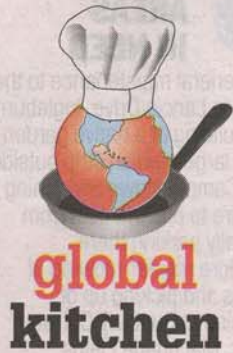


Cutting edge



Women in the healthy food for new arrivals class look for a healthy take on old favourites.

Experience the exotic flavours of the world in our new Global Kitchen feature. This week **VERA BERTOLA** speaks to Fatin Al Rawi about Iraqi cuisine.

THE key to the aromatic and tantalising taste of Iraqi food is in the number of ingredients and their patient preparation.

Iraqi-born Fatin Al Rawi said her children loved traditional Iraqi food and appreciated the time it took to make the authentic version.

"No, I don't take shortcuts," she said with a laugh. "There is one dish the kids really like ... the onion is not just cut, but cut in layers, one by one.

"You have to do it like

this or else it wouldn't be the dish."

Fatin and her family came to Australia almost 10 years ago after spending six years in Malaysia.

She admitted some of the spices she used in her cooking were influenced by Malaysia but largely she kept to the traditional methods she learnt from her mother.

"Iraqi food uses many ingredients, and preparation takes a long time.

preparation



Fatin Al Rawi shows off the tempting Middle Eastern recipe Arabic zaater roll.

Pictures: IAN SVEGOVIC

"Cutting ... so much cutting," she said.

"Most of the dishes are vegetable and meat-based. We eat meat a lot, especially red meat."

Staples in an Iraqi diet include vegetables (egg-plant, tomato, zucchini), cereals (rice, bulghur wheat, barley), pulses and legumes (lentils, chickpeas, cannellini), fruit (dates, raisins, figs, grapes) and cheese (feta and halloumi).

Other ingredients include olive oil, olives, tamarind,

yogurt, vermicelli, tahini, pistachios and rose water.

Food is flavoured with cinnamon, cardamom, cumin and oregano.

Macarthur Diversity Services Initiative runs a healthy food for new arrivals class in Minto each Wednesday. Details: Fatin on 4627 1188.



TANTALISE TASTEBUDS:

Tell us about your favourite recipe by emailing editor@macarthurchronicle.com.au.

Try this classic bread

ARABIC ZAATER ROLL DOUGH INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups warm water
- 2 teaspoons dry yeast
- 2 cups whole wheat flour
- 2 1/2 cups white flour
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 tablespoon olive oil

METHOD

1. Place ingredients in the bowl of mixer; beat 10 minutes to make soft dough.
2. Cover and let rise for two hours.
3. Divide dough into four pieces. Shape each piece into a round 20cm ball.
4. Mix zaatar (a dry blend of roasted sesame seeds, thyme and sumac which is available in Arabic specialty shops) with olive oil and then add it on the top of the dough.
5. Roll it and cut it to the size you like.
6. Bake in a hot oven (180C) for 15 minutes until golden brown.
7. Enjoy.

■ Recipe supplied by Macarthur Diversity Services Initiative.