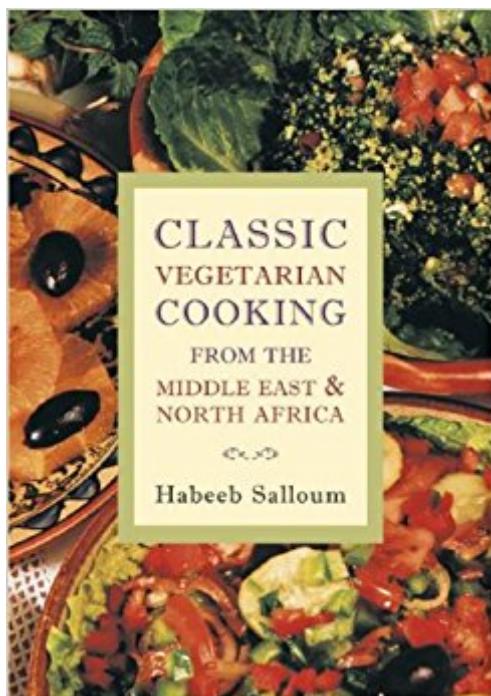


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# Classic Vegetarian Cooking From The Middle East & North Africa



## **Synopsis**

The vegetarian cuisine of the Middle East and North Africa is a treasure chest of pungent herbs and spices, aromatic stews and soups, chewy falafels and breads, couscous, stuffed grape leaves, greens and vegetables, hummus, pizzas, pies, omelets, pastries and sweets, smooth yogurt drinks, and strong coffees. Originally the food of peasants too poor for meat, vegetarian cooking in the Middle East developed over thousands of years into a culinary art form influenced both by trade and invasion. It is as rich and varied in its history as it is in flavor culinary historians estimate the Arab kitchen has over 40,000 dishes! Now noted food writer Habeeb Salloum has culled 330 savory jewels from this never-ending storehouse to create *Classic Vegetarian Cooking from the Middle East* a rich, healthful, and economical introduction to flavors and aromas that have stood the test of time.

## **Book Information**

Paperback: 352 pages

Publisher: Interlink Pub Group (April 1, 2002)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1566563984

ISBN-13: 978-1566563987

Product Dimensions: 7.1 x 1 x 9.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.6 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 34 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #474,855 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #73 in Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Regional & International > African #103 in Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Regional & International > Middle Eastern #566 in Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Special Diet > Vegetarian & Vegan > Non-Vegan Vegetarian

## **Customer Reviews**

Food and travel writer Salloum (From the Land of Figs and Olives) notes in his introduction that Middle Eastern and northern African populations have relied on a vegetarian diet since the beginning of civilization, despite the lamb and chicken dishes that may spring to the mind of anyone with a nodding acquaintance (meat is a rarity often reserved for special occasions). Setting the record straight with over 300 vegetarian dishes, Salloum's culinary tour gives readers the chance to eat like the locals do. While there are plenty of recipes utilizing common ingredients (30 chickpea recipes, 19 eggplant dishes and a dozen featuring dates), Salloum also offers unusual combinations

such as Pomegranate and Mushroom Soup and Tumeric-Flavored Eggs, using garlic, cilantro and tomato in addition to the subtle, noble spice ("much in demand at birth, marriage, and death ceremonies). Pancakes are stuffed with a sweetened and spiced ricotta cheese or a walnut, cinnamon and sugar filling, then cooked and dipped in Qater, a simple syrup infused with orange flower water and lemon juice. Including the Arabic names for every dish and boasting recipes for homemade yogurt, multiple takes on falafel and a multitude of stews and soups, most of which come together in minutes, Salloum's collection will be welcome, illuminating resource for vegetarians and omnivores alike. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

"A delicious magic carpet ride through the Middle East and North Africa." --Toronto Sun

My go-to recipe book. Pretty much everything I've tried has worked out and been absolutely delicious! Most of the ingredients are cheap and easy to acquire, too, and the dishes are easy to make. At least 50% of my dinners now come from this cookbook. Strongly recommended for all vegetarians and vegans (many of the vegetarian recipes can be easily converted to vegan), or anyone looking for some delicious, easy-to-make Middle Eastern and North African recipes. I particularly recommend the Chickpea and Macaroni casserole and the Lentil Soup with Spinach, but pretty much anything you pick will be a winner.

I bought this book based on all the reviews - but in reading the recipes over, I am a little disappointed. I was hoping to have a book with more (to me) new combinations of spices and ingredients. A lot of what I see in here are salt, pepper, and standard ingredients (peppers, onions, tomatoes, zucchini, canned beans). Which, I suppose, would be very helpful for people who are in a part of the country where you can't find things like rosewater or harissa easily.

Finally a vegetarian book of gold! I went to the Middle-East a couple years ago and the food was absolutely delicious, fresh and mostly vegetarian. This book is spot on with the recipes! I have tried a lot of them and all with success. I have so many bookmarks that it will take me a long time to get through all of them, which I plan to. My family and guests love what I am making.

I'm sure most people reading about "vegetarian middle-eastern" cookbooks are good cooks when they have the time and inclination. But I, for one, have grown bored with my own repertoire. Most

cookbooks are more fun to read than to actually cook from. Or they have ingredients that, even living in New York City, seem annoyingly inaccessible. This book has lots of very easy recipes that are healthy vegetarian (hardly any animal fat with the exception of yoghurt in cold dishes). I can imagine actually(!) making just about everything, there's even a section on arab desserts -- the easy kind made of farina. This is probably the best cookbook I've ever bought. I think it's useful whatever your level of cooking expertise, but you need to be a fan of the mediterranean diet. We're talking beans, legumes, olive oil, yoghurt, eggplant, a few other vegetables. Recipe details:-- it's true most are simple, but unless you were raised in a middle-eastern family I don't know how you would've thought of these combinations -- even if you're say very familiar with Greek or Italian food, I think this is pretty new stuff. Some "recipes" include: yoghurt ginger appetizer (includes almonds, onions, ginger, tomato); many types of lentil soups from various middle eastern countries (the egyptian one includes butter and cumin, the one from bahrain adds tomato, vermicelli, and ground coriander); fried pepper salad; orange and olive salad; beet salad; stuffed eggplant; and vegetable casserole. Nothing sounds 'exciting' but it is all very accessible and well seasoned. It's like you could turn to this book and make every meal from it -- that is if you like mediterranean food.

I love this cookbook! It's equally good for reading and cooking - so many interesting stories and details. I've had this cookbook for years and every single dish I've made comes out wonderful. The ingredients are fresh, interesting, and easy to make. I often turn to it when looking for new ideas. I've made Tabbouleh, Eggplant salads, Fava Beans with Rice and Dill, Pomegranate and Mushroom Soup, Tangy Beet Salad, Tahini Beet Salad, Artichoke Salad, so many of the delicious lentil and chickpea and vegetable soups, spice blends, sauces... I want to try the Chickpea Pies, Kibbeh, and some of the desserts and drinks. This is a wonderful cookbook. You will love it!

Though I am usually drawn to cookbooks with abundant pictures, I have spent hours poring through Classic Vegetarian Cooking from the Middle East and North Africa. It is at once a travel log and an invitation to share in the simplicity of good food and hospitality. The reader feels included in Mr. Salloum's quest for recipes remembered and his enjoyment of recipes discovered. Mr. Salloum's writing opens the doors both to rich cultural histories and to the simple present moments of a meals shared. Every recipe is headed by written descriptions that defy the phrase that a picture is worth a thousand words. He shares the stories of his travels and discoveries, the warm traditions of the various cultures, as well practical and nutritional information. His writing transports, educates, and informs, whetting one's appetite for travel as well as good, simple food. The recipes are

straightforward and clearly explained and therein accessible to even a novice in the kitchen. This book and the recipes it shares are a respite from the glad-handing and flashy style of today's tourist and cooking industries. Through his eloquent work, Mr. Salloum leaves one feeling nourished by an excellent meal in the sincere and congenial company of gracious hosts.

Okay, so 4 months ago I became a vegetarian and one that is also gluten free at that. I borrowed this from the library and immediately became hooked on the recipes - I had to buy it for myself. If it weren't for these recipes I might not have stayed with a healthier and happier diet. It has become one of my absolutely favorite cookbooks. I love the various different lentil dishes, chickpea stews and soups, and many more. I've shared recipes with friends and introduced them to foods they didn't think they'd like. To me - it's a MUST have for any new vegetarian. I LOVE IT.!!!!!!

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