



BISON DELIGHTS

middle eastern cuisine, western style

habeeb salloum

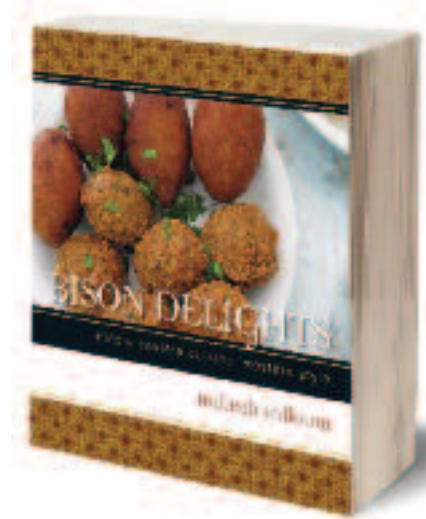


**middle east
and prairie west
meet—deliciously—
in this cookbook of over
100 bison recipes developed
by canada's foremost
expert in arab cuisine,
habeeb salloum.**

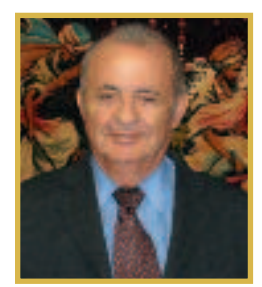
For thousands of years, the indigenous peoples of the prairies relied on the bison for clothing, shelter, tools and food. The arrival of Europeans to the West nearly wiped out the bison population, but over the past several decades, through conservation and repopulation efforts, bison numbers have increased. Bison ranches can now be found across North America.

Inspired by the increasing availability of bison meat, Habeeb Salloum, an expert in Arab cuisine, has adapted over one hundred recipes from the Middle East for use with this historical Prairie staple. Amateur and professional chefs alike will welcome the opportunity to add these straightforward, thorough and easy-to-follow recipes to their culinary repertoires.

contents



HABEEB SALLOUM grew up in Saskatchewan, and for the last 25 years he has been a full-time freelance writer, specializing in food, history, and travel. Besides 5 books and 19 chapters in books, he has had hundreds of articles about food, travel, history, and homesteading in western Canada appear in such publications as the *Toronto Star*, the *Globe and Mail*, the *Western Producer*, *Contemporary Review*, *Vegetarian Journal*, *Saveur*, the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Christian Science Monitor*. Among his most notable works are the books *Journeys Back*



to Arab Spain, From the Lands of Figs and Olives, Arabic Contributions to the English Vocabulary, Classic Vegetarian Cooking from the Middle East and North Africa, and the award-winning *Arab Cooking on a Saskatchewan Homestead: Recipes and Recollections*, as well as the chapter on the history of the Syrians in Canada in the *Encyclopedia of Canada's Peoples*.

BISON DELIGHTS: MIDDLE EASTERN CUISINE, WESTERN STYLE
BY HABEEB SALLOUM
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sfeehat jamus wa rumman

—ARABIAN BISON-POMEGRANATE PIZZA

Serves about 9 as an entree

A Syrian/Lebanese-type pizza or pie, *sfeehah* can be made with meat, vegetables, or sweet, and can be open or filled. Its fame has spread as far as the Latin and Central American countries, where it is found in many restaurants. In Brazil, meat dishes of Arab origin are often made spicier than their Middle Eastern counterparts and are much sought after by the local population.

2 lbs / 907 g	frozen bread dough, thawed (or use homemade)
1 lb / 454 g	bison round steak, cut into very small pieces
1 cup / 250 ml	pomegranate seeds
2	medium onions, very finely chopped
4	cloves garlic, crushed
½ cup / 125 ml	finely chopped parsley
4 Tbsp / 60 ml	tomato paste
1 tsp / 5 ml	paprika
1 tsp / 5 ml	salt
½ tsp / 2 ml	pepper
½ tsp / 2 ml	ground coriander seeds
¼ tsp / 1 ml	cayenne
4 Tbsp / 60 ml	olive oil

Form dough into 36 small balls, then cover with a damp cloth and allow to rest for 2 hours.

In the meantime, make a filling by thoroughly combining the remaining ingredients, then divide filling into 36 parts and set aside.

With a rolling pin, roll dough balls into circles about 3 inches (7.5 cm) in diameter, then fold and pinch edges to make a raised rim. Spread one part of the filling inside the rim and pat down evenly with fingers, then continue until all the balls are finished.

Place on a well-greased cookie tray, then bake in a 300° F (150° C) preheated oven for 1 hour or until the rims of the circles turn light brown. Remove and brush edges with a little extra olive oil, then serve as an appetizer or as an entree.



Tajine fas —BISON STEW WITH PRUNES AND HONEY

Serves 4 to 6

The Arabs considered the enjoyment of savoury foods one of life's great pleasures. Hence, when they introduced fruits and vegetables into Europe, they also brought their *yakhnis* and *tajines*. Today, many stews that grace the tables of Europe have their origins in the Arab East. Without doubt, the eggplant, *hummus* (chickpea) and lentil stews found in Spain and Portugal owe their origins to dishes developed in the Middle East.

This Moroccan dish was likely first cooked in Arab Spain. When the Arabs were expelled from the Iberian peninsula, many landing in North Africa, they brought their food with them. This recipe is the same as the one prepared in Morocco, but with bison meat replacing the lamb that is usually used.

2 lbs / 907 g	bison round steak
4 Tbsp / 60 ml	olive oil
1	medium onion, finely chopped
½ cup / 125 ml	finely chopped coriander leaves
2	cloves garlic, crushed
2 tsps / 10 ml	salt
½ tsp / 2 ml	ground ginger
½ tsp / 2 ml	pepper
½ tsp / 2 ml	tarragon
½ tsp / 2 ml	cinnamon
3½ cups / 875 ml	water
2 cups / 500 ml	small prunes, pitted
2 Tbsp / 30 ml	honey
1 tsp / 5 ml	orange blossom water
2 Tbsp / 30 ml	toasted sesame seeds

Cut bison steak into 1-inch (2.5-cm) cubes.

Heat oil in a saucepan, then add meat, onion, coriander leaves, garlic, salt, ginger, pepper, tarragon, cinnamon and water. Cover, then bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low, then simmer for 1½ hours or until the meat is well cooked, adding more water if necessary. Stir in prunes and honey, then simmer over low heat for 15 minutes, stirring frequently. If more sauce is desired, add more water. Stir in orange blossom water, then bring to a boil. Place on a serving dish, then sprinkle with toasted sesame seeds. Serve immediately with cooked rice or couscous.

Καβαβ μα^c Καραζ —BISON MEATBALLS AND CHERRIES

Serves 4

One of the most enticing signs of spring are the beautiful blossoms of the cherry trees, which after a few months bear their tangy fruit. Besides being featured in all types of desserts, in the Syrian-Aleppo kitchen cherries are also used to give a touch of class to a wide variety of entrees.

The cherries for this dish should be sour. Canned cherries are the best, but use only those with a small amount of sugar. Do not use syrupy cherries that are meant for pies and other desserts.

1 lb / 454 g	ground bison
¼ cup / 60 ml	bread crumbs
2	eggs, beaten
½ tsp / 2 ml	allspice
½ tsp / 2 ml	ground cumin seeds
1 cup / 250 ml	very finely chopped onions, divided
1 tsp / 5 ml	salt, divided
½ tsp / 2 ml	pepper, divided
19 oz / 540 ml	canned pitted sour cherries with their juice (not sweetened)
4 Tbsp / 60 ml	tomato paste
2 cups / 500 ml	water
2 Tbsp / 30 ml	olive oil

Prepare meatballs by combining ground bison, bread crumbs, eggs, allspice, cumin and half of each of the onions, salt and pepper. Mix well and form into meatballs the size of small walnuts, then set aside.

Place the meatballs, the remaining onions, salt, and pepper, reserved cherry water, tomato paste, water and oil in a saucepan, then bring to a boil. Cover and cook over medium-low heat for about 1 hour, stirring a number of times and adding more water if necessary. Add cherries, then re-cover and simmer over low heat for about 20 minutes or until meatballs are cooked, adding more water if needed. Serve hot with cooked rice.



Καβαβ Γροογ —BISON PATTIES

Makes from 20–25 patties, depending on size

Unlike in other Middle Eastern countries, where *kababs* are usually barbecued, traditional Iraqi *kababs* are made into patties and fried. I have tried them both fried and cooked in an oven and found the oven ones preferable. To this recipe, I have added an egg, not usually included in traditional recipes for *kababs*. Typically made from either beef or lamb, these are even more succulent when made with bison meat.

1 lb / 454 g	ground bison
1	small sweet pepper, finely chopped
1	large tomato, finely chopped
1	medium onion, finely chopped
2	cloves garlic, crushed
½ cup / 125 ml	flour
1	egg, beaten
2 Tbsp / 30 ml	finely chopped coriander leaves
1 tsp / 5 ml	salt
½ tsp / 2 ml	pepper
½ tsp / 2 ml	cumin
½ tsp / 2 ml	turmeric

Place all ingredients in a food processor, then process for 1 to 2 minutes. Form into patties about ½ inch (13 mm) thick and place in a greased baking pan. If the mixture is too soft, spoon into the pan with a large spoon, then form into patties. Bake in a 300° F (150° C) preheated oven for 1½ hours or until tops turn golden brown.

NOTE: If these are to be fried, add more flour to stiffen the meat mixture.

shawrabaat fool wa laham

—BEAN-VEGETABLE-MEAT SOUP

Serves 8 to 10

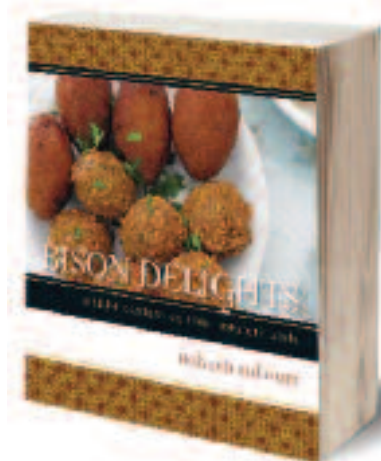
This wholesome and hearty soup is more like a stew. It is great in winter as the main meal of the day, giving warmth and a feeling of contentment to the body. I can still remember my mother's words as she served us dishes such as this one: "You will stay strong and healthy if you always eat soups and stews."

½ lb / 227 g	bison shoulder meat	Cut bison shoulder into ½-inch (13-mm) cubes.
1	medium potato	Peel potato and dice into ½-inch (13-mm) cubes.
4 Tbsp / 60 ml	olive oil	Heat oil in a saucepan, then sauté meat, onions, garlic and hot pepper over medium-low heat for 10 minutes. Add remaining ingredients and bring to a boil. Cover and cook over medium-low heat for 2½ hours or until beans and meat are well cooked, stirring a few times and adding more water if necessary.
2	medium onions, finely chopped	
4	cloves garlic, crushed	
1	small hot pepper, finely chopped	
1½ cups / 375 ml	skinned and split large dried fava or lima beans	
2 cups / 500 ml	stewed tomatoes	
1	medium carrot, finely chopped	
½ cup / 125 ml	finely chopped coriander leaves	
2 tsps / 10 ml	salt	
1 tsp / 5 ml	pepper	
1 tsp / 5 ml	cumin	
8 cups / 2 L	water	



“Habeeb Salloum spins his middle eastern magic on north America’s original red meat. He does the majestic bison proud.”

—JENNIFER BAIN, TORONTO STAR FOOD EDITOR



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