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Food Chain, Oct. 7

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ON THE SHELVES

Classic Lebanese Cuisine: 170 Fresh and Healthy Mediterranean Favorites

By Kamal AI-Faqih

Globe Pequot Press, \$24.95

A handsome collection of Lebanese food, from pita-based snacks to grilled kebabs to rice pudding decorated with apricots, it features plenty of color photos and the names of each dish in English and Lebanese (with a helpful pronunciation guide).

Some of the pictures are a bit too small to show details, but with many of the small pictures, such as Roast Leg of Lamb, the size doesn't matter.

There are one or two pictures in which the food looks a little creepy, if not downright unappetizing.

Case in point: Tilapia with Jalapeño and Pine Nut Sauce. The fish has been "reconstructed" on the plate, encased in bright green and pine-nut "scales," with cucumber slices for gills, a piece of radish for an eye and carrot darts to suggest fins. Hmm.

That aside, Al-Faqih is a conscientious teacher and offers many food-buying and cooking tips throughout the book

And many Lebanese dishes are one-pot meals, which gain in flavor if they are prepared the night before and sit in the fridge overnight.

This makes them convenient dinner choices, similar to crock-pot cooking.

ON TV

"What Would Brian Boitano Make?" on Food Network

He's traded in his glittering skating tights for chef whites and, boy, can this guy glide through the kitchen.

This show has the surreal in spades.

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It isn't just that Boitano cooks - and cooks pretty well - he entertains some of the strangest collections of eaters in San Francisco, which isn't exactly the Capital of Normal to begin with.

The first episode, called "Derby Girls," had Boitano inviting an entire roller derby team back to his house for a full-course meal starring the girls' favorite ingredient: bacon.

In "Handyman Special," Boitano cooks up a French-inspired Italian meal (hey, would I lie about a thing like that?) for his handyman, with the hope that said handyman will invite Boitano to join his exclusive supper club.

Is that a 10.0 idea for a show or what?

ON THE WEB

pumpkinnook.com

Includes recipes and other pumpkin-related information.

- Mary-Liz Shaw



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