

Salma Hage: *The Lebanese Kitchen*: Phaidon, 2012: 512 pp., hardback, £29.95.

I love Lebanese food, especially the *mezze*, and I was delighted to see that this book has a huge chapter, nearly 128 pages, of *mezze* and salad recipes alone. I am in heaven. There are other chapters on soup, fish, meat, vegetables, breads and pastries, desserts, drinks and pickles and jams. Talking of huge, this is a hefty book, certainly not one for bedtime reading. Its place is in the kitchen, as its title suggests. It is a hands-on book written by Salma Hage, originally from the mountains of the Kadisha Valley in northern Lebanon who, in the time-honoured way, learned cooking from her mother and grandmother. Salma emigrated from Lebanon to England in 1967 with her husband and young son. Here in London she first worked as a kitchen-hand and then worked her way up to the role of head chef for a large catering organization. But, in her own words, 'I'm a professional English cook ... but at home ... I cook Lebanese.' Her book is a treasure trove of enticing recipes. There are many old favourites of mine such as *baba ghanoush*, several kinds of *hummus*, *tabbouli*, but also some inspiring new ones to try such as eggplant (aubergine) and pomegranate salad and red cabbage and pomegranate. For those who have a sweet tooth there are many delicious pastries and desserts although I wonder if some of them (including some recipes in other parts of the book) may have been influenced by Salma's training as an English cook: – does that matter? With beautiful, vibrant photographs and recipes straight from the heart, this book will be an inspiration for people who want to try something new and different but also a great resource for all of us who love Lebanese food. Browsing through the pages there are so many enticing recipes beckoning to be tried.

HELEN SABERI

Jane Hornby: *Fresh and Easy: What to Cook and How to Cook it*, Phaidon, 2012, 351 pp., hardback, £29.95.

This is the author's second book, offering her selection of 'spring and summer classics', the 'Fresh and Easy' of the title, following her previous and popular *What to Cook and How to Cook it*. She trained at Leith's School of Food and Wine and has an established reputation as a food writer, notably with the *BBC Food Magazine*.

This is a large and weighty tome, with the presentation aimed at less