



# May 2026 : Baharat

**Baharat** is an all-purpose Middle Eastern spice blend of warm, earthy spices that deliver sweet, smoky flavor with a touch of heat. While it almost always includes eight core spices — black pepper, cinnamon, cloves, cumin, coriander, nutmeg, paprika, and cardamom — regional variations abound. North Africa adds rosebuds, Turkey incorporates dried mint, and the Persian Gulf introduces dried lime powder and saffron.

**Culinary Uses:** This warming spice blend is incredibly versatile. Use it as a rub to season proteins and vegetables for grilling or roasting. Turn it into a marinade or dressing by whisking it into olive oil and adding an acid. It can also be used to season rice or lentils. You can even experiment with it in sweet recipes - try adding a pinch to your next batch of molasses cookies.

**Medicinal Uses:** Baharat's spices contain bioactive compounds with notable health properties: piperine in black pepper enhances nutrient absorption, cuminaldehyde offers antimicrobial and antioxidant effects, and eugenol in cloves acts as an anesthetic and antiseptic. While the synergistic effects of these compounds in combination aren't fully understood, research suggests spice blends may outperform individual spices in health benefits.

In traditional Middle Eastern medicine, baharat's component spices have long been used therapeutically: cumin for digestion and bloating, cinnamon for blood sugar regulation, and cloves for toothaches and breath freshening. Though baharat isn't a standalone remedy, its individual spices carry centuries of medicinal use.

**Fun Facts:** Bahārāt comes from the Arabic word for "spices," itself derived from the Persian bahār. Since it refers to spices in general rather than a fixed blend, regional variations are common. The term likely originated in the Ottoman Empire. Some historians think the word may also trace back to bahar, an old name for India, which was the Arab world's primary source of imported spices.



# GRILLED ARAYES WITH CREAMY CUCUMBER SALAD

**Total Time: 25 minutes**

**Servings: 4-6**

## Ingredients

- 2 lb. ground beef
- 2 shallots, finely chopped
- 5 garlic cloves, finely grated, divided
- 5½ tsp. baharat, divided
- 3 tsp. Diamond Crystal or 1¾ tsp. Morton kosher salt, divided
- 6 pitas with pockets, halved
- Extra-virgin olive oil (for drizzling)
- Vegetable oil (for grill; optional)
- 3 Tbsp. plain whole-milk yogurt
- 1 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- 12 oz. Persian cucumbers (about 6), halved lengthwise, sliced crosswise 1" thick
- ⅓ cup coarsely chopped tender herbs (such as parsley, cilantro, dill, and/or chives)



## Instructions:

1. Gently mix 2 lb. ground beef, 2 shallots, finely chopped, 4 garlic cloves, finely grated, 4½ tsp. baharat, and 2½ tsp. Diamond Crystal or 1½ tsp. Morton kosher salt in a medium bowl. Evenly stuff 6 pitas with pockets, halved, with meat mixture and place on a baking sheet. Drizzle lightly with extra-virgin olive oil and turn to coat.
2. If grilling, prepare a grill for medium-low heat; oil grate with vegetable oil. Arrange pitas on grate, cover, and grill, turning halfway through, until crisped and lightly charred in spots, about 5 minutes per side. Stand pitas upright, cut sides down and grill until beef mixture is cooked through, about 2 minutes.
3. If baking, place a rack in middle of oven; preheat to 425°. Bake pitas on baking sheet until crisped, 6–8 minutes per side. Stand pitas upright, cut sides down and bake until beef mixture is cooked through, about 2 minutes.
4. Stir 3 Tbsp. plain whole-milk yogurt, 1 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice, and remaining 1 garlic clove, finely grated, 1 tsp. baharat, and ½ tsp. Diamond Crystal or ¼ tsp. Morton kosher salt in a medium bowl to combine. Add 12 oz. Persian cucumbers (about 6), halved lengthwise, sliced crosswise 1" thick, and ⅓ cup coarsely chopped tender herbs and stir gently to coat.
5. Stack pitas on a platter and mound cucumber salad on the side to serve.

# TURKISH SPICED CHICKEN KEBAB WITH POMEGRANATE RELISH & TAHINI YOGURT

**Total Time:** 1 hr 35 min.

**Servings:** 4

## Ingredients

### Tahini yogurt:

- 3 ½ Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- 1 Tbsp. Baharat Seasoning
- 1 large garlic clove, pressed
- ½ cup plain whole-milk Greek yogurt
- ¼ cup tahini

### Pomegranate relish:

- 1 ¼ cups pomegranate seeds
- ⅔ cup shelled unsalted natural pistachios, coarsely chopped
- ⅓ cup coarsely chopped fresh Italian parsley
- 2 ½ Tbsp. olive oil
- 2 ½ tsp. fresh lemon juice

### Chicken:

- 1/2 cup coarsely grated onion
- 2 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- 2 Tbsp. olive oil
- 2 tsp. Baharat Seasoning
- 4 skinless boneless chicken breast halves, each halved lengthwise, then cut crosswise into 3 pieces
- Warm pita breads
- Special Equipment: 4 10- to 12-inch-long metal skewers

## Instructions:

1. **For tahini yogurt:** Combine lemon juice, Baharat Seasoning, and garlic in medium bowl; stir to blend. Let stand 5 minutes. Whisk in yogurt and tahini. Season tahini yogurt to taste with salt. **DO AHEAD:** Can be made up to 2 hours ahead. Let stand at room temperature.
2. **For pomegranate relish:** Mix all ingredients in medium bowl. Season to taste with salt and freshly ground black pepper. **DO AHEAD:** Can be made 2 hours ahead. Let stand at room temperature.
3. **For chicken:** Whisk first 4 ingredients in large bowl. Add chicken. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Marinate at room temperature at least 1 hour and up to 2 hours.
4. Preheat broiler. Thread 6 chicken pieces onto each skewer. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Place on small rimmed baking sheet. Broil chicken until cooked through, 5 to 6 minutes per side. Arrange kebabs on platter. Serve with tahini yogurt, pomegranate relish, and warm pita breads.



## BAHARAT CHEWY MOLASSES COOKIES



**Time:** 45 minutes

**Servings:** 2

### Ingredients:

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- ¼ cup Valrhona cocoa powder
- 2 tsp. baking soda
- 4 tsp. Baharat, ground
- ½ tsp. salt
- 1 egg
- ½ cup butter, melted
- ⅓ cup dark brown sugar
- ¼ cup white sugar
- ⅓ cup molasses
- ½ tsp. vanilla extract
- ¼ cup white sugar + ½ tsp. Baharat

### Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees and prepare a sheet pan lined with parchment paper. Whisk dry ingredients together in a small bowl.
2. Whisk egg, butter, sugars, vanilla and molasses in a medium bowl until well mixed. Add dry ingredients and mix until combined.
3. Put remaining sugar and Baharat into a shallow bowl or saucer. Scoop out dough by the tablespoon and roll into balls. If dough is sticky, refrigerate for 20 minutes. Roll in sugar mixture and place on parchment lined sheet pan, about 2 inches apart.
4. Bake until puffed, cracked and just set around the edges, about 8 - 10 minutes. (Over baked won't be chewy.) Transfer to wire rack until cooled.

## BAHARAT SWEET POTATO CHIPS



### Ingredients:

- good olive oil, for frying
- 1 large sweet potato, thinly sliced with a mandoline
- kosher salt
- 1 tsp. baharat, or to taste
- 1/4 tsp sugar
- garlic and onion yogurt sauce, for dipping

### Directions:

1. in a heavy pot fitted with a thermometer, heat about 2" olive oil to 360°. fry the potato slices in batches until browned and crispy, 1 1/2-2 minutes. transfer them to a paper towel. sprinkle with salt, baharat, and sugar, and enjoy!

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## BAHARAT BLEND

**Yield:** ⅓ cup

### Ingredients:

- 4 tsp. /10 grams cumin seeds
- 1 Tbsp. /4 grams coriander seeds
- 1 tsp. /4 grams black peppercorns
- 2 (2-inch/5-gram) cinnamon sticks, broken into pieces
- 2½ tsp. /6 grams green cardamom pods
- 1½ tsp. /2 grams whole allspice berries
- 1 tsp. /2 grams whole cloves
- 1 whole nutmeg (2 grams)
- 4 bay leaves

### Directions:

1. Place all the ingredients in a spice grinder, clean coffee grinder, or mortar and pestle, and grind until fine. If you like, you can strain the mix through a fine-mesh strainer to remove any coarse bits, but this is optional. Store in an airtight container in a cool, dark place for up to 1 year.

## Check Out These Cookbooks!

These cookbooks all contain recipes with herbs from this month's kit. Did you know that we have over 350 cookbooks in our collection? Explore recipes from many different countries and cuisines!



### ***Milk Street Simple***

Christopher Kimball

Location in Library:  
641.5 KIM



### ***Home is Where the Eggs Are: Farmhouse Food for the Ones You Love***

Molly Yeh

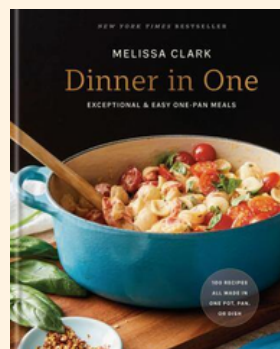
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### ***Dinner Tonight: 200 Quick Recipes for Inspired Weeknight Cooking***

America's Test Kitchen

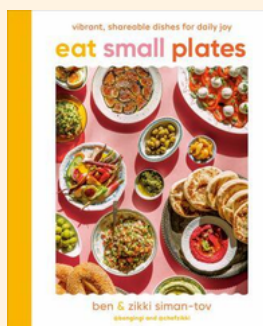
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### ***Dinner in One: Exceptional and Easy One-Pan Meals***

Melissa Clark

Location in Library:  
641.555 CLA



### ***East Small Plates: Vibrant Shareable Dishes for Daily Joy***

Ben Siman-Tov

Location in Library:  
641.59 SIM



### ***Pretty Delicious: Simple, Modern Middle-Eastern, Served with Style***

Alia & Radwa Elkaffas

Location in Library:  
641.595 ELK