



## Side dish

### No sweat

Grilling transforms asparagus from the kind of vegetable you hated as a kid to a sweet, meaty, lip-smacking treat.



Trim off the tough bottoms of the spears by grasping each end and bending it gently until it snaps at its natural point of tenderness—usually two-thirds of the way down the spear.

If the spear is less than 6 inches long, chances are it has already been trimmed for you. Peel the remaining stalk with a vegetable peeler and arrange on a plate.

Drizzle 1 pound fresh asparagus with 4 tablespoons olive oil and turn until spears are coated. Sprinkle with salt and turn again. Grill 5 minutes on medium hot grill. Give each spear a one-quarter turn every minute or so.

Asparagus should begin to brown in spots, indicating its natural sugars are caramelizing, but should not be allowed to char.

Remove asparagus from grill and serve immediately. Wrap grilled spears with slices of prosciutto for an appetizer. Spears can be trimmed and peeled earlier in the day, but if you're storing them for more than a day, trim the bottoms and stand upright in an inch of water.

Recipe adapted for Weber Grills from "The Surreal Gourmet's Off the Eaten Path" cookbook. For more recipes and grilling tips, visit [www.weber.com](http://www.weber.com)

### Summer spirits

Kahlua recently introduced Kahlua Especial, an ultra-premium version of the popular coffee liqueur.

Serve it straight over ice, or in your favorite cocktail. Available in 750ml and 1-liter sizes the bottle mimics the shape and mahogany color of Kahlua's bottle.

Rich and dark, Especial is creamy smooth, a harmonious blend of dark chocolate and cafe mocha.

The aroma is a blend of vanilla coffee with a hint of rum. It has a pleasantly warm finish with a lingering caramel.

Treat yourself and a friend to aniced Especial Latte—combine 1 part Kahlua Especial, 1 part chilled coffee, 2 parts milk, stir and serve over ice in a tall tumbler. For more information on Kahlua Especial and a list of Kahlua's cocktail and food recipes, log onto [www.kahlua.com](http://www.kahlua.com)



## Middle Eastern touch

### Foods with an Arabic flair can help keep summer meals cool

BY LANA MINI  
AND BRENDA DOMINICK  
STAFF WRITERS

One of Detroit's most popular ethnic festivals wraps up tonight and there's still a few hours left to enjoy the sultry music and refreshing foods.

The Arabic festival in downtown Detroit's Hart Plaza runs until 9 p.m. tonight (Sunday) and vendors are featuring Arabic staples that can cool your temperature like cold chick pea hummus, icy fruit smoothies, green salad with toasted pita chips (called Fatoosh), deep fried chick pea falafel sandwiches with fresh vegetables, chicken shawarma sandwiches and the wonderful, charred, but chilled eggplant dip called baba ganoosh.

"Arabic food has soared in popularity," said Leila Chahine at her family's Farmington location of La Shish restaurant. "Mainly because it's so high in flavor and it's healthy."

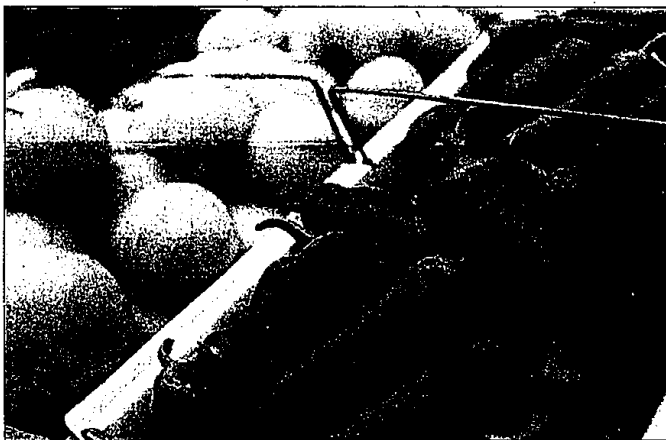
Fifteen years ago most Michiganders weren't familiar with Middle Eastern food as the majority of restaurants featuring the cuisine were clustered in Dearborn. La Shish now owns 15 restaurants outside of Dearborn and scattered throughout Wayne, Oakland and Macomb Counties. Middle Eastern food can be found easily in nearly every area city.

If the Arabic Festival wasn't on your summer schedule, try making some of the dishes at home. The next few months are good times to create the recipes since Michigan gardens grow the basic ingredients used in Middle Eastern dishes: cucumbers, tomatoes, zucchini and eggplant.

"The most popular dishes that people who are new to Middle Eastern cuisine try are hummus dips, lamb chops and Fatoosh and tabooleh salad," Chahine said.

The folks at Al-Amcer restaurant in Dearborn agree about what's popular.

PLEASE SEE FLAIR, B2



STAFF PHOTO BY JERRY DOLINSKY

Tomatoes are a key ingredient in Fatoosh salad and should be ripe in Michigan gardens and produce stores next month. Use hot peppers with pickled beets as a traditional Middle Eastern appetizer.

### ZUCCHINI IN YOGURT SAUCE

6 cups Michigan grown zucchini (approximately 3 medium size)  
1 teaspoon salt  
5 tablespoons vegetable oil  
6 cups yogurt  
1 tablespoon cornstarch  
3-4 cloves garlic  
1 teaspoon salt  
3 tablespoons vegetable oil  
handful of fresh chopped or  
2 tablespoons dry and  
crumbled  
1/4 teaspoon black or white  
pepper

Slice off both ends of zucchini. Wash well, scrubbing skin. Cut into cubes the size of walnuts or smaller. Sprinkle with salt and leave for 1 to 3 hours in a sunny location to draw out moisture. Drain zucchini. Lay on a tea towel and pat dry.

In a large cooking pot, sauté zucchini in oil over medium high heat for about 10 minutes, turning over now and then. Scoop up and lay in a bowl. Pour yogurt into same pot, add cornstarch and mix well. Place over high to medium heat and continuously stirring bring to a boil. Add zucchini and bring to the boil again. Lower heat, simmer for about 5 minutes. Crush garlic with salt. Fry in oil until light golden in color. Add to zucchini. Add mint and pepper. Take off heat.

Serve at room temperature alongside a crusty loaf of bread, radishes, olives, slices of sweet pepper. Makes 6 servings.

Source:  
<http://www.stvlg.com/cooking/recipe/month.html>

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## Pack a wand (or a baguette) to make your picnic magical

This is the time of year when a picnic can be a lot of fun, especially if you pack a wand! That's the meaning of the word baguette in French.

A golden, crisp baguette or two, some great cheese (try a perfectly ripened Brie or a nutty flavored Emmenthal), fresh fruit (such as pears, apples or grapes), and a bottle of Chardonnay will set the stage for happy memories in the years ahead. Most picnic items are fairly easy to find. An excellent baguette is not. It's the simplest of breads

(just flour, water, yeast and salt) yet it's the hardest to make really well.

Possibly, the best baguettes are made using an old Polish method of raising the dough slowly—with a naturally fermented starter or leaven called "poolish."

It has the consistency of a pancake mix made with flour, a lot of water and only a minute amount of yeast. Like most good things, it takes a lot of time to make baguettes this way. At The Give Thanks Bakery, we take the best part of three days.

Now, what are the characteristics you can look for to ensure that you are getting a great baguette? First, a caramelized crust that is beautifully golden and crisp. Also, the cuts on the surface are a telling feature—there should be raised ridges, evenly spaced. The inside is as important as the outer

appearance. Look for healthy signs—a creamy whiteness to the crumb (this tells you that the flour wasn't bleached or overmixed), and plenty of irregular-sized holes and a shininess where the dough has been stretched thin.

Lastly, aroma and taste are very important.

You should be able to smell the wholesomeness of wheat and experience an apple/nutty flavor.

Certainly, the flavor should be complex. Never bland.

So, when you pack your picnic basket, hopefully the baker has done his job well. Then your "wand" will give you a magical time indeed.

### PICNIC PASTA WITH PESTO (SAY THAT QUICKLY 10 TIMES!)

A delightful dish you can make quite eas-

ily and transport without too much trouble is a pasta dish. Simply prepare and chill your favorite pasta and grill some tender chicken breasts. Cut these into strips and slice some sun-dried tomatoes. Add these ingredients together, with some pine nuts.

Then, make a classic basil pesto from fresh basil, a clove or two of minced garlic, extra virgin olive oil and some finely chopped walnuts.

Combine the pasta, chicken and sun-dried tomatoes with your pesto. Then, all that's needed is a sprinkling of grated Parmesan cheese on top. Bella Cucina Artful Food makes a pesto that's sold in 6 oz. jars. It's excellent.

Buon Appetito!

Gerald Matthes is the managing partner of Give Thanks Bakery & Cafe in downtown Rochester and a Bloomfield Hills resident. Look for his column on the third Sunday of the month in Taste. Visit [www.givethanksbakery.com](http://www.givethanksbakery.com) for more information.



Give Thanks

Gerald Matthes

Are there cobwebs on your cultural calendar?

Turn to today's ARTS section. Get inspired with ideas for some worthwhile things to do.