

Dinner in 40 Minutes

Kebabs With Black Olive and Lemon Relish

4 servings

These simple grilled kebabs, served with a briny, assertive relish, will transport you to the Mediterranean. There's more than enough relish; leftovers stand up to grilled tuna. Adapted from "The Big Book of Outdoor Cooking & Entertaining," by Cheryl and Bill Jamison (Morrow, 2006, \$24.95; the book is reviewed on the facing page). Serve with ratatouille.

For the relish:

1½ cups pitted kalamata olives, coarsely chopped

Grated zest and juice of 1 large lemon

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil

1 tablespoon minced basil or 1 teaspoon minced oregano

¼ cup drained and rinsed capers

For the kebabs:

1 pound ground lamb

1 medium clove garlic, minced

2 tablespoons minced onion

1½ teaspoons crumbled dried mint

½ teaspoon salt

½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

½ teaspoon ground cumin

1 dozen "boiling" or pearl onions

Bring a medium pot of water to a boil over high heat. Have ready 6 metal skewers, preferably flat. (If using bamboo skewers, soak them in water for at least 30 minutes.)

For the relish: Combine all ingredients in a medium bowl and stir to mix well. Set aside.

For the kebabs: Combine — but do not overmix — the lamb, garlic, minced onion, mint, salt, pepper and cumin. Cover and refrigerate for 10 to 15 minutes, then form into about 14 oval patties about 1 inch wide and a couple of inches long.

Cut an X in the bottom of the onions for easier peeling. Add the onions to the water. Boil until nearly tender, 3 to 5 minutes. Drain, rinse in cold water and peel.

In the meantime, prepare the grill. If using a gas grill, preheat the grill to medium heat. If using a charcoal grill, start the charcoal or wood briquettes. When the briquettes are ready, distribute them evenly under the cooking area for direct heat. Oil the grate. Place 2 or 3 of the lamb patties on each kebab, interspersing them with the onions. (If not grilling right away, place the kebabs on a lined baking sheet and refrigerate, covered.)

Grill for 8 to 10 minutes total, turning occasionally to brown all sides. Serve immediately, with relish on the side.

Per serving with 1 tablespoon relish: 354 calories, 19 g protein, 6 g carbohydrates, 28 g fat, 63 mg cholesterol, 12 g saturated fat, 607 mg sodium, 1 g dietary fiber

Recipe tested by Marcia Kramer; e-mail questions to food@washpost.com

— Marcia Kramer

TO DO

THURSDAY: Cooking demonstration and discussion about Afghan food. \$15. Proceeds will benefit the Women for Afghan Women's Fund. 7 p.m. Whole Foods Market, 2504 Solomon's Island Rd., Annapolis. 410-573-1800.

THURSDAY: Rum Festival. Sponsored by TasteDC. \$68. Registration required. 6:30-8:30 p.m. The Whittemore House, 1526 New Hampshire Ave. NW. 202-244-3700.

SATURDAY: Book signing of "Build a Better Burger,"

grilling tips and wine pairing sponsored by Wegmans and Sutter Home Winery. Noon-2 p.m. and 5-7 p.m. Wegmans, 11620 Monument Dr., Fairfax. 703-653-1600.

RESERVE NOW
AUG. 7-11: Silver Spring cooking camp for kids ages 9-14. Sheila Crye teaches nutritious snacks and lunches. Kids can enter their finished dishes in the Montgomery County Fair. 301-512-8631.

— Leigh Lambert

SEND NOTICES TO: To Do, Food, The Washington Post, 1150 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20071, or food@washpost.com. 14 days in advance.

SO MANY QUESTIONS . . . | A FURTHER CONVERSATION FROM OUR WEEKLY ONLINE CHAT

Germantown: I loved the snapper recipe [Red Snapper With Potatoes and Black Olives, Food, June 21], but I am not too sure I can fillet a whole fish. Will this be any less terrific if I use filets? Will I need to adjust the cooking time? Or am I just being a big baby — can you talk me through the filleting process?

Stephanie Witt Sedgwick: You don't have to be a big baby, Germantown — boning a cooked fish is a snap. You just peel away the skin and use a spatula or large serving fork to remove the cooked fish from above the bones. Then pull the bones up and away from the fish gently. The bottom fillet will still be on the plate.

As for substituting filets, this particular recipe is not a great candidate for a redo. The cooking time would have to be halved. The potatoes would neither cook through nor absorb the fish juices in a shortened time. Though you could lay the filets on top of the rosemary, that same short cooking time would hurt the end product.

CHAT TODAY: Join the Food section staff online at 1 p.m. today; go to www.washingtonpost.com/liveonline.

SHOPPING CART | NEW & NOTEWORTHY

For the latest in museum fashion, the Smithsonian American Art Museum and National Portrait Gallery, which reopens Saturday, asked New York designer and Target icon Isaac Mizrahi to create a functional garment for the conservation staff. But the **Mizrahi apron** (\$85) could also be a special gift for someone who likes to grill. Cut from fine blue denim, it has deep, angled pockets for tools and brushes, or perhaps a potholder. Satin fabric on the back of the ties can be draped to show the name of the Lunder Conservation Center, a new part of the museum complex where visitors can watch conservators care for national treasures. The apron is available in the museum store at Eighth and F streets NW, 202-633-5450.



APRON PHOTO BY FEMME CORNET FOR THE WASHINGTON POST. PHOTOS ABOVE AND AT RIGHT BY JELIA EDWARDS — THE WASHINGTON POST

Adagio Teas has improved the bottled-tea field with **Anteadole**, a line of four unsweetened flavors with no preservatives: White Pai Mu Tan, Black Yunnan and Chun Hao grade Jasmine are new; Green Dragonwell has been an award-winning flavor for Adagio since it was introduced two years ago. 16.9-ounce bottles, about \$2 each, at Perk Up Coffee House, 829 S. Washington St., Alexandria (703-838-2812) and at Juice Zone, 1990 K St. NW (202-223-9663), or order by bottle and by the case online at www.adagio.com.

Color Full notecards by Madison Park Greetings are graced with appropriate hues and sentiments about our fondest flavors ("If life gives you some lemons, make some kind of fruity juice" — Conan O'Brien). \$15 for a box of 16, available at the Papery, 4852 Bethesda Ave., Bethesda, 240-497-1420, or order online from a list of retailers at www.madisonparkgreetings.com.



OUCH | LEMON GRASS

For the average home cook, the skyrocketing price of lemon grass might not be a problem. But Thai chefs are feeling the pinch.

"It's gotten worse every month since April," says Sak Pollert, owner of the restaurant Rice in Northwest Washington's Logan Circle/Shaw neighborhood and Simply Home on U Street NW. "I told my chefs that if the price doesn't come down soon, we're going to buy a farm and grow it ourselves."

In April, Pollert paid \$1 per pound for the fragrant, reedlike herb that is a key ingredient in Thai curries, soups and drinks. In May, he paid \$3 per pound and in June \$3.50. When you buy 160 to 240 pounds per month, as Pollert does, the increase is significant. Thus far he has not raised menu prices — "for now, we're just absorbing it."

For home cooks, the pain is felt at the supermarket. Magruder's spokesman Mike Patterson says that last week his stores did not carry lemon grass because of its scarcity and high price. In April, customers paid \$2.99 per pound. This coming week, if lemon grass comes in at all, he estimates it will sell for \$4.99.

"Most supermarkets across the country aren't carrying it," says Robert Schueller, a spokesman for Los Angeles-based Melissa's World Variety Produce, one of the country's largest distributors of specialty fruits and vegetables. He says the problem stems from heavy rains in February and March in the Fresno, Calif., area where most of the U.S. lemon grass crop is grown. Eighty to 90 percent of the crop was ruined. The price took off in late March when the supply from Mexico ran out.

"In comparison to cost and availability, lemon grass took the sharpest turn of any crop this year so far," says Schueller, who predicts that prices will stay high through August. "This may not be the best summer to use lemon grass as skewers on the grill."

— Walter Nicholls



BY JELIA EDWARDS — THE WASHINGTON POST

FIRST CALL | LEWES MARKET

Beachgoers, take note: Lewes, Del., will begin sponsoring a farmers market on Saturday. The market will run from 8 a.m. to noon each Saturday through Sept. 30. Vendors from Sussex County will sell produce, bread, meats and flowers. Chefs and gardeners will give presentations throughout the summer.

The market will be set up at the Lewes Historical Society Complex, at the corner of West Third and Shipcarpenter streets; 302-644-2505. (On July 8, Aug. 5 and Sept. 30, the market will relocate to Old Lewes Ice Plant, 110 New Road.)