KARNIYARIK

(Stuffed Eggplant)

SERVES 6

Briefly frying the eggplants for this classic dish softens their flesh, making them easier to stuff.

- Canola oil, for frying
- 6 Japanese eggplants (about 2 lbs.), ends trimmed
- 4 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 1 lb. ground lamb
- 1 tbsp. tomato paste
- ½ tsp. ground cinnamon
- 6 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
- 1 small yellow onion, roughly chopped
- ½ green bell pepper, cored, seeded, and finely chopped
- 2 medium tomatoes, cored and finely chopped
- ½ cup chopped flat-leaf parsley
- ¼ cup chopped mint leaves
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

❶ Pour oil into a 12" skillet to a depth of ½". Heat over medium-high heat until the oil is shimmering and very hot. Working in 2 batches, fry eggplants, turning occasionally, until softened, 6–8 minutes per batch. Transfer eggplants to paper towels to let drain; discard oil and set aside.

❷ Melt butter in a 12" skillet over medium-high heat. Add the lamb and cook, breaking the meat into small pieces with a wooden spoon, until lamb is browned, about 8 minutes. Add the tomato paste, cinnamon, garlic, onions, and peppers and cook, stirring frequently, until onions are soft and golden brown, about 8 minutes. Add the tomatoes and cook until they're soft, about 6 minutes. Stir in the parsley and mint and season with salt and pepper. Remove skillet from heat and set lamb filling aside.

❸ Heat oven to 475°. Halve reserved eggplants crosswise to make 12 pieces. Working with one piece at a time, cut a lengthwise, ¼"-deep incision in the eggplant to make a pocket (be careful not to cut all the way through the bottom). Lightly season inside of each eggplant pocket with salt and pepper and spoon about ¼ cup lamb filling into it, pressing filling lightly into pocket. Arrange stuffed eggplants in a 9" x 13" baking dish and bake until hot, about 5 minutes. Serve warm.

SHREDDED PHYLLO DOUGH

Shredded phyllo dough (called tel kadayif in Turkey)—essentially the same delicately layered pastry as regular phyllo but processed into thin strands for a shaggier texture—is the base for many crunchy, sticky desserts across the eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East. In the Turkish pastry called künefe (shown on page 74), shredded phyllo is paired with fresh cheese and drizzled with sugar syrup; in the Greek pastry known as kataifi, the dough is stuffed with chopped walnuts, almonds, or pistachios and scented with orange or rose water. The ingredient is equally versatile for savory pastries. Made from nothing more than flour and water and usually sold frozen, it will dry out quickly if not properly handled and stored. Brushing shredded phyllo with melted butter before baking helps to prevent sticking and cracking and gives desserts like kataifi their golden color. Thawed shredded phyllo should be stored in the refrigerator under a damp towel and wrapped tightly in plastic wrap; it will keep for about a week. Frozen shredded phyllo, like the kind made by Apollo (pictured), a Greek company, can be found in the freezer case of most Middle Eastern food markets and in specialty stores. —*Leah Koenig*

GAVURDAĞI SALATASI

(Tomato Salad with Herbs and Pomegranate)

SERVES 6

This dish is a perfect garnish for falafel and is also delicious on its own.

- ¾ cup chopped flat-leaf parsley
- ½ cup chopped mint leaves
- ¼ cup finely chopped red onion
- 3 tbsp. pomegranate molasses (see below, right)
- 3 tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- 2 tbsp. chopped fresh thyme
- ½ tsp. dried ground aleppo pepper or paprika (see page 100)
- 8 scallions, finely chopped
- 6 medium tomatoes, cored and finely chopped
- 2 large banana peppers or Italian frying peppers, stemmed, seeded, and finely chopped
- 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 tsp. ground sumac, for garnish (see page 100)

Stir first 11 ingredients together in a large bowl; season with salt and pepper. Garnish with sumac and serve.

ETLI KURU FASULYE

(Stewed White Beans)

SERVES 6–8

Cooking these beans with a lamb shoulder chop, a flavorful cut of meat, will give this entrée a richer texture.

- 2 cups dried white beans, such as cannellini
- 2–3 chiles de árbol
- 2 medium yellow onions (1 halved, 1 finely chopped)
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 6-oz. lamb blade chop
- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 large banana pepper or Italian frying pepper, stemmed, seeded, and chopped
- 1½ cups tomato sauce
- 1 tsp. dried ground aleppo pepper or paprika (see page 100)
- ½ tsp. dried oregano
- 2 medium tomatoes, halved and grated, skins discarded
- 1¾ cups chicken broth
- Kosher salt, to taste
- 1 lemon, cut into wedges

POMEGRANATE MOLASSES

Sweet and tart, with the jammy sweetness of ripe fruit and the tangy bite of an aged balsamic vinegar, pomegranate molasses lends its distinctive flavor to many Mediterranean dishes, including the tomato salad with herbs and pomegranate shown above left. Most pomegranate molasses (including Alwadi Alakhdar, pictured) comes from the Middle East, though American versions are now being made in California and Arizona. In the making of pomegranate molasses, the juice of sour pomegranates is mixed with sugar and sometimes lemon juice, then boiled down until it's a thick syrup. The subtly flavored condiment can also be drizzled over ice cream, incorporated into cakes and candies, and added to cocktails in place of grenadine syrup; indeed, old-fashioned grenadine is nothing more than a syrup of pomegranate boiled with sugar. (See THE PANTRY, page 100, for a source.) —*Ben Mims*

❶ Put beans into a 6-qt. saucepan, cover with 10 cups water, and let soak overnight. Add chiles de árbol and halved onion to the pan and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer until beans are tender, about 1 hour. Discard onion and drain beans and chiles; set aside.

❷ Heat oil in a 4-qt. saucepan over high heat. Add lamb and cook, turning once, until browned, 8 minutes. Add remaining onions, garlic, and banana pepper and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened, about 8 minutes. Add tomato sauce, aleppo pepper, oregano, and grated tomatoes and cook, stirring occasionally, until the mixture is very thick, about 10 minutes. Add chicken broth and the reserved beans and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer, stirring occasionally, until the flavors have melded, about 15 minutes more.

❸ Transfer lamb to a plate and chop it into small pieces; discard bone. Return lamb to saucepan. Season beans with salt; ladle beans into bowls and squeeze lemon wedges over the top.

MERCIMEK ÇORBASI

(Red Lentil and Bulgur Soup with Chile-Mint Butter)

SERVES 6

This soup is finished with a flourish of mint-and-chile-infused butter.

- **5 tbsp. unsalted butter**
- **¾ tsp. cumin seeds**
- **2 cloves garlic, finely chopped**
- **1 medium onion, roughly chopped**
- **1 tbsp. tomato paste**
- **3 medium tomatoes, halved and grated, skins discarded**
- **4 cups chicken broth**
- **1 cup dried split red lentils (also called masoor dal), rinsed and drained**
- **⅓ cup coarse bulgur**
- **Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste**
- **1 tbsp. dried mint leaves, crumbled with your fingers**
- **½ tsp. dried ground aleppo pepper or paprika (see page 100)**

❶ Melt 2 tbsp. butter in a 4-qt. saucepan over medium heat. Add cumin, garlic, and onions and cook, stirring, until onions are soft, about 8 minutes. Increase heat to high, add tomato paste, and cook, stirring frequently, until color darkens, about 3 minutes. Add grated tomatoes and cook until mixture thickens slightly, about 3 minutes more. Add broth, lentils, bulgur, and 4 cups water and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer until lentils are tender and soup has thickened, about 45 minutes. Season soup with salt and pepper; remove pan from heat, set aside, and cover.

❷ Meanwhile, melt remaining butter in a 1-qt. saucepan over medium heat. Remove pan from heat and stir in the mint and aleppo pepper. To serve, ladle soup into bowls and drizzle with chile-mint butter.

URFA KEBAB

(Spiced Lamb Kebab)

SERVES 4

Wide, flat metal skewers are ideal for grilling this style of ground-meat kebab (see page 100 for a source). The spiced meat mixture can also be formed into patties if you don't have skewers.

- **1½ lbs. ground lamb**
- **6 tbsp. grated onion**
- **2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil**
- **4 tbsp. dried ground aleppo pepper or paprika (see page 100)**
- **1 tbsp. kosher salt**
- **2 tsp. ground cumin**
- **2 tsp. dried oregano leaves**
- **2 tsp. dried mint leaves, crumbled with your fingers**
- **1 tsp. freshly ground black pepper**

❶ Combine lamb and onion in a large bowl; set aside. Heat oil in a 10" skillet over medium-high heat. Add aleppo pepper, salt, cumin, oregano, mint, and pepper and cook, stirring constantly, until fragrant, about 45 seconds. Pour the spice mixture over the reserved lamb mixture and mix thoroughly with your hands.

❷ Divide lamb mixture into 4 portions and roll each into a thin cylinder about 10" long and 1" thick. Slide a flat metal skewer (see page 100) into each cylinder and press the meat around the skewer. Transfer skewers to a parchment-lined baking sheet and refrigerate for 30 minutes to firm up.

❸ Meanwhile, build a medium-hot fire in a charcoal grill or heat a gas grill to medium-high (alternatively, heat broiler and position rack 7" from heating element). Grill or broil the kebabs, turning once, until browned and nicely charred on the outside and medium on the inside, about 4 minutes per side.

KÜNEFE

(Shredded Wheat and Cheese Pastry in Syrup)

SERVES 6

Shredded phyllo dough (see page 72) can be found in the freezer aisle of Middle Eastern markets (see page 100 for a source). Queso blanco or mozzarella is a good substitute for the firm sheep's milk cheese used in many Turkish pastries.

- **1 cup sugar**
- **8 whole cloves**
- **8 cardamom pods, crushed**
- **3 cinnamon sticks**
- **1 lemon, thinly sliced crosswise into ¼"-thick slices**
- **10 oz. frozen shredded phyllo dough, defrosted and roughly chopped**
- **16 tbsp. unsalted butter (2 sticks), melted**
- **½ lb. queso blanco or mozzarella, grated (about 2 cups)**
- **½ lb. ricotta (about 1 cup)**
- **Greek yogurt or sour cream, for garnish**
- **3 tbsp. ground pistachios, for garnish**

❶ Bring the sugar, cloves, cardamom, cinnamon, lemon, and ¾ cup water to a boil in a 1-qt. saucepan and cook, stirring, for 3 minutes. Remove pan from heat and let sit for 10 minutes. Strain the syrup through a sieve set over a small saucepan, discarding solids, and set aside.

❷ Heat oven to 375°. Put the phyllo and 12 tbsp. of the butter into a food processor and pulse until the mixture is just combined, about 30 seconds. Grease a 10" shallow pie pan with 2 tbsp. of the butter. Transfer half of the phyllo mixture to the pan and flatten it with a rubber spatula. Sprinkle the queso blanco over the phyllo mixture; then spread ricotta evenly over the top. Add remaining phyllo mixture on top of ricotta; flatten with a spatula. Drizzle top of phyllo mixture with remaining butter. Bake until golden brown, about 1 hour. Raise heat to broil and cook until crisp, about 5 minutes. Transfer to a rack and let cool slightly. Reheat syrup and drizzle over cake. Set aside to let syrup soak into cake, 4–5 minutes. Slice cake into wedges and serve topped with dollops of yogurt and sprinkled with pistachios.

LEFT TO RIGHT: ANDRE BARANOWSKI; LANDON NORDEMAN (2)