

# VENUE

RAMADAN  
GETTING  
SHOES,  
DIAMONDS  
AND NEW  
SEASON BAGS

HOW TO  
MAKE MOST  
OF THE  
MIDDLE  
EASTERN  
SUMMER

SHEIKH  
MOHAMMED  
AL THANI'S  
INSPIRATIONAL  
CLIMB TO  
THE TOP

Celebrate!



July - August 2013

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EURO 5.25



## ARIANA BUNDY, TV CHEF AND COOKBOOK AUTHOR

'RAMADAN IS A FAMILY AFFAIR AND THE IDEAL WAY TO BREAK FAST IS WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY. PERHAPS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO REMEMBER IS TO TRY AND KEEP COOL AND COLLECTED AT ALL TIMES - THERE ARE ALWAYS BOUND TO BE A FEW GRUMPY PEOPLE OUT THERE WHO NEED YOUR ATTENTION AND CARE!

MAKE SURE THAT EVERYTHING IS PREPARED AHEAD OF TIME. IF IT IS NOT, THEN HAVE A HANDFUL OF DATES AND A POT OF FRESHLY BREWED TEA TO HAND, AS THIS IS THE GENTLEST WAY TO BREAK ANY FAST.

IRANIANS LOVE NOON PANIR SABZI, A PLATE OF CREAMY CRUMBLY FETA, FRESH NAN BREAD, SOAKED WALNUTS AND A MEDLEY OF FRESH HERBS (BASIL, MINT, SPRING ONIONS). THEY ALSO REALLY LIKE EATING SOME KASHGEH BADEMJOON A SMOKEY, CREAMY AUBERGINE DIP UNLIKE ANYTHING YOU'VE EVER TASTED.

IF YOU ARE ENTERTAINING A LOT OF PEOPLE, A GIANT BOWL OF POMEGRANATE SOUP, OR ASHE E ANAR, IS THE PERFECT DISH TO SERVE. IT HAS LOTS OF FRESH HERBS, A LITTLE BIT OF RICE, SPLIT PEAS, DELICATE LITTLE MEATBALLS AND OF COURSE POMEGRANATES - TOPPED WITH CARAMELIZED ONIONS AND FRIED MINT IT IS NOURISHING, DELICIOUS AND A PERFECT RAMADAN DISH. AS A BONUS, KIDS LOVE IT!

IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THE REAL MEANING OF RAMADAN HOWEVER AND NOT JUST GO HEAD LONG INTO ENTERTAINING. IT IS A SEASON OF REFLECTION AND BEING IN TOUCH WITH YOURSELF AND GOD. JUST CONCENTRATE ON THAT... AND ADD A BUNCH OF FLOWERS AND A FEW CANDLES FOR THE PERFECT SETTING FOR YOUR SPECIAL GUESTS'.



### Kashkeh Bademjan

Grilled aubergine spread topped with creamy whey, fried onions, garlic, mint and walnuts

Kashk gives this rich aubergine dish its special edge. It is dried buttermilk – a by-product of cheese-making that is either compressed into round balls or powdered. Before adding to dishes it must be mixed with water to create a paste or liquid whey. Kashk has depth of flavour – think liquid feta but much stronger in taste and with the consistency of tahini. Ready-mixed kashk is conveniently sold in jars in Persian food shops.

Kashkeh Bademjan is generally served at parties as an appetiser with lots of thin lavash bread for dipping.

#### Ingredients

6–7 medium aubergines  
60ml (21/2fl oz) 1/4 cup olive oil, extra virgin or regular

1 large onion, thinly sliced  
4 garlic cloves, finely chopped  
75g (3oz) 1/4 cup kashk  
1/2 tsp salt  
pepper, to taste

#### For the topping:

2 sprigs of fresh mint, finely chopped or 1 tsp dried mint  
2 tbsp olive oil, plus extra to drizzle  
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped  
3 tbsp kashk  
1/3 tsp saffron threads, pounded then dissolved in 2 tbsp hot water  
1 tbsp ground walnuts

#### Method

Bake the whole aubergines at 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6 for 45–60 minutes until charred. Remove the skin, chop the flesh and place in a non-stick frying pan with the olive oil and onion, and fry until golden. Add the chopped garlic at the very end and





VELVET  
*Summer*  
**SURVIVAL**

allow it to brown. Then add just enough water to cover the mixture and let it simmer for about 20–30 minutes so that it becomes soft enough to purée.

Purée the cooked aubergine and onion mixture in a food processor, with a hand-held mixer, pestle and mortar or even a potato masher, along with the kashk, plus salt and pepper to taste.

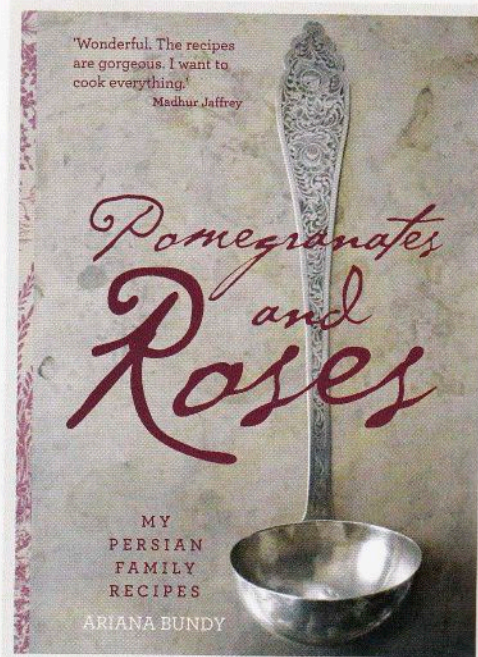
Make the topping. Fry the mint in 1 tbsp oil, and set aside. Fry the garlic in the remaining oil until golden, then set aside.

Spread the aubergine purée on a large shallow plate. Garnish with the fried mint and garlic, the kashk and a drizzle of olive oil and saffron liquid. Sprinkle with walnuts and serve with lavash

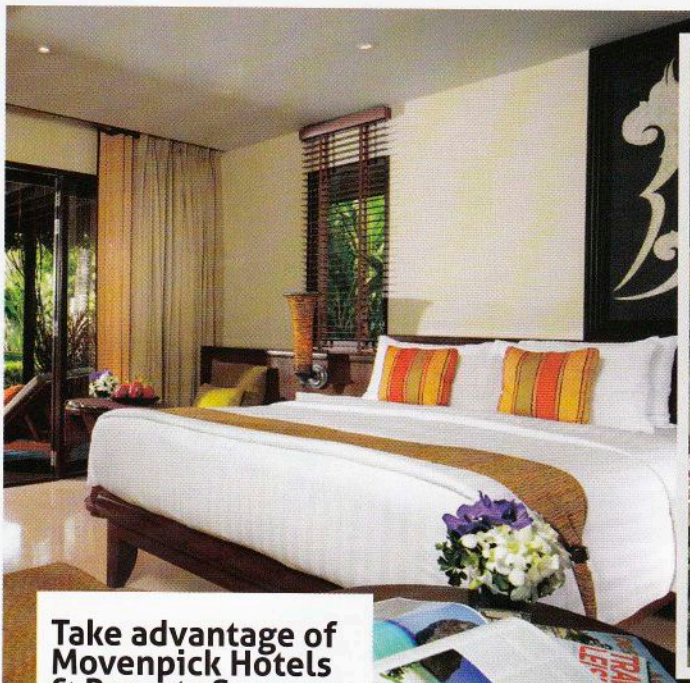
bread or any other thin bread, although a crusty baguette will also do nicely.

For a quick version, instead of baking whole aubergines, cut them into 8cm (3in) cubes. Place in a colander, run a little water over and then salt them to sweat away the bitterness. After 20–30 minutes, wipe the pieces with paper towels, then follow the method above.

**TIP:** To serve the purée as in the photograph, halve 2 large or 4 medium aubergines and scoop out the flesh. Wrap the shells in foil and bake for 20 minutes at 190°C/375°F/Gas Mark 5. Remove the foil and cook the shells for another 5–10 minutes so that they dry out a bit. Fill with the purée, decorate and serve.



*Pomegranates & Roses: my Persian family recipe (Simon & Schuster UK) is now available at Bloomingdales Home, priced AED165.*



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