

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

experienced cooks who wish to provide lively food for themselves and others, and are in need of clear advice regarding the required ingredients and detailed instructions as to how to handle them. A lengthy introduction gives advice on how to approach recipes, tips on successful outdoors eating, acquiring kitchen equipment and the buying and storing of food items. The chapter arrangement is by meal occasion rather than courses or main ingredients, and moves from *Breakfast and brunch* and *Quick lunches and suppers* through *Picnics*, *Food for friends*, *Sides & salads* to *Desserts & baking*.

The abundant provision of colour photographs for each recipe is a prominent feature. They include a display of the ingredients, shown in the size and quantity required followed by the details of the method, with pictorial coverage of the different stages, and concluding with a view of the completed dish. The photographs are taken with a clear and practical intent. This tends to give the book a somewhat textbook feel, but they usefully illustrate the comprehensive accompanying text. The style of cuisine is fairly heterogeneous in that there is widespread dipping in and out of various national cuisines, or at least the ingredients associated with them. The salad section includes dishes based on pasta and pastry. *Food for friends* includes Duck and pineapple, and Chicken and quinoa, and *Barbecues* have Mackerel with orange and radish, and Chimichuri-style burgers. The author has an enthusiastic following since the appearance of her earlier book, and many will welcome a second volume written in the same helpful way.

JENNIFER STOREY

Alan Borg: *The History of the Worshipful Company of Cooks*: Jeremy Mills Publishing, Huddersfield, 2012: 242 pp., illus., hardback, £30.00

For some six hundred years, between the fourteenth and nineteenth centuries, all professional cooks working in the City of London had to have their training, qualifications and trade practices approved by their Guild, incorporated as the Worshipful Company of Cooks in 1482. Unfortunately much of its archive was destroyed by fire in 1771 and in the Blitz, the only readily available descriptions of its past being the history published by F. Taverner Phillips in 1932, with subsequent volumes in 1982 and 2002. There was still a great need for a single book to draw all the available sources together to present a full, authoritative, readable and fully illustrated history of the company. This has now been admirably achieved by Dr Alan Borg, formerly Director of the Victoria and Albert museum. The quality