

A FAMILY MEAL IN Middle East

COOK & EAT

Work together as a family to prepare a traditional Middle Eastern meal (recipes on back). While you eat, try out some customs shared among many Middle Eastern cultures:

- A variety of hot teas or coffees are served with every meal. (Each area has its own specialized blends.)
- Traditionally people sit on the floor, mats, or pillows around a low table.
- Eating is done with the right hand only, or a piece of bread may be used as a scoop.



LEARN ABOUT THE MIDDLE EAST

Almost every Middle Eastern country has a desert region. Saudi Arabia's Rub 'al Khali is the largest uninterrupted sand desert of the world. Temperatures throughout the Middle East vary with elevation and the seasons. They can range from -51°F in the winter months of the mountains to 122°F in the desert summer.

The majority of countries of the Middle East are predominantly Sunni or Shia Muslim. According to Islamic laws, girls and boys are often educated separately. In strict Islamic states girls and women are denied educational opportunities altogether.

The main Middle Eastern languages include Arabic, Farsi (Persian), Russian, Armenian, French, Tajik, Azeri, Hebrew, Turkish, Cirassian, Kurdish, Urdu, English, Kyrgyz, and Uzbek. Here are a few Arabic phrases:

- Please: *min faDlik*
- Thank you: *shukran*
- You're welcome: *äafwan*
- Excuse me: *aläafw*

In Uzbekistan, the entire family sleeps in a central room during the winter months. When summer arrives, they move their sleeping quarters outside on a raised platform in the courtyard.

In Kyrgyzstan, a horse is sacrificed at the funeral of a respected elder and served at the funeral meal.

READ THE BIBLE AND PRAY

Prayer is powerful! (In Farsi, Doa Ghodrat Darad) Why? Because God hears us when we pray. All the time. Even when we are afraid. When the disciple Peter was in prison his friends prayed for him all night long.

Read Acts 12:1-19. Talk about what we can learn from Peter and his friends. Pray together for Christians who face persecution in the Middle East.



Middle Eastern Recipes

HUMMUS

Buy pre-made hummus from your local grocery store, or try the following recipe.

2 (15 1/2 oz.) cans of chickpeas or garbanzo beans

1/2 tsp. cumin

1/2 tsp. chili powder (optional)

1 tsp. sesame seed oil

1 clove garlic, minced

2-3 tbsp. lemon juice

Salt and pepper to taste

Place all ingredients in a food processor and blend until mixture is of a paste-like consistency. Serve with pita bread. Yields approximately 2 1/2-3 cups.

NOTE: You can leave out the chili powder to make a much milder hummus.

UMM ALI (EGYPTIAN BREAD PUDDING)

1 package frozen puff pastry

1 3/4 C chopped mixed nuts (pistachios, pine nuts, and almonds are traditional, but you may substitute walnuts, pecans, hazelnuts, or other nuts)

1/2 C coconut flakes

1/2 tsp. vanilla extract

1 (15 oz.) can of sweetened condensed milk

3 C water

1/2 C cream

Preheat the oven to 400°. Bake the puff pastry according to package directions. Meanwhile, combine the liquid ingredients and cook them over medium heat for 3-5 minutes. Allow this to cool.

Break the pastry into pieces and combine it in a large bowl with the nuts and coconut flakes. Pour the mixture into a greased 9x13 baking dish. Pour the cooled liquid over the nut mixture and bake, uncovered, for 15 minutes.

PITA BREAD, CHEESE CUBES, DATES, AND GRAPES

Cut pita bread rounds into four sections each. Cut cheese into small cubes. Cut larger dates and grapes into smaller pieces.

