

The Kitchen without Borders: Recipes and Stories from Refugee and Immigrant Chefs

The Eat Offbeat Chefs

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Compiling recipes from refugee chefs of scattered origins, *The Kitchen without Borders* is a bridge-building cookbook.

The catering company Eat Offbeat began in 2015, with the award of a seed grant from Columbia University to sister and brother team Manal and Wissam Kahi. Its aims were two: to provide refugees with a safe and steady place of employment, and to introduce New Yorkers to cuisines with which they were perhaps less familiar.

From the now popular company come recipes for more familiar dishes, like curries, daal, moussaka, and hummus. The chefs' instructions here are edifying. But the book also includes tempting recipes for less familiar plates, including mustard and lemon marinated chicken with cilantro; Sri Lankan coconut cabbage, featuring fennel and curry powder; and Afghani doogh, a blended yogurt drink with mint that's often used to break the Ramadan fast. A glossary leads the project to introduce less familiar ingredients; recommendations for substitutes and places to purchase them are included for ease.

The chefs behind the recipes are honored with spreads that share their happy memories from family kitchens and celebrations. These take care to center the joys of home, rather than the troubles that led each to emigrate. The profiled chefs include Mariama, who came from Senegal, and for whom Eat Offbeat was her first job; and Diaa, a Syrian who's owned and operated restaurants previously. Other chefs come from the Central African Republic, Nepal, and Venezuela—Eat Offbeat's chefs come from fifteen nations in total. What each chef shares is nostalgia for home, and a desire to see the traditional dishes that spark their fond memories be embraced by New York eaters, too.

The Kitchen without Borders is a mouth-watering tour of global cuisines the puts a human face to each tantalizing new taste.

MICHELLE ANNE SCHINGLER (March / April 2021)

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