

Set out your stall

Brick Lane in London's East End is a thriving, multicultural hub of great food and the inspiration for author **Dina Begum**

My love affair with Brick Lane started in the market. I've always loved the hustle and bustle of traders displaying their wares, offering samples, enticing you in with voices soft and loud, punctuated by the lilt of global accents.

As a child in the 1980s I would visit the Sunday market with my dad, fascinated by the many types of stall set up in the road. There were stalls selling second-hand furniture, jewellery, bric-a-brac, toys and clothing, including leather goods. Whatever you wanted, it was there.

Traders would always be friendly and to my child's eye it felt like a magical land. I would wait with anticipation for Sunday to arrive as it was my dad's only day off and meant treats and delicious food at a Pakistani cafe called Sweet & Spicy. Sometimes he'd buy me a trinket; a musical jewellery box with a dancing ballerina, or a vintage handheld mirror. I'd try and remember favourite stalls, marking them in my head with a mental image so that we could visit them again the following week.

These weekly outings also meant peeking into a part of East London that was ever-changing, and introduced me to different foods and flavours. ■

@dinafoodstory

Brick Lane Cookbook by Dina Begum is published in hardback by Kitchen Press, £20.

Mushroom shawarma

A wonderful vegan and vegetarian option that is great on a pitta with salad and a dollop of garlic mayo. The spices perfectly complement the mushrooms and you get a hint of sour from the sumac. A delicious meat-free Monday dish with minimal prep and only 15 minutes of oven time.

Serves six

6 large portobello mushrooms
2 tsp ground cumin
1 ½ tsp paprika
½ tsp ground coriander
½ tsp ground cardamom
½ tsp ground cinnamon
½ tsp ground turmeric
1 ½ tbsp sumac
juice of ½ lemon
6 cloves garlic, finely grated
40g ginger, finely grated
50g fresh coriander, stems and leaves, chopped
salt
black pepper

1 Heat a frying pan on medium heat and toast the cumin, paprika, coriander, cardamom, cinnamon and turmeric for about 30 seconds, stirring continuously. Take off the heat and put the spices into a bowl. Add the sumac, lemon juice, garlic, ginger, chopped coriander and olive oil and mix well. Season to taste with salt and black pepper.
2 Wipe the mushrooms clean, then add them to the marinade and stir through so that they are evenly coated. Leave to marinate overnight in the fridge.
3 When you are ready to cook the mushrooms, preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Lay the mushrooms on a baking tray and bake for around 15 minutes until lightly golden. Serve hot.

Masala chips with smoked paprika and garlic mayonnaise

East London is studded with old-fashioned fish and chip shops, and I can barely pass one without being



Photographs: Peter Watson



Baked cheesecake, main; masala chips with smoked paprika and garlic mayonnaise, above

lured in by the comforting hug of frying potatoes. Like most people who've grown up in the UK, not much time goes by before I start to crave this most British of snacks – in my book there's no such thing as too much potato. Chaat masala is crucial to the recipe as it adds a sweet, tangy and sour undertone to the chips: if you're near an Asian grocery store you'll most likely be able to find a packet there. Most major supermarkets tend to store this in their world foods section as well.

Serves six

1kg Desiree potatoes, or another waxy variety
500ml rapeseed oil, to deep fry (and an additional 1 tsp to fry the garlic)
4 tsp mayonnaise
2 tsp Greek yogurt
½ tsp smoked paprika
1 tsp garlic clove, finely grated
½ tsp chaat masala
½ tsp paprika
½ tsp dried coriander leaves
½ tsp chilli flakes

1 Peel and wash the potatoes and slice into 1cm thick slices. Chop each slice lengthways into 1cm wide chips. Place the chipped potatoes into a large bowl of cold water as you go to avoid discolouration.

2 Bring a large pot of salted water to the boil and, when the water is bubbling, carefully slide the drained chips into the pan. Boil for about five minutes, until just tender but still firm. You'll know they're ready when the potato pieces start to lose their opaque appearance.

3 Drain in a colander and rinse quickly with a burst of cold water. Place in a large plastic ziplock bag and put immediately into the freezer for 20 minutes, being careful not to break the potato pieces.

4 Now make the mayonnaise dip by mixing together the mayonnaise, yogurt and smoked paprika. Quickly fry the crushed garlic clove in the oil, then stir it into the mayonnaise and put into the fridge.

5 In a small bowl, mix together the chaat masala, paprika, dried coriander leaves and chilli flakes. Set aside.

6 Heat the rapeseed oil for deep frying in a deep pan on high heat. When the oil is hot, very carefully put half the slightly frozen chips into the pan. Cook for about 15 minutes or until golden, occasionally moving the chips around to get an even colour.

7 With a slotted spoon transfer the cooked chips to a roasting tin. Sprinkle with about one teaspoon of the masala spice mix and shake the tin so that all the chips are coated with the masala. Repeat for the second batch of chips – if you have a deep fat fryer you can probably fry them in one batch. Devour hot, with the smoked paprika and garlic mayonnaise.

Baked cheesecake

A trip to Brick Lane is incomplete without a slice of baked cheesecake from Beigel Shop, and this recipe is based on their best-selling dessert.

The thick, creamy cheese filling with a hint of vanilla and lemon sits on top of a thin biscuit base with an almost imperceptible almond taste. It's simply delicious as is, so there's no need to add any sauces or toppings. You'll need a 23cm springform cake tin.

Serves 12

100g digestive biscuits
50g rich tea biscuits
60g butter, at room temperature
¼ tsp almond extract
400g cream cheese
200g caster sugar
150ml soured cream
100ml double cream
4 medium eggs
juice of ½ lemon
vanilla extract
2 tbsp cornflour

1 Preheat your oven to 170°C/Gas Mark 3½. Grease the tin and line the sides with a strip of greaseproof paper.

2 Whizz the biscuits into fine crumbs in a food processor (or put them into a ziplock bag and bash with a rolling pin). Melt the butter in a small pan over medium heat, then stir in the biscuit crumbs and almond extract. Press the mixture firmly into the base of the prepared cake tin and bake for ten minutes.

3 Remove from the oven and cool. Whisk together the cream cheese and sugar, then add the soured cream, double cream and the eggs and blend together until smooth and fluffy – this will take two to three minutes with an electric whisk, or about five minutes by hand. Mix in the lemon juice, vanilla extract and cornflour and mix again until everything is combined.

4 Pour the mixture into the tin and bake for 60 to 90 minutes. The surface will be puffy and light golden. Leave in the oven for 30 minutes with the door ajar (to avoid a cracked surface) and then cool completely at room temperature.

5 Chill in the fridge for three to four hours before serving.

Italian grapes add la dolce vita to Australia

Australian winemakers are well known as some of the industry's most resourceful experimenters. Now they are turning their attention to Italian grapes with unexpected success.

This new interest in Italian varieties comes after almost 200 years of focusing primarily on French grapes in Australia. Shiraz (30 per cent), cabernet sauvignon (18 per cent) and chardonnay (16 per cent) are still by far the most commonly planted, but as the climate warms and droughts become prolonged, particularly in Australian wine's 'engine room' of the Murray-Darling and Riverina regions, winemakers are turning to southern European grapes.

In the 2011 census, 916,000 Australians had Italian ancestry. With so many Italian Australians it is hardly surprising Italian grape varieties now feature strongly.

King Valley, north-east of Melbourne, is gaining a particular reputation, where families like the Pizzinis first grew tobacco, before turning to grapes. In the 1980s the Pizzinis were approached by local Brown Brothers winery to trial nebbiolo and sangiovese grapes which had recently arrived in the country.

Early examples of famous grapes nebbiolo (Barolo's grape) and sangiovese (Chianti's main grape) lacked fruit and depth compared to more mature shiraz and grenache. Now though, they are coming of age.

The frontrunner quality-wise amongst white grapes is fiano. Originally from Campania, inland from Naples, it has settled well in Clare Valley (Jeffrey Gosset), Riverland (Jade & Jasper) and McLaren Vale (Coriole) in South Australia and Frankland River in Western Australia (Larry Cherubino). Another successful white Italian grape is vermentino, grown in Sardinia, Tuscany and Liguria.

Sangiovese was first introduced in the 1970s into Penfold's nursery Kalimna



Rose Murray Brown

@rosemurraybrown

Red

Heartland Sposa E Sposa 2014 Ben Glaetzer

A gutsy ripe take on Alto Adige's lagrein and Piedmont's dolcetto, never blended together back home. An affordable, easy drinking blackberry spiced Langhorne Creek red.

£13.50-£14.50, www.greatwesternwine.co.uk; www.luvians.com

Chalmers Heathcote Sagrantino 2012

Sagrantino is so successful on the iron-rich soils of Heathcote in Victoria. Lush, ripe with plums and damsons and better than anything in Umbria.

£22, [Fine Wine Musselburgh; www.greatwesternwine.co.uk](http://www.greatwesternwine.co.uk)

First Drop Minchia Montepulciano 2012

This unusual montepulciano from the Adelaide Hills has densely dark fruits and firm tannins; it tastes Italianate – serve with red meat.

£19.99-£21, www.oldbutcherswinecellar.co.uk

The Hedonist Sangiovese 2015 Walter Clappis

This well priced attractive sangiovese from McLaren Vale's Willunga foothills has more succulent ripeness than in Chianti; typical cherry fruits, spice and rounded texture; large oak matured with six per cent cabernet for structure.

£14.99-£16.99, www.rudewines.co.uk; www.luvians.com

Unico Zelo The River Nero d'Avola 2017

Sicily's plummy nero d'Avola is at home in warm Riverland; this is a delicious, lush, savoury, easy-drinking unoaked example.

£19, www.corkingwines.co.uk

Torzi Vigna Cantina Negroamaro 2012

Dominic Torzi's ancestors hail from southern Italy; he specialises in Puglia's negroamaro in Barossa Valley. Perfumed, spicy, liquorice and lively tannins. This seemed to be most Italianate in style. ■

£11.97, www.bbr.com



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