

ANISSA HELOU (www.anissas.com) is a chef, food writer, journalist, broadcaster, and consultant focusing on the cuisines and culinary heritage of the Middle East, Mediterranean and North Africa, and most recently the Islamic world. Born and raised between Beirut, Lebanon, and Mashta el-Helou, Syria, she knows the Mediterranean as only a well-traveled native can. Ms. Helou is the author of numerous award-winning cookbooks including *Feast, Food of the Islamic World, Sweet Middle East, Levant, The Fifth Quarter, An Offal Cookbook; Modern Mezze; Savory Baking from the Mediterranean; Mediterranean Street Food; Café Morocco*; and *Lebanese Cuisine*, which was a finalist for the prestigious Andre Simon awards and chosen as one of the *Los Angeles Times*' favorite books in 1998. *Lebanese Cuisine* remains the classic and most comprehensive work on this increasingly popular cuisine. *The Fifth Quarter, An Offal Cookbook; Modern Mezze*; and *Mediterranean Street Food* have received Gourmand World Cookbook awards. The latter was included in *Food & Wine* magazine's selection of the Best of the Best for 2002. *Mediterranean Street Food* was chosen by *Cooking Light* magazine as one of the top 100 cookbooks of the last 25 years. *Savory Baking from the Mediterranean*, was chosen by NPR, *The New York Times*, the *Chicago Tribune*, and *Food & Wine* as one of the best cookbooks for 2007 and *Levant* was chosen as best of the year by several publications including the *Observer Food Monthly* and *Australian Gourmet Traveller*.

Her new book, *Feast: The Food of the Islamic World*, was published to great acclaim by Ecco in May 2018 (also published in the UK and Germany) has been short-listed for the very prestigious Art of Eating award. It has also won the James Beard Foundation award in the International category and was short-listed for the IACP awards in the General and International categories. It was also chosen by the *New Yorker* as one of the 10 best cookbooks of the century so far.

Before the National Museum opened in Qatar, Helou worked with QMA with the idea of developing a food culture program within the National Museum but the program was never realized. In 2021, she worked with the Culinary Arts Commission of Saudi Arabia to standardize traditional and contemporary recipes collected from cooks in the Kingdom, bringing an experienced cookbook writer's hand to the preservation of foodways. The result was *Saudi Feast*, which was published in 2022 with the French edition winning a Gourmand award for best translated work in the French language. The book has also won Gourmand awards for both the entertainment and food writing categories.

She was also the winner of the Foodics Icon Award for Middle East and North Africa's 50 Best Restaurants 2023.

An accomplished photographer and intrepid traveler, Anissa runs culinary tours to various Mediterranean countries, Iran and Central Asia. She also teaches cooking classes. She was the featured chef in the travel/cooking Show, *Al Chef Yaktachef* (meaning the chef discovers), that was shown on Abu Dhabi TV in 2010. She has also featured as one of the judges/mentors to a team of chefs in *Taste Arabia*, which aired on Al Nahar TV in Egypt and OSN all over the Arab world and was one of the guest judges in the final of one of the series of *Top Chef Arabia*. She also recently gave a masterclass and was a guest judge on *Masterchef Italia*. She was also listed in 2013 in the *Arabian Business Magazine* as one of the "100 Most Powerful Arab Women" and on the "500 Most Influential Arabs".

Helou was also the first ever chef-in-residence in Leighton House during their Nour festival in November 2011. In 2013 she helped a group of Egyptian entrepreneurs open *Koshari Street* in Covent Garden where they serve her gourmet version of *Koshari*, the ultimate Egyptian street food. *Koshari Street* was chosen by the FT as one of London's 5 best street foods. Helou is no longer associated with *Koshari Street* and she now divides her time between Sicily where she will eventually have a teaching kitchen and London. Ms. Helou is fluent in French, Arabic, and English and soon to be fluent in Italian as well. (Trapani, Sicily & London, UK)