

JOE BARZA CHEF

"SIMPLICITY. THAT'S THE BIGGEST SUCCESS"



"I LIKE TO EAT," SAYS JOE BARZA, describing his inspirations. His passion for cooking, though, first came from watching his mother and grandmother. "They would sit me by the sink and I used to watch them cook." But away from the home he hid his passion for cooking. "Chefs were not thought of highly. Lebanese food is well known, but not Lebanese chefs. I thought: 'If French chefs have creativity, why not Lebanese?' So I worked out the look and feel of how I was going to cook my food. I knew I needed to innovate."

Joe has been credited with reinventing Lebanese cuisine. "I like to reflect Beirut's cosmopolitan nature in my food. All my chefs bring their own experience, and that creates richness in the kitchen."

Getting the basics right is essential: "Quality is everything in life. It has to be. I like to have knowledge of each ingredient and mix those ingredients to surprise people. If I don't try something new each day I feel upset."

His one-word advice for us cooking at home is: "Simplicity. That's the biggest success. Make things simple. The difficulty, though, is that simplicity is actually very hard to achieve."

www.joebarza.net

Joe's enthusiasm is infectious: "I have a very quick recipe you should try – aubergine purée with grilled halloumi. Peel, drain and roast 1kg of aubergine, mix with 50g of bulgur wheat and then purée. Blend in 75g of olive oil and a pinch of fresh mint and parsley. Add salt and pepper. Grill 250g of halloumi and slice onto a plate with the purée. Garnish with sliced tomato, cucumber and fresh mint. Then, at the end, drizzle lightly with pomegranate molasses. Simple. Beautiful."

TAP HERE TO SEE JOE'S WORK





CLOSE

Joe Barza's take on Lebanese cuisine
combines simplicity and innovation

