



## NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2021

Following through on our gradual revision of the Spice Kits, we've had a look at the Al Fresco kit. At our place, outdoor meals often include big sharing platters, which enable those who are hungry to really dig in, and those with bird-like appetites to pick gently at morsels, without any embarrassment about how much is put on, or left on, the plate. So we've followed that thought, with the sub-heading *Plates with Mates* as part of the Al Fresco description. We think it's an even better kit than it was before, the contents now being: Chinese Five Spice, Sazon Seasoning, Rose Harissa, Nasi Goreng mix, Chipotle Chilli powder and Umami spice mix. We know you'll find lots to enjoy with the new recipes, including a super-spiced seafood platter!

Our new Box of Ideas for Winter will keep you cosy through the chilly months. Never used fenugreek leaves before? Well, now's the time to find out how well they can enhance in unexpected ways. The kit contains our ever-popular Persian spice mix, along with whole cinnamon quills, fenugreek leaves, chipotle chilli powder and premium bay leaves. Go on, extend your repertoire, and enjoy the discoveries!

Since our wings were clipped by the pandemic, we have constantly had people asking whether we intend to resume our popular trips to India. We are deeply saddened by the continuing dire situation in India, however we trust that eventually the pandemic will be brought under control so that we can visit this amazing country again. Maybe 2024 ... it's too soon to start making plans, but at this stage we do hope to go back, with a group, when it's safe to do so.

Our clipped wings, mentioned above, caused us to take a few weeks to travel to Broken Hill, stopping at several lovely country towns along the way. Naturally, we called on our customers on the way – The Essential Ingredient at Orange; Thom, Dick and Harry's at Broken Hill; and S&S Butchers at Mudgee. It is sad to see that so many restaurants in Western NSW are desperate for staff at this busy time when domestic tourists are there in droves. Unemployed? Go west!

During the past year of fulfilling your internet orders, our analysis shows us that Aleppo Pepper has been the product consistently most in demand. What is it that makes this version of chilli so popular? Sure, you ordered your first pack because it was an ingredient in your latest Ottolenghi book, but what makes you come back for more? Aleppo pepper is one of the many *capsicum annum* chillies, but these flakes from Turkey have a particularly delicious roasted, slightly oily, flavour, with a very tolerable heat level of 6 out of 10.

In case you're new to Aleppo Pepper, here's a family favourite of ours:

*LAMUCIN (Turkish pizza)*

<i>1 pack flatbreads approx 23cm wide</i>	<i>¼ cup fresh mint leaves</i>
<i>1 cup fresh continental parsley leaves</i>	<i>1 tsp ground cumin</i>
<i>1 tsp Aleppo pepper, plus extra</i>	<i>½ tsp ground coriander</i>
<i>½ tsp sweet paprika</i>	<i>1 tsp salt</i>
<i>1/3 cup tomato paste</i>	<i>750g lean lamb mince</i>
<i>½ cup pine nuts</i>	<i>parsley, to serve</i>

*In a food processor, whiz mint, parsley, cumin, coriander, Aleppo pepper, paprika, salt and tomato paste until well combined. Add lamb mince and pulse 3 or 4 times to make a thick paste.*

*Preheat oven to 240C. Prepare as many baking sheets as will fit in your oven, lining each with baking paper. Spread lamb topping over flatbreads (it should do 6 to 8), and place as many as you can on oven trays. Bake each for 8-10 minutes, until lamb is cooked through. Repeat with remaining pizzas.*

*Whilst hot from the oven, top with additional Aleppo pepper, pine nuts, and parsley. Serve immediately.*

Another very popular chilli flake originating from the same part of the world is Urfa Biber, from the Urfa region of Syria. Slightly milder and more moist than Aleppo Pepper, Urfa Biber flakes are very dark, almost black, with an underlying dried-fruit sweetness. Use them instead of Aleppo pepper in the recipe above, for a little less chilli heat.

We're in for more stock shortages, not surprising in this sad and desperate world we live in. Due to issues with importing spices from other countries, especially India, there may be some variations in quality. The challenge for us is: do we offer you the best available, or do we make an item out of stock rather than pack something that does not meet our high standards? We'll work out a way that keeps you informed about what you're getting. There are also shortages looming of some of the Australian native ingredients, due to crop failures.

The pandemic has not been kind to classes of any kind. But we've found a solution that may appeal to you if you're keen to know more about the spices you use. As part of our mission to educate people about culinary herbs and spices, we have partnered with Restaurant and Catering Australia to provide a series of four on-line courses, plus a free introductory course. On successful completion of a course, you earn a digital badge to certify that you have completed the course. You can display your badge on your CV, or LinkedIn profile to add weight to your skills and competencies. The information is directed at food professionals, however, many very involved home cooks will find this challenging and rewarding. At a cost of \$39.95 per course, it's pretty good value! Click on this for more information: <https://edu.training.rca.asn.au/>