**Cooking around the World: Lebanon**

*Recipes provided by Julia Issa-Ghantous*

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**LEBANESE KAFTA**

6 servings

Ingredients:

1 1/2 pounds lean ground beef

1 finely chopped onion

1/2 cup finely chopped parsley

1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper

1/4 teaspoon ground allspice

1/2 teaspoon cumin (optional)

1/4 cup Panko breadcrumbs

1 teaspoon salt

1/4 teaspoon black pepper

6 wooden skewers

Method:

1) Preheat an outdoor grill for high heat or preheat the oven to 400 F. If using wooden skewers, soak in water.

2) In a large bowl, mix together the ground beef, onion, parsley, cayenne, allspice, cumin, panko breadcrumbs, salt and pepper until evenly blended.

3) Divide into 6 portions, and press around one end of the skewers to form a log shape approximately 1 inch thick and 6 inches long.

4) Grill for 10 to 15 minutes, turning occasionally, or bake in the oven for 30-40 minutes until meat is no longer pink.

**TABBOULEH**

8 servings

Ingredients:

1 cup bulgur wheat

1/4 cup freshly squeezed lemon juice

1/4 cup good olive oil

1 cup minced scallions

1 cup chopped fresh mint leaves

1 cup chopped flat-leaf parsley

2 cups diced tomatoes

3 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt

1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Method:

1) Soak the bulgur wheat in the lemon juice.

2) Stir, then allow to stand at room temperature for about 1 hour.

3) Add the scallions, mint, parsley, tomatoes, 2 teaspoons salt, and the pepper; mix well.

4) Season, to taste, and serve or cover and refrigerate. The flavor will improve if the tabbouleh sits for a few hours.

**HUMMUS**

8 servings

Ingredients:

2 cups drained well-cooked or canned chickpeas, liquid reserved

1/2 cup tahini (sesame paste), with some of its oil

1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil, plus oil for drizzling

2 cloves garlic, peeled, or to taste

Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

1 tablespoon ground cumin or paprika, or to taste, plus a sprinkling for garnish

Juice of 1 lemon, plus more as needed

Chopped fresh parsley leaves for garnish

Method:

1) Put everything except the parsley in a food processor and begin to process; add the chickpea liquid or water as needed to allow the machine to produce a smooth puree.

2) Taste and adjust the seasoning.

3) Serve, drizzled with the olive oil and sprinkled with a bit more cumin or paprika and some parsley.