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Soframiz: Vibrant Middle Eastern Recipes From Sofra Bakery And Cafe



Synopsis

A charming collection of 100 recipes from Cambridge's Sofra Bakery and Cafe, showcasing modern Middle Eastern spices and flavors with exotic yet accessible sweet and savory dishes geared toward everyday cooking and entertaining. Ana Sortun and Maura Kilpatrick have traveled extensively throughout Turkey and the Middle East, researching recipes and gaining inspiration for their uber-popular cafe and bakery, Sofra. In their first cookbook together, the two demystify and explore the flavors of this popular region, creating accessible, fun recipes for everyday eating and entertaining. With a primer on essential ingredients and techniques, and recipes such as Morning Buns with Orange Blossom Glaze, Whipped Feta with Sweet and Hot Peppers, Eggplant Manoushe with Labne and Za'atar, and Sesame Caramel Cashews, Soframiz will transport readers to the markets and kitchens of the Middle East.

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Customer Reviews

ANA SORTUN graduated from La Varenne Ecole de Cuisine de Paris and opened Oleana in 2001, immediately drawing raves from the New York Times. She was awarded the Best Chef in the Northeast by the James Beard Foundation in 2005, and opened Sofra in 2008. After receiving a graduate certificate in baking at the California Culinary Academy, MAURA KILPATRICK moved back to her hometown to work for many of Boston's top chefs. In 2001, she worked with Sortun to develop the concept for Oleana, followed by Sofra in 2008. Kilpatrick has earned several nominations from the James Beard Foundation for Outstanding Pastry Chef and the title of Boston's Best Pastry Chef from Boston magazine.

DRAGON BEAN PLAKI SERVES 8 Plaki is an Armenian, Turkish, and Greek word for a stew that can be eaten warm or cold. Typically, a bean plaki is made with giant white lima beans called gigantes. The beans are first cooked and then stewed in a fresh tomato sauce until the tomato coats the beans like a thick dressing or glaze. In the summer, my husband, farmer Chris Kurth, grows amazing fresh wax beans called dragon's tongue. These are wide, flat, juicy, and speckled with purple spots. They are similar in shape to Romano beans, which are a fine substitute. I like to make plaki with fresh beans and add other vegetables like corn and sweet peppers. Variations of plaki are served warm or cold as a meze on the menus at Sofra, Oleana, and our third restaurant, Sarma. When corn and dragon's tongue beans are not in season, we use cooked gigantes or Peruvian limas and make the traditional version. You'll want to make a big batch of this to have on hand for the week. Simply serve with a chunk of feta and it's a perfect quick meal.

Ingredients:

- 4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 small summer onion, such as Ailsa Craig or Vidalia, finely chopped
- 1 carrot, peeled and diced small
- 1 small (or half of 1 large) green bell pepper, stemmed, seeded, and diced small
- 1 teaspoon finely chopped garlic
- 3 cups dragon's tongue beans or other wax beans, cut into 2-inch pieces
- 3 cups fresh, in-season sweet corn kernels (from about 3 cobs)
- 6 plum tomatoes, halved
- 2 teaspoons tomato paste
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh dill or tarragon leaves
- 1 teaspoon sherry vinegar
- 1 teaspoon freshly squeezed lemon juice
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

Instructions:

Place a large deep-sided sauté pan over medium-low heat and add 2 tablespoons of the olive oil. Add the onion, carrot, and bell pepper and sauté until they begin to soften and the onion is translucent, about 8 minutes. Stir in the garlic, beans, and corn and continue to cook until they start to soften, about 10 minutes. Meanwhile, using your fingers, scrape as many seeds out of the cavities of the tomato as you can without being too fussy. Over a mixing bowl, use the large holes of a box grater to grate the tomatoes (holding the cut side of the tomato to the grater) until you have nothing but skin left in your hand and the flesh of the tomato is in the bowl. Stir the grated tomatoes into the corn mixture and add the remaining 2 tablespoons of olive oil, the tomato paste, and the bay leaf. Cook until the mixture has thickened and become jamlike, about 20 minutes on low heat. The tomato sauce should coat and cling to the beans and the corn. Pour the plaki into a large mixing bowl and cool to room temperature. Remove the bay leaf and stir in the dill, vinegar, and lemon juice and season with 1 teaspoon of salt and freshly ground pepper to taste. Serve at room temperature or cold. This salad can easily be made a day or two before serving; the flavors become better overnight. Store it covered in the refrigerator up to 4 days.

Several years ago, a fellow cookbook collector gifted me a copy of Ana Sortun's excellent *Spice: Flavors of the Eastern Mediterranean*, and I fell instantly and madly in love. Sortun is the executive chef behind Oleana and Sofra. Classically trained at La Varenne, she decided to incorporate Mediterranean spices and the meze mentality after studying in Turkey. Sofra Cafe and Bakery opened in 2008 and serves meze and baked goods from Turkey, Lebanon, and Greece, all of which are amply represented in "Soframiz." I've long admired Turkish cuisine and have collected numerous books on the subject (including recent releases *Istanbul Cult Recipes*, *Eat Istanbul: A Journey to the Heart of Turkish Cuisine*, and *Anatolia: Adventures in Turkish Cooking*), so when I heard that Ana and Maura Kilpatrick were coming out with a Sofra cookbook, I was ecstatic. I've had the galley for several months, and have made numerous recipes from the book, including the spicy tomato bulgur salad, stuffed simit, Persian carrot and black eyed pea salad, and tahini shortbread cookies. The recipes include breakfast, meze, flatbreads, savory pies, cookies and confections, specialty pastries, cakes and desserts, and beverages. If you've never experienced a Turkish (or Israeli) breakfast, you're in for a treat; traditional breakfast spreads include many small bowls and plates of olives, tahini, stuffed flatbreads, egg dishes, vegetables and cheeses taking up the entire table. Breakfast at Sofra includes such staples as Shakshuka (baked eggs with spicy tomato sauce), rolled omelet with za'atar and labne, flower pogaca rolls, date orange brioche tart, pistachio toaster pastries with rosewater glaze, and morning buns with orange blossom glaze. The meze really shine and make for inspired snacking or afternoon pick-me-ups, from the whipped cheese spreads and hummus to hearty and healthy bean-based salads (Persian carrot and black-eyed peas, Egyptian-style pea salad with walnuts, barley and chickpea salad, yellow split peas with za'atar spiced almonds). I made several for this review and all were definite repeats. My true passion is baking, so the breads and baked goods were the real test. My first disappointment was that measurements are only given in volume, not weight; as a serious home baker, I much prefer the precision of weighing my flours, particularly as I live in an extremely humid climate (which affects the weight of flour). I also had some issues with several of the bread recipes I tried; the stuffed simit featured on the cover calls for 1 cup water to 2 1/4 cups of flour, and what initially greeted me was almost like pancake batter. I continued to add flour by the tablespoon, as well as a little olive oil, and eventually had a very soft (but workable) dough that was wonderfully moist. The Turkish method of brushing with pekmez (grape molasses) lends a sweet finish to the savory filling of feta and za'atar spiced almonds and the toasted sesame seed topping. The bread is delicious on its own or as an accompaniment to the salads in the book. Fans of Middle Eastern

pastries will be in heaven; from pistachio bird's nests (a recipe I have not encountered in my many other Turkish books) to Persian love cake, kunefe, umm Ali with caramelized apples, chocolate hazelnut baklava, brown butter pecan pie with espresso dates, date espresso ma'amoul, and milky walnut-fig baklava, this is a baker's paradise. I encountered an issue with the tahini shortbread cookies, which calls for 2 tsp salt; I cross-checked the recipe on the internet, and the online version I found also called for 2 tsp. salt. My baker's instinct told me to start with much less; I went with 1/2 tsp salt, which is what most of the other cookie and shortbread recipes in "Soframiz" called for, and I'm certainly glad I didn't use the full amount as they would have been too salty for my taste. Also, I followed the recipe to the letter, and ended up with more like 3 or 4 dozen cookies. The recipe calls for 1/2 cup toasted sesame seeds but you are only instructed to use 1/4 cup. The resulting cookies were absolutely delicious and would be fantastic as part of a cheese tray as the sesame lends a savory edge. Gorgeous matte photography and clear, large font make this a pleasure to read and cook from (I prefer matte pages as it means no glare in my cookbook holder). I loved the recipes I tried, but found in several instances that there are small errors, so be sure to read through the entire recipe in advance and make note if an ingredient is mentioned that is not in the list, or an amount seems off. Overall "Soframiz" is one of my top cookbook picks for 2016 (I'll be releasing my 2016 cookbook roundup in the next month or two), and one that fans of Turkish, Mediterranean and Middle Eastern cuisine will certainly want to add to their collections.

I love Ana Sortun and her explorations of the flavors of Turkey and the Middle East. I eat at one of her restaurants at least once every 5 weeks. The recipes in this book are right in her flavor wheelhouse and are exciting to read [and eventually make.] Why only four stars? This is a bakery cookbook with VOLUME measurements. Huh? Any serious cook/baker has a scale. I don't think you need to remove the inaccurate volume measurements, but throw me a bone.... give me grams or even ounces by weight. I consider this a major flaw to this book. I can assure you that at Sofra, they are not measuring flour by volume. No decent bakery does.

Baking bread is one of my favorite weekend activities. It is therapeutic and rewarding. You mix up a bunch of ingredients, and at the end you have a gorgeous, handmade loaf of bread. Soframiz is full of gorgeous photographs of enticing baked goods. I'm not against innovation and improvement, but I like to pay homage and respect to tradition. I love that the book clearly states that "the recipes may not be traditional, but they follow the spirit of the original dish." I have a long list of recipes that I want to make from the cookbook: lamb

katmer, flower pogaca rolls, raspberry-rose petal turnovers, Turkish simit, crick cracks, cheese borek pie with nigella seeds, spanakopita serpentine. I could go on and on. I have a go to brioche recipe, but I thought I would start with the Tahini brioche. It has a warm, nutty flavor and it's perfect spread with salted butter and drizzled with honey. I used leftovers for French Toast. If you are a baker, I highly recommend the book. It is inspirational, the photos are enticing, and the recipes are really straight forward and not too complicated. I received a review copy of Soframiz in exchange for an honest review.

A friend, and professional chef, who lived in Turkey gave this a very high rating. Even without her recommendation I realized that this is going to be one of my favorite cookbooks.

Love this book! It's beautiful and the recipes are delicious and easy to follow. The ingredients and steps can be a bit complicated for an inexperienced cook, but worth it!

terrific cookbook from a great cafe. made several of the recipes(so far)& they were excellent.

I like reading Ana Sortun's cookbooks. Her use of spices and herbs is wonderful and even a simple recipe is boosted in flavor by the inventive combinations.

Excellent Book fast shipping. Thanks

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