

# LIFESTYLE

Seasonal tastes in food and wine, travel and design

## *Spice up* YOUR LIFE

Rich in fragrance, colour and flavour, Middle Eastern dishes make a fantastic sharing feast with salads, dips and flatbreads

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**F**ragrant and floral, spiced but not spicy, Middle Eastern cuisine is one of the most diverse gastronomies in the world. Its broad repertoire of small, shareable dishes is thanks to an abundant array of spices that brings together the best influences from North Africa, India and Turkey. Rich reds, rusty oranges and golden hues create a feast for the eyes. Layered carefully, the flavours challenge the palate in a way that not many foods can. The tart tanginess of sumac, the earthy smokiness of turmeric and the musky flavour of saffron can work wonders to enhance lamb or rice. Meanwhile, an authentic ras el hanout – which translates as ‘top of the shop’ because of its traditionally expensive ingredients – is a fragrant blend of spices including cardamom, cinnamon, cumin and coriander, and can create magic with a good glug of olive oil and flatbread alone. Punctuate your meze with some ruby-red pomegranate seeds and almonds, and you’ll have a feast fit for a king. ▶



## JEWELLED RICE

Serves 4

6 tbsp flaked almonds	350ml water
60g raisins (preferably green or golden – or use normal raisins)	Large pinch of saffron soaked in 4 tbsp hot water
20g unsalted butter	Large pinch of table salt
1 onion, finely chopped	Small handful of pistachios
Pinch of cinnamon	3 slices of orange peel, very finely sliced
Pinch of ground cumin	1 small sharon fruit, chopped into 5mm cubes
6 cardamom pods	Handful of fresh pomegranate seeds
Pinch of black pepper	
320g basmati rice, washed and drained	

- Preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas 4. Spread the almonds on a baking tray and toast for 5 minutes until golden and aromatic. Set aside to cool.
- In a bowl, cover the raisins with water and leave to soak for 10 minutes. In the meantime, melt the butter in a medium-sized pan and fry the onion for 5 minutes until lightly golden. Add the spices, and fry for a minute, then add the rice. Continue to fry for another couple of minutes, then add the water, saffron with the soaking liquid, raisins and salt. Place a lid on top and put on a high heat until steam comes out. Turn down to the lowest setting and cook for a further 10 minutes. After 10 minutes, turn back to the highest setting for 15 seconds, and finally turn off the heat. Leave the lid on for a further 10 minutes, as the rice will still absorb the steam.
- Fluff up the rice with a fork and add the almonds, pistachios, orange peel, sharon fruit and pomegranate seeds. Arrange on a large plate to share, or serve as individual portions.

**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT**  
**Villeroy & Boch** Artesano Original dinner plate £15.90; **Waterford** Lismore tumblers £60 each; **Vera Wang for Wedgwood** Grosgrain Indigo side plate £xxx; **The Just Slate Company** bowls £38.95 for set of 3; **Villeroy & Boch** Artesano Original antipasti board £32.90; **Charingworth** Fiddle Vintage Satin cutlery (from 24-piece set) £xx; **Wedgwood** 27cm Hibiscus Accent plate £40; **Meissen** Stripes gold thread soup plate £79; **Meissen** Shape 'No 41' Stripes bread & butter plate £45; **Wedgwood** Hibiscus oval platter £138

## RACK OF LAMB WITH POMEGRANATE SEEDS, ROSE PETALS AND RAS EL HANOUT, SERVED WITH SUMAC YOGURT

Serves 4

4 *tbsp ras el hanout* sliced  
 1 *tsp garlic, grated* 1 *tsp lemon juice*  
 1 *tsp fresh ginger, grated* 100ml *Greek yogurt*  
 3 *tbsp vegetable oil* ¼ *tsp sumac*  
 1 *tsp malden salt or flaky sea salt*  
 1kg (about two racks) *French trimmed lamb*

**For the sumac yogurt**  
 1 *tsp salt*  
 2 *tsp sugar*  
 1 *white onion, finely*

**For the sauce**  
 2 *tsp sugar*  
 3 *tbsp pomegranate molasses*  
 5 *tbsp red wine*  
 Pinch of *salt*  
 Handful of *dried rose petals and pomegranate seeds, to garnish*

**1** In a bowl, mix together the ras el hanout, garlic, ginger, oil and salt, then rub it all over the lamb. Leave to marinate in a fridge for minimum of 1 hour or overnight.

**2** To make the sumac yogurt, sprinkle the salt and sugar over the onion and leave to pickle for 10 minutes. Once it has become slightly watery, lightly rinse the onion in a bowl of water and squeeze out the excess. Mix in the lemon juice and yogurt and place in a bowl. Sprinkle some sumac on top and set aside.

**3** Bring the meat back to room temperature. Preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas 4. Using a spoon, remove the spice mix from the meat and set aside for later to make a sauce. Heat a large frying pan and sear the meat until it is lightly golden, and then transfer it to a metal baking tray. Cook in the oven for 20 minutes for medium rare, or 25 minutes for medium to well done. Rest the meat for 10 minutes in a warm place.

**4** Meanwhile, make the sauce by heating the juice from the meat with the reserved spice mix, sugar, pomegranate molasses, wine and salt. Reduce until thickened. Slice the meat and drizzle the sauce over the top, finishing with a sprinkle of dried rose petals and the pomegranate seeds. Serve with the sumac yogurt and jewelled rice.

*Serve with...* XXXXXXX XXXXXXX, XXXXXXX  
 xxxxxxx, 20XX, £XX

**FROM TOP** Wedgwood 27cm Hibiscus Accent plate £40; Meissen Stripes gold thread soup plate £79

Food Halls, Ground Floor; Fine Wines & Spirits, Lower Ground Floor; HOMEWARES XXXXX XXXXXXX, XXXXXFloor; and harrods.com 

