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International Union of Arab Master Chefs

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How Arab cooking evolves — documenting a recipe as it changes

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A practical method for documenting change across family and professional versions of Arab recipes.

Start with a specific version

Record the dish name as its cook uses it, together with the place and occasion. Describe the preparation you observed. Two dishes with the same name may differ in ingredients, sequence or service. Identifying the version keeps the comparison useful and preserves its context.

Separate the change from its explanation

If one grain is substituted for another, record the type, weight, cooking time and observed texture. Attribute explanations about availability or family custom to the person who gave them. Keep your observations separate from the oral account.

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An exercise from kitchen to archive

Choose two versions of the same dish. Record the source, season, main ingredient and service style for each. Compare one step, such as when herbs are added, and describe its effect in two portions of equal weight. Finish with one historical question that needs independent evidence.

American University of Beirut — Food Heritage Foundation

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