Introduction by LEYLA MOUSHABECK

My grandmother picking through lentils to remove stones. The tinkling jangle of her bracelets as she stirred the pot. The waft of cumin down the hallway as she opened her door to greet us. These are some of my earliest memories as a child. If you ask almost anyone for their memories of childhood, it won’t be long before they mention food.

Because we all share these kinds of memories but in endlessly different ways, these recollections were the first and brightest sparks in my own passion for seeking out connections between food and identity as well as the roles food plays everywhere—practical, emotional, political. This has led me to chefs and food writers from cultures often underrepresented in culinary landscapes. As a cookbook editor, I aim to bring new dishes to the literary table, serving up stories that make that table richer, more meaningful, more colorful, more nourishing—and more fun.

In this I got a head start from my parents. When I was 4 years old, my father, the son of Palestinian refugees, and my mother, both recently arrived in the US, founded Interlink Publishing. They instilled in me a certainty that culture—particularly literature, art, music, history and food—is the most effective instrument I have to both honor my heritage and, just as important, build connections within my country.

So, I have been thrilled to help AramcoWorld since 2018 highlight recipes and stories of the Arab and Islamic world through its “Flavors” section, selecting from some of the dozens of cookbooks I have had the pleasure of editing. We began with recipes from The Immigrant Cookbook: Recipes That Make America Great (2018), which celebrates the innovation of chefs from around the world within a food industry that relies on immigrants for its workforce as much as it does for new ideas. Like their creators, this book’s recipes are vibrant, varied and resilient, as regional flavors mingle with local ones and adapt to tell a story as old as its first ingredients and as new as the person who makes the recipe next—maybe you.

We also have chosen several from Joudie Kalla’s Baladi Palestine: A Celebration of Food From Land and Sea (2019), her ode to family, food traditions and homeland. Until very recently, it was one of a handful of Palestinian cookbooks available globally. From the other

The experience of food, and its preparation, is our common cultural touchstone.

PATTERNS of MOON
PATTERNS of SUN

Written by PAUL LUNDE

THE HIJRI CALENDAR

In 638 ce, six years after the death of the Prophet Muhammad, Islam’s second caliph, ‘Umar, recognized the necessity of a calendar to govern the affairs of Muslims. This was first of all a practical matter. Correspondence with military and civilian officials in the newly conquered lands required dating. Pre-Islamic Arab customs identified years after the occurrence of major events. But Persia used a different calendar from Syria, where the caliphate was later based; Egypt used yet another. Each of these calendars had a different starting point, or epoch. The Sassanids, the ruling dynasty of Persia, used the date of the accession of the last Sasanid monarch, Yazdagird III, June 16, 632 ce. Syria, which until the Muslim conquest was part of the Byzantine Empire, used a form of the Roman “Julian” calendar, with an epoch of October 1, 312 bce. Egypt used the Coptic calendar, with an epoch of August 29, 284 ce. Although all were solar calendars, and hence geared to the seasons and containing 365 days, each also had a different system for periodically adding days to compensate for the fact that the true length of the solar year is not 365 but 365.2422 days.

In pre-Islamic Arabia, various other systems of measuring time had been used. In South Arabia some calendars apparently were lunar, while others were lunisolar, using months based on the phases of the moon but intercalating days outside the lunar cycle to synchronize the calendar with the seasons. On the eve of Islam, the Himyarites appear to have used a calendar based on the Julian form, but with an epoch of 110 bce. In central Arabia the course of the year was charted by the position of the stars relative to the horizon at sunset or sunrise, dividing the ecliptic into 28 equal parts corresponding to the location of the moon on each successive night of the month. The names of the months in that calendar have continued in the Islamic calendar to this day and would seem to indicate that before Islam some sort of lunisolar calendar was in use, though it is not known to have had an epoch other than memorable local events.

There were two other reasons ‘Umar rejected existing solar calendars. The Qur’an, in Chapter 10, Verse 5, states that time should be reckoned by the moon. Not only that, calendars used by the Persians, Syrians and Egyptians were identified with other religions and cultures. He therefore decided to create a calendar specifically for the Muslim community. It would be lunar, and it would have 12 months, each with 29 or 30 days.

This gives the lunar year 354 days, 11 days fewer than the solar year. ‘Umar chose as the epoch for the new Muslim calendar the Hijra, the emigration of the Prophet Muhammad and 70 Muslims from Makkah to Madinah, where Muslims first attained religious and political

THE COUNT (OF TIME).

IT IS HE WHO MADE THE SUN TO BE A SHINING GLORY, AND THE MOON TO BE A LIGHT (OF BEAUTY); AND MEASURED OUT STAGES FOR HER, THAT YE MIGHT KNOW THE NUMBER OF YEARS AND THE COUNT (OF TIME).

—QUR’AN 10:5
(ENGLISH BY YUSUF ALI)
Food is one of the most powerful agents of intercultural appreciation. They are. They cook and write to honor, remember, share and preserve traditions and ideas for future generations. Reading their stories side by side, you will find strands of experiences that exemplify the bonds between community and food the world over. In preparing their dishes and learning about these experiences, you can cultivate connections to other people and places. You invite them into your home, and they join your routines and traditions, which become richer for their presence, however brief.

Practically, this series of recipes—chosen for appeal to both novice and experienced cooks alike—is doubly timely. The global pandemic and shaky economy are inspiring renewed considerations of what is often romanticized as a more “traditional” approach to food: adapting dishes to available ingredients; cooking from scratch; resourcefully limiting food waste; and, most of all, cooking and eating at home. With this comes a deepening awareness of our roles and impacts—starting with the food we purchase, unwrap, peel, slice, chop, fry, boil, bake, serve and, finally, tell stories about. And it’s these stories that keep traditions alive, told now amid sweeping reassessments of how food is reported in books, magazines and online, and who is (and who is not) given a platform to represent it.

Like opening a book—or turning the page of a calendar to a new month—sharing a meal is a beginning. I welcome you to start sampling these delicious recipes.

LEYLA MOUSHABECK is Interlink Publishing’s cookbook editor and author/editor of the award-winning The Immigrant Cookbook: Recipes that Make America Great (2018). She lives with her Colombian husband in Brooklyn, where their two young children share a passion for peanut butter sandwiches.

The following equations convert roughly from Gregorian to hijri and vice versa. However, the results can be slightly misleading: They tell you only the year in which the other calendar’s year begins. For example, 2021 Gregorian begins in hijri 1442 and ends in 1443.

\[
\text{GREGORIAN YEAR} = \left\lceil \frac{32 \times \text{Hijri year} + 33}{622} \right\rceil + 622
\]

\[
\text{HIJRI YEAR} = \left\lceil \frac{\text{Gregorian year} - 622}{33} \right\rceil + 32
\]

Online calculators can be found by searching “Gregorian-hijri calendar calculator” or similar terms.
### JANUARY

**JUMADA I 1442—JUMADA II**

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<td><strong>Boxer Muhammad Ali goes to Makkah on Hajj 1972</strong></td>
<td><strong>Author, poet and artist Khalil Gibran born 1883</strong></td>
<td><strong>'Abd al-'Aziz Al-Sa'ud declared King of Hijaz 1926</strong></td>
<td><strong>'Abd al-Rahman iii becomes caliph of al-Andalus 929 ce</strong></td>
<td><strong>Kaifi Azmi, Indian Urdu poet and lyricist, born 1919</strong></td>
<td><strong>Abd al-Rahman iii becomes caliph of al-Andalus 929 ce</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Cornerstone of Washington, DC, Islamic Center, laid 1949</strong></td>
<td><strong>Marrakesh Declaration protects rights of religious minorities 2016</strong></td>
<td><strong>Akhtem Baytursynov, Kazakh intellectual and writer, born 1872</strong></td>
<td><strong>Geraldine Rendel, first European woman received at Saudi royal palace, born 1885</strong></td>
<td><strong>Winter Palace hotel in Luxor, Egypt, opens 1907</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Kyrgyzstan National Playwright Mirzabek Toybaev born 1935</strong></td>
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**AFRO STEAK DINNER** I learned the power of food from my father, who used herbs and spices as medicine to help others. He first taught me the importance of using fresh ingredients and treating them with respect. This dish truly represents Somali and East African culture, using ingredients that can be found here in the US. In Somalia, goat meat is fairly common, while beef is somewhat of a delicacy because of the high value of cattle. Tasty portions of spiced beef with grilled vegetables compliment the flavor. —MOUSSA DOULAEH, from *The Immigrant Cookbook*. Photograph courtesy Ricky Rodriguez / Ricarius Photography.

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**Sultanate of Brunei proclaims independence 1983**
### FEBRUARY

**SUNDAY**

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**RECIPE**

**CHICKEN DAHIWALA**

This recipe comes from my home: My mother used to make it for us during the hot days of summer. Yogurt does wonders for cooling the body and digestion, so we always enjoyed this healthy, hearty, wholesome dish. The origin of the dish is northern Indian, but many mothers across India make it with their own spin. Yogurt is popular in the cooking of northern India, while coconut milk is more common in the southern coastal areas. I’ve used chicken, but this recipe can be made using fish or vegetables.

—RONI MAZUMDAR, from *The Immigrant Cookbook*. Photograph courtesy Roni Mazumdar.

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**NOTES:**

- Indonesian author Pramoedya Ananta born 1925
- Chagatai poet Alisher Nava’i born in Herat 1441 CE
- Malian band Tinariwen win Grammy 2012
- Mughal princess and poetess Zeb-un-nisa born 1638
- Layla Murad, Egyptian vocalist and film star, born 1918
- Istiqal Mosque opens in Jakarta, Indonesia 1978
- Traveler Ibn Battuta born in Tangier 1304 CE
- Franciscus Raphelengius, Europe’s first printer of Arabic outside Rome, born 1539
- Jambyl Jabayev, Kazakh poet, composer and singer, born 1846
KURUS WITH SPOON SALAD  
My mother made this dish a lot for my brother and me because it was inexpensive, easy to prepare and, most importantly, delicious. Growing up in southern Turkey in the city of Adana, we eat a lot of bulgur. Kurus is a very versatile dish, so we’re always searching for different ways to use it. Delicious served with yogurt and salad, and, just as well, it makes a great sandwich. Look for pomegranate molasses in Middle Eastern or specialty stores, or substitute lemon juice if you can’t find it.  
—DIDEM HOSGEL, from *The Immigrant Cookbook*. Photograph by Ricky Rodriguez / Ricarius Photography.

### MARCH

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**NOTES:**

- Baha ad-din ibn Shaddad, biographer of Saladin, born 1145 CE
- Moroccan author and artist Mohammed Mrabet born 1936
- First commercial flow of Saudi Arabian oil 1938
- Abu Dhabi and France agree to establish Louvre Abu Dhabi 2007
- Dutch settlement of Java is named Batavia 1619
- Egyptian musician Sayed Darwish born 1892
- Ottoman explorer Evliya Çelebi born 1611
- Ottoman physician of German origin, born 1840

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**RECIPE**

**KURUS WITH SPOON SALAD**

My mother made this dish a lot for my brother and me because it was inexpensive, easy to prepare and, most importantly, delicious. Growing up in southern Turkey in the city of Adana, we eat a lot of bulgur. Kurus is a very versatile dish, so we’re always searching for different ways to use it. Delicious served with yogurt and salad, and, just as well, it makes a great sandwich. Look for pomegranate molasses in Middle Eastern or specialty stores, or substitute lemon juice if you can’t find it.

—DIDEM HOSGEL, from *The Immigrant Cookbook*. Photograph by Ricky Rodriguez / Ricarius Photography.

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—DIDEM HOSGEL, from *The Immigrant Cookbook*. Photograph by Ricky Rodriguez / Ricarius Photography.
TAMIA—FALAFEL Tamia are similar to falafel. An easy Sudanese recipe for this great snack or mezze/appetizer that is probably as popular in the West as it is in the Middle East, where it originated. Serve with pita bread, salad and yogurt.
—TROTH WELLS, from One World Vegetarian Cookbook. Photograph courtesy Kam & Co. Denmark.

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—TROTH WELLS, from One World Vegetarian Cookbook. Photograph courtesy Kam & Co. Denmark.
POULET STUFFED WITH HERB-INFUSED FREEKEH

Freekeh is one of the best grains out there, quickly earning a reputation as the newest “supergrain.” Freekeh is green and nutty and has this amazing aroma when cooked. It is also replete with whole-grain sources of fiber and offers a whopping 7 grams of protein per serving. So, this freekeh-stuffed poultry dish is definitely good for you.

—Joudie Kalla, from Baladi Palestine. Photograph courtesy Jamie Orlando Smith.

### MAY

**RAMADAN—SHAWWAL**

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**MAY 2021**

First All-Russian Congress of Muslims convenes in Moscow 1917

- Mamluk Sultanate founded in Egypt 1250 CE
- Pope John Paul II visits Damascus Mosque 2001
- `Id al-Fitr 1
- ’Id al-Fitr 1
- Djerba becomes part of the Ottoman regency of Tunis 1560
- Vasco da Gama’s ships reach India from Europe 1498
- Nur Jahan begins tenure as empress consort of Gurkani empire 1611
- Sinai Trail, Egypt’s first long-distance hiking trail, opens 2017
- Thor Heyerdahl departs Morocco in papyrus boat 1970

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—Joudie Kalla, from Baladi Palestine. Photograph courtesy Jamie Orlando Smith.
WATERMELON, FETA AND RED ONION SALAD WITH MINT  The ingredients in this recipe represent everything that Palestinian people enjoy eating: fruits, cheese and onions. Onions play a perfect role here, a sharp hit against the sweetness of the watermelon and the smooth creaminess of the cheese, which is also tart. This will take about three minutes to make and will remind you of a time when you were on vacation, enjoying the sunshine.

— JOUDIE KALLA, from Baladi Palestine. Photograph courtesy Jamie Orlando Smith.
PISTACHIO, ZUCCHINI AND LEMON CAKE  I started making this cake years ago while I was running my deli. I really prefer it to carrot cake, and the green of the pistachio slivers running through it makes it both beautiful and delicious. It is lighter because it has an oil base, which keeps it fluffy and moist, rather than a crumbly butter base. The pistachios must be good quality, so please do make sure you use the best you can find.

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— Joudie Kalla, from Baladi Palestine. Photograph courtesy Jamie Orlando Smith.
KUSHARI  A simple, yet hearty vegetarian dish that is popular on the streets of Egypt. Often considered poor man's food, as it is cheap and filling, kushari (koo-shar-ee) showcases the simple flavors of Egypt, making it popular among children and world travelers alike. I always ask for it as soon as my plane lands in Egypt. The red sauce can make or break your kushari experience, yet every Egyptian makes it differently. The sauce is a delicate combination of tomato sauce, cumin, chili and garlic.  — BRENDA ABDELALL, from The Immigrant Cookbook. Photograph by Ricky Rodriguez / Ricarius Photography.
CHEESE PARCELS WITH HONEY AND ORANGE REDUCTION  
Diego and his brother Moises are third-generation tapas bar owners—catering runs through their veins. While studying for a diploma in tourism, Diego crisscrossed the entire province of Almería, in Andalusia, Spain, and as a result, there is very little he doesn’t know about local specialties. This dish combines delicious textural contrast with subtle, sweet Moorish flavors. You need to complete the final stage just minutes before eating. Add whipped cream as an extra hit of sweet.  
— FIONA DUNLOP, from Andaluz. Photograph by Hiltrud Schulz.
VEGAN LEBANESE MOUSSAKA Moussaka is a wonderfully inclusive dish; there are countless versions of this much-loved recipe. My version is vegan and maintains the simplicity and richness of flavor that make this dish so popular. We ate it frequently during my childhood, since feeding a large family meant we rarely ate meat due to its expense. I offer here a modern twist on the traditional Lebanese preparation. A guaranteed crowd-pleaser, it can be served as a main course or as a part of a mezze spread.

—SALMA HAGE, from The Immigrant Cookbook. Photograph by Ricky Rodriguez / Ricarius Photography.

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—SALMA HAGE, from The Immigrant Cookbook. Photograph by Ricky Rodriguez / Ricarius Photography.
CHICKEN WITH CHARMOULA  Before the development of the poultry industry in Morocco in the 1970s, it was customary to go to the market and pick out a live chicken. The chickens were large, and the meat really needed to be soaked and braised or it would be extremely tough. The breed of chicken, a beidi, is equivalent to some of the free-range artisan chickens sold in the US. And this is still what I prefer to use, pure poultry raised by hardworking farmers who take pride in their product.

—MOURAD LAHLOU, from The Immigrant Cookbook. Photograph by Anders Schonnermann.
Jollof Rice  This is Nigeria's national dish—that may be a slight exaggeration, but it's pretty popular. There's a friendly rivalry between a few West African countries as to who makes the best jollof rice. The provenance of the dish is disputed, but evidence suggests it originated from the Sengalese thieboudienne, though most Nigerians would disagree. Suffice it to say, we take jollof rice very seriously.

— Tunde Wey from *The Immigrant Cookbook*. Photograph courtesy Ricarius Photography

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**Kazakh governing body**

- Alash Orda formed to counter Soviet influence 1917

**Khedive of Egypt**

- Tewfik Pasha born 1852

**Amir Timur**

- Takes Delhi using camel cavalry 1398

**Egyptian novelist**

- Naguib Mahfouz born 1911

**Kazakhstan**

- Form of Alash Orda to counter Soviet influence 1917

**Rock star**

- Frank Zappa, son of Greek-Arab Sicilian, born 1940

**Abdul “Duke” Fakir**

- Of Motown group Four Tops born 1936

**Bengali artist**

- Zainul Abedin born 1914

**All-India Muslim League**

- Founded 1906

**Christmas**

- 25

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**Arab coffee inscribed on UNESCO’s list of intangible cultural heritage 2015**

**Inaugural Gahwa Championships held in Abu Dhabi 2019**
In November 1949, the Arabian American Oil Company (Aramco) published the first issue of an interoffice newsletter named *Aramco World*. Over the decades that followed, as the number of Americans working with Saudi colleagues in Dhahran grew into the tens of thousands, *Aramco World* grew into a bimonthly educational magazine whose historical, geographical and cultural articles helped employees and their families appreciate an unfamiliar land.

Today, the fostering of mutual appreciation among interconnected cultures remains our mission at *AramcoWorld*. The magazine is available in print and online at aramcoworld.com, where you will find all of our back issues, photo archive, video channel, educational supplement and more.

Download the free (and ad-free) *AramcoWorld* app on Google Play or the Apple Store.

We’re glad you’re along for the journey.

The stories, photographs and recipes in this calendar have been adapted with permission of the authors as well as the publisher, Interlink Books, www.interlinkbooks.com.

*Andaluz: A Food Journey through Southern Spain*  
Fiona Dunlop, 2018, 978-1-62371-999-9, $35 hb

*Baladi: A Celebration of Food From Land and Sea*  
Joudie Kalla, 2019, 978-1-62371-981-4, $35 hb

*The Immigrant Cookbook*:  
*Recipes that Make America Great*  
Leyla Moushabeck, ed., 2018, 978-1-56656-038-2, $35 hb

*One World Vegetarian Cookbook*  
Troth Wells 2011, 978-1-56656-834-0, $35 hb