**Hummus with feta and olives**

Makes 2 ¾ cups

4 garlic cloves

2 cups canned chickpeas, drained, but liquid reserved

1/3 cup tahini (sesame paste)

1/3 cup fresh lemon juice

2 tablespoons water ( or reserved liquid from chick peas)

Salt and pepper to taste

Hot sauce to taste

¼ cup crumbled feta

¼ cup chopped pitted kalamata olives

Place the garlic, chickpeas, tahini, lemon juice in the bowl of a food processor. Season with salt, pepper and hot sauce to taste; adjust consistency with water or reserved chickpea liquid…. Stir in the feta and kalamata olives. Serve chilled or at room temperature.

**Smoky Eggplant Spread**

Makes about 2 cups

Ingredients

2 medium eggplants, about 2 pounds, cubed

1 large onion, sliced

4 garlic cloves,

2 tbsp olive oil

1 roasted red pepper, diced

Salt

¼ cup tahini paste

¼ cup lemon juice

⅛ teaspoon cayenne

½ teaspoon ground toasted cumin

3 tablespoons olive oil

½ teaspoon smoked paprika

1 tablespoon finely chopped parsley

1 tablespoon finely chopped mint

Pita or other flatbread, for serving (optional)

1. Preheat the oven to 400F
2. Place the eggplant, onions and garlic onto a rimmed baking sheet, drizzle with the oil, and toss to coat. Roast for 30-40 minutes or until all vegetables are soft.
3. Place the eggplant, 1/2 teaspoon salt, tahini, lemon juice, roasted red pepper and cayenne in a food processor or blender to obtain a creamy purée. (For a more rustic spread, beat with a whisk instead.) Taste and adjust salt and lemon juice if necessary. Transfer mixture to a shallow serving bowl.
4. Just before serving, stir together cumin and olive oil, and spoon over the mixture’s surface. Sprinkle with paprika, parsley and mint. Serve with warm pita cut into triangles if desired.

**Chicken with Green Olives and Lemon**

Serves 4-6

8 bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs

Ground cumin, Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

½ cup flour

3 tablespoons olive oil

12 garlic cloves

2 large yellow onions, thinly sliced (about 4 cups)

1 lemon, thinly sliced, seeds discarded

2 tablespoons fresh oregano leaves, plus more for garnish

1 cup green olives

½ cup chicken broth

Juice of 1 lemon

Additional lemon wedges to serve, if desired.

 Preheat the oven to 375°. Season the chicken on both sides with cumin, salt and pepper; dredge it in the flour.

2. In a large ovenproof pan or Dutch oven large enough to hold all the thighs in a single layer, heat the olive oil over medium-high heat. When the oil is hot, add the chicken, skin-side down, and sear until golden brown, 5 to 6 minutes. Add the garlic cloves to the pan and flip the thighs over. Cook until the garlic is fragrant and has gotten a little brown, 2 to 3 minutes. Remove the chicken and garlic from the pan and set aside.

3. With the pan still hot, add the onions, lemon slices and oregano, and season with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring often, until the onions have wilted and the brown bits on the bottom of the pan have loosened, 6 to 8 minutes. Nestle the thighs skin-side up in the onion mixture and add the garlic and the olives. Pour the lemon juice and the broth over the chicken and transfer the pan to the oven. Bake for 35-40 minutes. Scatter fresh oregano leaves over the top and serve.

**Couscous with Apricots and Almonds**

**Serves 6**

**Ingredients**

2 tbsp olive oil

1 small red onion, small dice

1/3 cup dried apricots, coarsely chopped

1/3 cup whole almonds toasted, coarsely chopped

11/2 cup couscous

2 ¼ cups chicken stock, warm

1 teaspoon lemon zest

3 scallions green parts only

1/3 cup fresh mint leaves, roughly chopped

1/2 bunch fresh cilantro leaves, roughly chopped plus leaves for garnish

Kosher salt and freshly ground black

### Directions

In a medium saucepan add the olive oil. Add the red onion, apricots and almonds and saute gently over low heat until translucent and slightly fragrant. Add the couscous then dump in the warm chicken broth. Stir with a fork to combine, add lemon zest and cover. Let sit for 10 minutes, then uncover and add the scallions, mint, and cilantro. Fluff again with a fork. Season, to taste, with salt and pepper. Toss gently to combine.

Serve family-style on a large platter and garnish with fresh cilantro.

**Grilled Eggplant smothered in Charmoula sauce**

Serves 6

3 medium eggplants (about 1 1⁄2 lbs.)

Kosher salt and pepper to taste

2 cloves garlic, peeled and minced

2 tsp. sweet paprika

1 pinch hot paprika

1 tsp. ground cumin

1/3. finely chopped fresh cilantro

1/3 cup tbsp. finely chopped fresh parsley

1/3 cup. fresh lemon juice

1⁄2 cup extra-virgin olive oil

**Instructions**

Slice eggplant into 3⁄4" rounds and season with salt and pepper; brush liberally on both sides with oil.Preheat the grill, and grill the eggplant for 4-5 minutes per side, or until tender. As the eggplant is finished, place onto a serving platter.

To make charmoula, whisk together garlic, paprikas, cumin, half of the cilantro and parsley, lemon juice, 2 tbsp. of the olive oil, and salt to taste in a small bowl; set aside.

Whisk charmoula once more and drizzle over eggplant. Sprinkle remaining cilantro and parsley on top, and serve immediately

**Halvah**

Serves 8-10

2 sticks unsalted butter

2 cups of farina or cream of wheat

2 cups of sugar

4 cups of water

½ cup toasted pine nuts

Cinnamon to taste

1. Melt butter in a large skillet; add the pine nuts and the farina, stirring frequently until the farina turns light brown in color.
2. Meanwhile, place water and sugar into a saucepan, bring to a boil and simmer for about 30 minutes. Carefully pour the hot syrup into the browned farina, and simmer, stirring occasionally until all the liquid is absorbed.
3. Transfer to a lightly greased loaf pan or bundt pan, or spoon directly into individual cups. Sprinkle with cinnamon and serve warm, cooled or refrigerated.