

THE FEARLESS OLIVE
BY REEMA ISLAM



A different kind of Iftar

CUMIN BREAD A LA FOCACCIA

The Italians love eating bread and have found all kinds of combinations to satiate their love of it. Focaccia is one such example of the many types of bread and it is consumed throughout the Mediterranean. I attempted a Fearless Olive version of this bread which can be placed as an accompaniment to the other iftar items.

Ingredients

2 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
1 tsp salt, white sugar and active dry yeast
1 tsp roasted cumin, dried oregano and basil and coriander seeds
1 tbsp chopped mint and pinch of garlic paste
A pinch of black pepper and chilly flakes and ground mace (joitree)
1 tbsp desi ghee or clarified butter and 1 cup water
2 tbsp olive oil
½ grated Dhaka poneer

Method

In a large bowl, mix the flour, salt, sugar, yeast, and other dry ingredients. Mix the garlic and mint with the oil and water and add this now. Mix the dough and when it looks sufficiently mixed and the dough starts to come away from the bowl, after about 5 minutes, turn it out onto a lightly floured surface, and knead until smooth and elastic. Lightly oil a large bowl and place the dough in it then turn to coat with oil and leave it with a damp cloth on it for about 30 minutes. It will have risen by this time. Now preheat oven to 230 °C. Punch the dough to remove any excessive air caused by the rising and place it on a greased baking sheet. Shape it into a half inch thick rectangle. Brush the top with olive oil. Bake in a preheated oven for 15 minutes, or until golden brown. Right towards the end add the cheese and let it bake for a bit longer.

EGGPLANT BOATS

Melitzanespapoutsakia literally translates to tiny eggplant shoes in Greek. The boat shaped eggplants are stuffed with a cheese and meat filling or any number of fillings and a



béchamel sauce. Here below is a Fearless Olive rendition of this classic Greek/Mediterranean dish with a healthy twist! Obviously!

Ingredients

2 large eggplants (soak them in salt for about half hr before use to avoid any allergic reactions!)

1 cup boiled chickpeas with salt and a dash of garlic paste

1 large onion diced

1 tbsp finely diced garlic

A pinch of cumin powder, cinnamon powder, coriander seeds (roughly ground)

1/4 cup tomato puree

Salt and a fresh red chili or pepper, as per preference

1-2 tbsp chopped green onions, leafy part

Olive oil

For the yoghurt sauce--

1/2 cup hung yoghurt or Greek yoghurt

1/2 tsp cumin powder, a pinch of pepper and salt

1 tbs gurur molasses mixed with 2 tbsp fresh lime juice

A pinch of chopped fennel or coriander

1 tsp paste of mint leaves

Method

Slice the eggplants in the middle to get 2 boat shaped parts and scoop out the middle parts. You may use the scooped out insides in the masala or onion mix, otherwise discard it, or use as compost. Start frying the boat shaped eggplants in minimal oil until they brown (try not to char them). Take them out and sprinkle some salt on them and set aside. Now brown the onions then add the garlic and sauté for about one minute before adding the tomato puree. Swirl them around for at least one minute then add the spices and chillies and salt. Once the oil starts separating add the chickpeas and cook for about two minutes. Scoop the chickpeas into the eggplant boats.

Make a raita or yoghurt mix of the ingredients mentioned above. Pour this on the chickpeas and a dash of gur (molasses) syrup on top. This adds a sweetness which just hits the right notes with the heat in the rest of the food. Alternately, you can use palm syrup or maple syrup. Or just a sugar syrup with lemon squeezed in it.

Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed

Food: LS Desk



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