4/2014) And who were we watching as the guest chef? Rawia Bishara. And why? Because last month she published *Olives, Lemons, & Za'atar*, her celebration of the spectrum of recipes that distinguish Tanoreen. This is Middle Eastern food elevated to a level you probably not have experienced. But you should. And, because the genesis of this food was Rawia watching her mother in the home kitchen, this is home

food, the daily food of a food-loving culture. So, these marvelous dishes are certainly attainable by you. (Cooking by the Book, 3/28/2014) Every time I go to Tanoreen, my vegetarianism flies out the window. My favorite item on the menu is the lamb-stuffed baby squash. The dish is elaborately flavored—the yogurt is sour, the spices sweet, the lamb gamy and the squash earthy. This interplay of flavors is found throughout Bishara's menu, and also in her new cookbook, *Olives, Lemons & Za'atar*, published this spring. The tome is as colorful as the cuisine it depicts, with photos of the Nazareth hillsides, family picnics and open-air markets. Under the heading, "The Pantry" is a list of ingredients—pomegranate molasses, bulgur, mastic sumac and many others—essential for concocting the dozens of breakfast dishes, mezzes, salads, soups, stews, mains, pickles, sauces and desserts found inside the book. (Naomi Zeveloff *The Jewish Daily Forward*, 4/13/2014) *Olives, Lemons & Za'atar: The Best Middle Eastern Home Cooking*, by Rawia Bishara (Kyle Books, \$29.95): The chef-owner of Brooklyn's Tanoreen shares traditional recipes from her childhood in Nazareth and her updated classics, including fried Brussels sprouts topped with crispy panko and doused with tahini. The cookbook is very friendly to vegetarians and the gluten-sensitive; her flourless tangerine-apricot cake, made with ground almonds and pistachios, is not to be missed. (Vicki Hyman, *Best spring 2014 cookbooks: From Nazareth to rural Mississippi and beyond* *NJ.com*, 4/23/2014) When Tanoreen, one of New York's best and longest-running Middle Eastern restaurants, opened in 1998 in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, none of Rawia Bishara's customers had heard of za'atar or dukkah; cumin was still exotic. Ms. Bishara's new book, *Olives, Lemons and Za'atar*, charts the evolution of her cooking from strictly traditional to personal. (Julia Moskin *The New York Times*, 4/29/2014) We were at DeGustibus, the cooking school at Macy's, listening to Rawia Bishara discuss her new book *Olives, Lemon & Za'atar*. She went to the core philosophy of cooking, her book, and her immensely satisfying Brooklyn restaurant Tanoreen. "Use what you have. Fresh. Today fresh," she repeated throughout her demo. (Cooking by the Book, 4/7/2014) No, it's not pate like you'll find in Paris. But it surely has the vibrant quality of a signature dish. This Eggplant Pate, from *Olives, Lemons & Za'atar* by Rawia Bishara, seeks to inundate you with layers of texture and flavor. This can be an appetizer with wine before your meal, the salad, a side dish. Or you load up the plate and enjoy this as the main course. (Cooking by the Book, 4/10/2014) The recipe below, from the newly released cookbook *Olives, Lemons & Za'atar* by Rawia Bishara of Brooklyn's acclaimed Tanoreen, is an authentic reflection of traditional Middle Eastern versions. (Shannon McCook, *The Perfect Summer Peach* *Muffin Parade.com*,

4/7/2014)...it's a book filled with recipes that feel both modern and traditional, an elevated but still accessible take on a rural cuisine. Rawia does not treat her family's cooking style rigidly, but rather lets it grow and evolve based on inspiration from her travels throughout Europe and her years in New York. Many of the resulting recipes are loaded with summer produce, which feels a little bit like torture right now, but is also filling me with inspiration for what to do with all those eggplants and peppers we'll have come August. I especially can't wait to try the Eggplant Napoleon, a stack of fried, pesto-marinated eggplant slices served with a slather of baba ghanouj, fresh tomatoes, and more pesto. I'm also drawn toward the big family dinner and feast dishes that she shares • big platters of meat and grains and vegetables, all heavily spiced and sauced • they feel festive and complete and make me want to gather friends around my table more often. The bright flavors that Rawia presents are echoed heavily in the book's clean design and photography • the pictures in the book are wonderfully colorful and energetic, immediately transporting me to a warmer climate where food and color are abundant. It's a book filled with light, flavor and summertime, for sure. (Katie at the Kitchen Door, 4/5/2014)I make my career talking about amazing Brooklyn-based restaurants and food folks, so I have total respect for people like Tom Mylan and Rawia Bishara. (Sarah Zorn, former Brooklyn Paper scribe; author of The Brooklyn Chef's Table The Brooklyn Paper, 4/21/2014)Her roots and experience make it easy for home cooks to navigate. It's well written and filled with stories of her childhood, one in which her mother made her own goat cheese, distilled vinegar, dried herbs and made olive oil and then used the crude remains for soap. There is much in this book for the vegetarian to adore. There's falafel and all the favorite mezze dishes from hummus to baba ghanouj; salads including tabouleh, as well as veggie stews; homey egg dishes; and an amazing array of sauces that will keep cooking interesting. Peter Cassidy's beautiful photographs in Nazareth and of the food are worthy of note. (Gail Ciampa, Journal Food Editor Providence Journal, 4/28/2014)Her first cookbook, Olives, Lemons & Zatar: The Best Middle Eastern Home Cooking (Kyle), builds on childhood experiences subsequently cultivated with those of her new home in New York City. It covers all the bases, from breakfast to dessert, and shows a chef who keeps an eye on her heritage and yet is unafraid to experiment with new recipes and shortcuts. Readers will find dependable instructions for such stalwarts as hummus, baba ghanouj, tabbouleh, fattoush and coconut semolina cake. Bishara also shares various lamb dishes, eggplant salad and new recipes, including Brussels sprouts with panko and tahini, and lamb shank marinated in herbs and rose buds. (Tom Witom Suburban Life Papers, 5/15/2014)Everything about Ms. Bishara's evocative new book made me want to run to the kitchen or get on a plane and wander

in the Old City. Instead, my family and I hopped in our car and drove to Ms. Bishara's acclaimed restaurant, Tanoreen, located in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn. All praise bestowed upon it by my colleagues rang true about the excellent, sometimes transcendent, food Ms. Bishara serves. (Rozanne Gold Huffington Post, 6/15/2014) Rawia Bishara's new cookbook, *Olives, Lemons & Za'atar*, keeps the family in mind. Like so many home cooks I know, it's clear through Bishara's stories and recipes that her food comes from a place of love for feeding family. Though the finished dishes are foreign and exotic, they ring with notes of familiarity. She builds flavors using ingredients you already know and love (and probably already have in your pantry) as the foundation, then dresses them with a Middle Eastern finish you can't resist. Maybe that's the elegance of well-written international cuisine: At the root of every dish you can find something fairly familiar. Eggplant, an American farmers-market favorite, takes on new life in Eggplant Salad, Eggplant Napoleon and Stuffed Eggplant in Tomato Sauce. Chickpeas prove they're good for more than just making hummus. Try them in her Chickpea and Fava Bean Breakfast. Though, if we're being fair, Bishara's hummus recipes are exquisite as well. She gives readers recipes for everything from stocks and sauces to the larger dishes you'll use them in, like the vibrant and fresh Lamb and Vegetable Soup. Ease yourself into Middle Eastern food slowly, with a recipe that feels familiar to you and your family, then build your repertoire from there. Give the Brussels Sprouts with Panko (below) a try to begin, and watch your culinary world open right up. (Mallory Viscardi, *Olives, Lemons & Za'atar*, Off the Shelf Food Network Blog, 7/18/2014) The book is full of creative recipes, including untraditional dishes like Brussels sprouts with tahini and fried panko crumbs, kale with shallots and tomatoes, and a sumac-scented chicken "pizza." (Faith Bahadurian The Princeton Packet, 7/11/2014) In *Olives, Lemons & Za'atar: The Best Middle Eastern Home Cooking*, published this spring, Bishara channels the taste memories of her childhood in Nazareth, all olive trees and homemade jams, big celebrations and bright flavors. These experiences unfold into the dishes she cooks at Tanoreen today, both traditional (hummus, stuffed grape leaves) and new (fried Brussels sprouts with panko), which she has translated for the home cook. (Marian Bull, Behind the Book: *Olives, Lemons & Za'atar* Cherry Bombe, Issue No. 3) "A food business needs love and care," says Rawia Bishara, chef and co-owner of Tanoreen, a popular Middle Eastern restaurant in Brooklyn. "I don't think anything is harder than this if you're doing it like you're supposed to • with love." Bishara, 59, would know, she opened her restaurant in 1998, and her cooking continues to draw praise from food critics. Earlier this year she published a cookbook collecting Palestinian recipes from her childhood in Nazareth. (Rawia Bishara

and Ousila Rafai: Serving Up a Labor of Love Feet in 2 Worlds, 9/5/2014)Olives, Lemons & Za'atar is a gorgeous book - I fell in love with when it was first released. I have tagged many recipes to try out. The first recipe I made was the shrimp in garlic sauce and it was outstanding, served with some toasted sourdough bread -- perfection. (Jenny Hartin Mad Rantings of Andrew's Mom, 9/15/2014)The Best Food Books of 2014 - More Mediterranean cooking you'll want to use, particularly if you're one of Yotam Ottolenghi's Jerusalem and Plenty adherents (and who isn't), is Olives, Lemons & Za'atar: The Best Middle Eastern Home Cooking by Rawia Bishara, the chef-owner of Tanoreen, a Palestinian-themed cult Brooklyn restaurant. She adds spice to what her mother in Nazareth already used, so you'll use more of the sumac, thyme, rosemary, sweet and hot peppers Ottolenghi accustomed you to, and of course, and za'atar, the blend of oregano, sesame seeds, and sumac that varies cook to cook. Start with eggs and za'atar, which has already transformed many readers' breakfasts. (Corby Kummer The Atlantic, 12/13/2014)Outstanding Cookbooks of 2014 Can Change Lives - Olives, Lemons & Za'atar, by Rawia Bishara, Kyle Books, 224 pages, \$29.95 Rawia Bishara is a Palestinian Arab chef from Nazareth, Israel, who runs a Brooklyn restaurant called Tanoreen. Her place has been awarded a Michelin star despite its downmarket focus: Middle Eastern home cooking. Her recipes are relatively simple and focus on building flavor from humble ingredients. Legumes like chickpeas and lentils get plenty of play, useful for building meatless suppers. Lamb, chicken and fish are presented in both traditional and innovative forms. Israel is far away, but Bishara's cuisine, shaped in Brooklyn, uses ingredients Americans should be able to find. (Andrew Z. Galarneau The Buffalo News, 12/9/2014)

Rawia Bishara opened her restaurant Tanoreen in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn in 1998. New York Magazine has named it the best Mezze in 2003 and #1 Cheap Eats in 2006. The New York Times, Gourmet magazine, The New Yorker, The Village Voice, Travel & Leisure, Zagat Restaurant Survey, Michelin Guides, Time Out New York, The New York Post, and Food Network's "The Best Thing I Ever Ate" have all featured or positively reviewed Tanoreen. Rawia has had her recipes published in The New York Times, New York Magazine, and Plate Magazine and teaches a recurring class at DeGustibus Culinary School.

I'm familiar with food from this region and was really excited about trying out some of her recipes. The cookbook is beautiful. Unfortunately, I found problems with some of the recipes I tried. I *have* to think that this is something to do with the editing and not the real recipes because in some cases,

the instructions just seem wrong. Examples (1) The recipe for split pea soup (shorabit bazzela, page 89) says to add **15 cups of water** when the soup only contains 2 cups of dried split peas (and only 1/2 tsp salt). Even if you add 10 cups of water, you'll end up with a really watery, bland soup - not the slightly thickened soup shown in the picture. I had to reduce the liquid A LOT and add more salt to make it look and taste right. (2) Beet salad (salatet shamandar, page 69) was too oily even with half the oil added and the instructions, which say "toss to coat", will not reproduce the beautiful salad in the picture. (3) Rice and vermicelli pilaf (page 182) says to use 1 lb of vermicelli. I used 12 oz and it was too much. There is also no way that 1 lb vermicelli, 4 cups rice, and 9 cups water will fit in a "medium pot". I had to switch over to the biggest pot I have. (4) Okra with tomatoes (bamyā belzait, page 180) came out ok except I added half the lemon juice and half the oil but that's just personal taste, I suppose. (5) The hummus recipe (page 36) was good but I did add less garlic and lemon juice which is just a personal taste thing. I regularly use other people's recipes without a problem but I had to struggle with the ones in this book. If you follow the instructions exactly, you will run into some issues. I highly recommend checking it out from the library first, if you are thinking of buying it.

Brilliant, practical recipes that are delicious. For busy people who don't have the time to cook tedious, elaborate dishes (Otolenghi), these recipes allow you to create much more pragmatic and tasty fare. The book is visually beautiful, offering up intimate stories and authentic pictures of the origins of Rawia Blshara's recipes. It makes those of us from the area want to dive into our ancestral culinary background, and it makes everyone else want to embrace these lovely recipes. I can't help but gravitate to this book, time and time again, when I'm looking for inspiration.

These recipes are superb and I love the story of this woman's life which added so much to her creativity and delightful recipes.

Do not confuse me with an actual cook. I am a designer who loves food porn. And sometimes cook. After moving back to the States, I missed my Mediterranean neighborhood food in London. I will actually break down and cook with this. Or just make tons of mezés.

The author has a restaurant nearby and we love everything there so of course we had to get the cookbook. We have tried 8 recipes so far and the food is easy to make and delicious. The dishes look like you took a long time to prepare them so it is impressive to guests!

This book was great brought back very good memories of my families cooking in the Arab countries. I used some of the recipes and it was heavenly. good food and good memories

The recipes are great with no ingredients so exotic I could not purchase in a local store or order online (like on in some cases). I have enjoyed every recipe I have made and learned to use some of the spices in my own recipes as well.

beautiful book and awesome recipes

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