



CELEBRITY KITCHEN

SHAYMA SAADAT

OK! Pakistan was lucky enough to catch up with food writer, photographer and stylist of the award winning food website, The Spice Spoon as she prepared a special treat for our readers!



Scones with Cardamom-Scented Strawberries and Lemon Cream

Serves 8-10

INGREDIENTS:

- Cardamom-Scented Strawberries and Lemon Cream
- 600g strawberries, rinsed, hulled and quartered
- 50g granulated sugar
- 1 tsp green cardamom powder
- 1 cup whipping cream
- 1 tbs lemon zest
- 1 tbs lemon juice
- 1 tbs icing sugar

SCONES:

- 75ml milk
- 1 tsp fresh lemon juice
- 1 egg, beaten
- 250g plain flour
- 1 tbs baking powder
- 70g sugar
- 75g chilled and diced butter

PREPARATION:

Place strawberries in a bowl and sprinkle sugar and cardamom powder on top. Cover and let stand at room temperature for one hour. Whip cream, lemon zest, lemon juice and icing sugar together until cream holds soft peaks. Place in fridge till ready to serve.

Preheat the oven to 225°C. In a small bowl, combine milk with lemon juice. After five minutes, the milk will look curdled and thick. This is sour milk. Whisk sour milk with beaten egg. Set aside. Sift flour, baking powder and sugar together into a large bowl. Add diced butter and rub into the flour with your fingertips until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs. Make a well in the flour mixture and pour in the sour milk mixture. Using a fork, stir until a soft, moist dough is formed. Do not over knead. Roll out the dough on lightly floured surface to 3cm thick. Stamp out rounds using a floured 5cm glass or biscuit cutter (you can recombine the scraps). This will yield 8-10 scones. Place rounds on the prepared baking sheet, giving each scone 1.5-2cm of room to grow in the oven. Brush the tops with sour milk mixture. Bake at 225°C for approximately 15-20 minutes or until golden brown.

TO SERVE:

Split the scones in half horizontally. Spoon some of the strawberries with their juice onto each shortcake bottom. Add a dollop of lemon cream on top and cover with the other half of the scone.

butter, Sriracha sauce, pickled red chillies and Damson plum preserves.

Do you prefer recipes or experimentation?

SS: Mostly experimentation; I love the aspect of trial and error in the kitchen.

Who is your cooking inspiration/idol?

SS: My mother. I also have utter respect for chef and restaurateur, Greg Malouf. **OK!**

TEXT: ANUSHKA TAPLUR
PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY: SHAYMA SAADAT

Shayma Saadat is truly an inspirational woman, along with juggling mummy and wife duties; she also works as a senior policy analyst in Toronto! Her passion for food of her heritage including Pakistani, Afghan and Persian keeps readers enticed as they follow her journey via Instagram @spicespoon.

When did you start cooking?

Shayma Saadat: I started to become a serious cook when I was studying at Cambridge and could not abide the food served in the college dining hall.

Who would be your dream dinner party guests?

SS: I would adore to invite Michelin-starred chefs like Elena Arzak and Hélène Darroze and serve them a simple meal – my mother's Pakistani chicken curry with *basmati* and an Afghan aubergine *borani*.

What is one food that always perks up your mood?

SS: Spaghetti with *pomodori pachino* (Sicilian tomatoes) with lots of grated parmesan on top.

What's your signature dish?

SS: *Tahdig* (Persian saffron-crusting rice) with prawn masala, followed by a cardamom chocolate flourless cake.

Afghan, Pakistani or Persian – what's your favourite cuisine?

SS: Oh dear, for a food lover like myself, that's an impossible question to answer.

Who is your favourite person to cook for?

SS: Zain, my husband, who loves my home cooked food; he oohs and aahs even if I prepare a simple meal like lentils and rice.

Do you remember the first thing you ever cooked?

SS: Yes, I was nine-years-old when I prepared a blueberry cobbler for my family. I'm sure my parents remember it, too (that's how bad it was).

What's your weakness?

SS: Anything savoury and fried – shrimp cakes, samosas, *frites*, *fiore di zucca* – the list is endless.

What is your best dining experience?

SS: My husband, Zain and I had a meal at *Iskele*, a seafood restaurant along the Bosphorus, in Istanbul – it was magical.

How often do you cook?

SS: Several times a week. I also bake two-three times a week, especially late at night, as it relaxes me.

Favourite restaurant in the world?

SS: *Cul de Sac* in Rome – having lived in that city for years, it's all about the memories I associate with that restaurant.

What is your food philosophy?

SS: To me, food is so much more than that dish in front of you – it is about the customs associated with it and the stories and family ties that go with it.

Who is one international chef you would love to work with?

SS: I would love to work with the *halwai* who made hundreds of *puris* at a family brunch in Karachi. He is one of the many unsung heroes of Pakistani cuisine.

What's your dream food destination?

SS: The Walled City of Lahore and Rome.

Describe your ideal dinner party.

SS: We would start with my spicy crab cakes, followed by lobster tail in a spiced tomato and coconut curry with lots of grilled crusty bread. For dessert – a strawberry rosewater and cardamom granita.

Do you prefer to eat at home or out?

SS: A mix – I cook a lot at home, but I love the dynamic Toronto restaurant scene, too.

Five random items in your fridge.

SS: Full-fat Greek yoghurt, salted cultured