

One table,



global kitchen

The Morheb household gets to experience the best of both worlds at dinner time. **VERA BERTOLA** reports.



Saja Morheb uses her kitchen to whip up a global wonderland of cuisine.

AMBARVALE resident Saja Morheb often calls on the best of Lebanese and Australian cuisine to feed her hungry but always appreciative family.

Mealtime in her household is a tantalising mix of aromas as she calls on her knowledge from her home country of Lebanon and sometimes a few Aussie shortcuts.

Mrs Morheb came to Australia in 1973 but her ties to her culture run deep.

Even though her children were born in her adopted

country, they share their mother's love of Lebanese food although they're happy to compromise as well.

"I cook mostly Lebanese food, sometimes Australian food, sometimes both," she said. "My children are happy with anything. They enjoy home-cooked food."

Lebanese families relish mealtime as a chance to get together and enjoy each other's company.

Mrs Morheb said she often entertained, the focus being the tasty selection of dishes.

two worlds

This recipe is simple to follow

SABANEKH BI LOUBIA (spinach and beans with caramelised onions)

INGREDIENTS

1 large onion sliced, 6 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, 3 garlic cloves chopped, 1 kg fresh spinach, salt and black pepper, 400g can beans drained, juice of 1/4 to 1/2 lemon (use black-eyed peas or haricot beans). You can use frozen spinach, defrost thoroughly, or if using fresh, wash it well and remove the stems only if they are very thick.

METHOD

1. Fry the onion in 2 tablespoons oil, stirring often, until brown and caramelised.

2. In a large saucepan, heat the garlic in 2 tablespoons oil for moments only, until the aroma rises. Add the spinach, put on the lid, and cook until the spinach crumples to a soft mass. Season.

3. Stir the beans and the fried onions into the spinach, add lemon juice and cook through. Add the remaining oil and serve hot or cold.



Lebanese food is full of flavour and colour.

Pictures: IAN SVEGOVIC

flavoured with herbs and spices. Most depend on the freshness of the ingredients.

Popular Lebanese dishes include baba ghanouj (char-grilled eggplant), baklava (sweet pastry dessert), manaaesh (mini pizzas) and tabbouleh (finely chopped salad).

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

Lebanon's cuisine has been influenced by a number of cultures over the centuries, and includes many with Turkish and French origins. The Lebanese diet includes an assortment of fruits, vegetables, seafood and poultry more than red meat.

Dishes are usually cooked in plenty of garlic and olive oil and often seasoned by lemon juice.

They are often grilled, baked or sauteed, and