DELIGHTS FROM THE GARDEN OF EDEN
A COOKBOOK AND HISTORY OF THE IRAQI CUISINE

Second Edition

NAWAL NASRALLAH
In loving memory of my son Bilal, who has been my inspiration. Despite his young years, he knew the meaning of food. In his school journal, he once wrote, ‘Love is when Mom makes brownies for me.’ I regret, every second of my life, having missed the chance of seeing these words when he was still with us.

I am grateful to this book. It has been to me like the stories were to Sheherazad.
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PREFACE

The discovery of a new dish confers more happiness on humanity than the discovery of a new star. (French gastronome Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, 1755–1826)

When reading this book, anticipate more than a taste of Iraqi food, expect a cultural immersion experience, which will cater to your culinary senses and intellect alike, an experience that I hope will stay with you long after the book is finished and food cooked from it has been enjoyed. As a cooking guide, the backbone of the book is certainly the recipes themselves, lots of them, given in a clear and detailed way so that they may be easily prepared with rewarding results. And if the directions in some of the recipes happen to be somewhat lengthy, such as that for making authentic traditional tannour bread in the convenience of our modern kitchens, I earnestly hope you will bear with me, for good food, like anything else worthwhile having in our lives, cannot be rushed.

The gastronomic history and culture of Iraq are interwoven with the recipes, so that the region and its cuisine may be better understood, and their role in the building of human civilization acknowledged. The book is supplemented with detailed menus and an extended Glossary to familiarize the user with the indigenous ingredients needed to create authentic Iraqi meals. In this second edition, metric equivalents to the American customary weights and cup measurements are provided, so that the recipes may be conveniently used everywhere.

A reviewer of the first edition of this book described it as being

visibly reminiscent of medieval Arabic prose writings on biography or history: shifting between poetry and prose, offering independent tidbits inside the main narrative, and presenting a wide array of names, places, anecdotes, and examples halfway between digression and main narrative. (Leyla Rouhi, ‘Dialogue of Cuisines,’ Gastronomica, Summer 2004, p.109)

This I choose to take as a compliment, for there is indeed something for everyone in the book, just like life itself, which is ‘like a box of chocolates. You never know what you’re gonna get,’ as Forrest Gump’s Momma said.

Nawal Nasrallah, New Hampshire, 2013

Um Ali by Maysaloon Faraj, from exhibition ‘Boats and Burdens: Kites and Shattered Dreams,’ 2004
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MEASUREMENTS, EQUIPMENT AND INGREDIENTS

In almost all the recipes weights and measurements are given in US cups, and in both imperial and metric forms. Oven temperatures are given in F°, C°, and gas mark numbers whenever they occur, so a list is not provided here.

For ingredients, both liquid and dry, I use a standard US set of measuring cups. The metric equivalents for liquid measures are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>US</th>
<th>Metric</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1⁄4 cup</td>
<td>60ml</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1⁄3 cup</td>
<td>80ml</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1⁄2 cup</td>
<td>125ml</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2⁄3 cup</td>
<td>160ml</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3⁄4 cup</td>
<td>180ml</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 cup</td>
<td>250ml</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 cups (1 pint)</td>
<td>475ml</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 cups</td>
<td>715ml</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 cups (1 quart)</td>
<td>950ml (0.95 liter)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N.B. The reader is advised not to use an older British measuring cup, marked in cups and fluid ounces, because the British pint is 20 fluid ounces (1 cup = 10 fl.oz) and the US one is 16 fluid ounces. This would significantly affect the result of a recipe.

The metric equivalents for cup measurements of dry ingredients are not uniform because each ingredient has a different mass (weight). For instance: 1 cup of flour = 4 ounces = 115 grams, whereas 1 cup of butter = 8 ounces = 225 grams. I have given both grams/kilos and pounds/ounces, for any reader who prefers to use imperial measurements.

The metric equivalents of US ounces and pounds, used for dry ingredients, are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>US</th>
<th>Metric</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1oz</td>
<td>30g (exactly, 28.5g)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2oz</td>
<td>60g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3oz</td>
<td>85g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4oz</td>
<td>115g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5oz</td>
<td>140g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6oz</td>
<td>175g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7oz</td>
<td>200g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8oz (½lb)</td>
<td>225g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9oz</td>
<td>250g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10oz</td>
<td>285g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11oz</td>
<td>310g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12oz (½ lb)</td>
<td>340g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13oz</td>
<td>370g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14oz</td>
<td>400g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15oz</td>
<td>425g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16oz (1lb)</td>
<td>450g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2lb</td>
<td>900g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2½lb</td>
<td>1.25kg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3lb</td>
<td>1.35kg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4lb</td>
<td>1.80kg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4½lb</td>
<td>2kg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teaspoons and tablespoons are the same size in both systems. The ‘heavy medium’ pot, often specified in a recipe, is a 4-quart size, either with a extra-thick base, or a cast-iron casserole (e.g. Le Creuset).
A number of recipes, pieces of equipment, and ingredients have different names in US and British usage. For easier reading in narrative sections, I have not always given both names, but they appear in recipe titles and lists of ingredients. The following list provides a quick reference.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>US</th>
<th>British</th>
<th>US</th>
<th>British</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>all-purpose flour</td>
<td>plain flour</td>
<td>scallion</td>
<td>spring onion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>baking pan</td>
<td>baking tin</td>
<td>shredded coconut</td>
<td>desiccated coconut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>baking soda</td>
<td>bicarbonate of soda</td>
<td>slivered almonds</td>
<td>flaked almonds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beet</td>
<td>beetroot</td>
<td>sunchoke</td>
<td>Jerusalem artichoke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bouillon/broth</td>
<td>stock</td>
<td>vanilla extract</td>
<td>vanilla essence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bread flour</td>
<td>strong flour</td>
<td>whole-wheat flour</td>
<td>wholemeal flour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>broiled</td>
<td>grilled</td>
<td>zucchini/squash</td>
<td>courgettes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chilli powder</td>
<td>cayenne pepper</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cilantro</td>
<td>fresh coriander</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>confectioners’ sugar</td>
<td>icing sugar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cookie</td>
<td>cornflour</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>corn syrup</td>
<td>golden syrup</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cornish hen</td>
<td>poussin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cornstarch</td>
<td>cornflour</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eggplant</td>
<td>aubergine</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>endive</td>
<td>chicory</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fava beans</td>
<td>broad beans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fillo dough</td>
<td>filo pastry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>golden raisins</td>
<td>sultanas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>green beans</td>
<td>French beans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ground meat</td>
<td>minced meat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hamburger/pancake flipper</td>
<td>(fish) slice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>heavy cream</td>
<td>double cream</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lima beans</td>
<td>butter beans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>molasses</td>
<td>black treacle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>romaine lettuce</td>
<td>cos lettuce</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tomato sauce, a frequent alternative ingredient in stews, is plain condensed tomato puree thinner in consistency than tomato paste.

Eggs used in recipes are large.