

# FISHERMEN'S VOICE

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*News & Comment for and by the Fishermen of Maine*

**FREE**

## **Cooking with Dottie**

We'd missed the first of Dottie Fitzgerald's famous Lebanese dinners this winter. I was just coming out of knee surgery and was in no condition to party. Asked her for a raincheck and next time could AJ and I cook with her as we'd like to learn a few of the mysteries of Middle Eastern cooking. Expand our horizons a bit. Dottie is just the lady to learn from and have fun as we rattled a few pans.

First time I'd been introduced to Lebanese was at Fall Bird Camp when Dottie's husband Mike would bring "Kibbe". The gang acted like this was a gift from the food goddess. I'm Down East, what do I know. If it's not made of fish, preferably cod or haddock with potatoes, I'm lost. The "Kibbe" was really good. I managed to get a few bites before 20-some guys evaporated it. Off and on AJ and I have had various dishes but no dedicated Lebanese dinner. Finally at the end of March Dottie announced the date.

Dottie's father, Joseph Sleeper immigrated to Caribou Maine (Aroostook County) from Lebanon in 1916 to join a growing Lebanese population in that area. He soon married Alma Meelan (from Limestone) and raised a family of seven children one of whom was Mitch Sleeper who owned Sleeper's Clothing Store on Main Street in Bangor. This was a very popular store of my Mall(less) generation and we seldom went to Bangor without a visit to Mitch's emporium. Alma (or soon to be known as "Sitoo"—Grandmother in Lebanese) gained a wide reputation for her excellent Lebanese cuisine. So Dottie, as a youngster learned at the side of a master and it shows.

I'd had a double physical therapy session on the appointed day and we were unfortunately running a bit late. Sharon Mangan (Dottie's niece) and Alyce Wakem (Dottie's cousin) had been shopping, chopping and soaking bulgur since midmorning. We said our "hellos" and I grabbed my notepad and played catch-up while AJ secured a knife and began chopping tomatoes. Menu was to be cooked Kibbe (from which one makes Kibbe nilee 'raw Kibbe' excellent in its own right), "Chicken and Hushwee" (Arabic for stuffing), Lubeatta (green beans), and Tabouille, a cold dish done with bulgur. *Note:* Lubeatta done with stew beef simmered with beans is simply "Lubee".

In the interest of space this month I'm going to do just two of the recipes, Lubeatta and Chicken Hushwee and continue another month with the more intricate Kibbe and Tabouille.

## **Lubeatta**

1 large onion chopped	1/2 teaspoon allspice
2 cloves garlic chopped	1 teaspoon salt
3 tablespoons olive oil	1/4 teaspoon pepper
28 oz. can of (fresh equiv.) diced tomatoes	1 1/2 lbs. fresh cut green beans
1 teaspoon cinnamon	

Sauté onion in medium size cooking pot in the olive oil until transparent. Add rest of the ingredients except the tomatoes and slow cook until just done. Then add the tomatoes. (Interesting note: tomatoes retard the cooking of beans and other vegetables). Bring the tomatoes to temperature. Like many dishes this one gets better the next day so can be made ahead.

## **Chicken and Hushwee (Stuffing)**

1 lb. ground hamburger	1/2 teaspoon allspice
1 cup rice	5 cups chicken broth (from boiled chicken)
2 chicken breast halves deboned	Handful pine nuts
1 teaspoon cinnamon	

Boil off the chicken breasts (include bones in the broth) in 5 1/2 cups water. Set aside the broth. Dab a bit off in another medium pan and brown the meat. Add 2 1/2 cups of the reserved chicken broth, the spices and rice. Cook for 20 minutes. Add the pine nuts, cook a bit longer and add the chicken. Keep warm in oven until served.

These recipes, pared down to feed 2-4 were doubled and quadrupled that day to serve 25 for dinner and there was nothing left for "take home". Food was delicious.

Fair winds and good roads.

*Lee S. Wilbur*