

# Na'ama's Fattoush

SERVES 6

scant 1 cup / 200 g Greek yogurt and  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup plus 2 tbsp / 200 ml whole milk, or 1  $\frac{2}{3}$  cups / 400 ml buttermilk (replacing both yogurt and milk)  
2 large stale Turkish flatbread or naan (9 oz / 250 g in total)  
3 large tomatoes (13 oz / 380 g in total), cut into  $\frac{2}{3}$ -inch / 1.5cm dice  
3 oz / 100 g radishes, thinly sliced  
3 Lebanese or mini cucumbers (9 oz / 250 g in total), peeled and chopped into  $\frac{2}{3}$ -inch / 1.5cm dice  
2 green onions, thinly sliced  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  oz / 15 g fresh mint  
scant 1 oz / 25 g flat-leaf parsley, coarsely chopped  
1 tbsp dried mint  
2 cloves garlic, crushed  
3 tbsp freshly squeezed lemon juice  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup / 60 ml olive oil, plus extra to drizzle  
2 tbsp cider or white wine vinegar  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  tsp freshly ground black pepper  
1 tsp salt  
1 tbsp sumac or more to taste, to garnish

Arab salad, chopped salad, Israeli salad—whatever you choose to call it, there is no escaping it. Wherever you go in the city, at any time of the day, a Jerusalemite is most likely to have a plate of freshly chopped vegetables—tomato, cucumber, and onion, dressed with olive oil and lemon juice—served next to whatever else they are having. It's a local affliction, quite seriously. Friends visiting us in London always complain of feeling they ate "unhealthily" because there wasn't a fresh salad served with every meal.

There are plenty of unique variations on the chopped salad but one of the most popular is *fattoush*, an Arab salad that uses grilled or fried leftover pita. Other possible additions include peppers, radishes, lettuce, chile, mint, parsley, cilantro, allspice, cinnamon, and sumac. Each cook, each family, each community has their own variation. A small bone of contention is the size of the dice. Some advocate the tiniest of pieces, only  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch / 3 mm wide, others like them coarser, up to  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch / 2 cm wide. The one thing that there is no arguing over is that the key lies in the quality of the vegetables. They must be fresh, ripe, and flavorful, with many hours in the sun behind them.

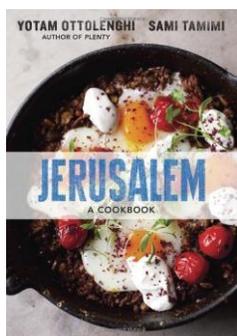
This fabulous salad is probably Sami's mother's creation; Sami can't recall anyone else in the neighborhood making it. She called it *fattoush*, which is only true to the extent that it includes chopped vegetables and bread. She added a kind of homemade buttermilk and didn't fry her bread, which makes it terribly comforting.

Try to get small cucumbers for this as for any other fresh salad. They are worlds apart from the large ones we normally get in most supermarkets. You can skip the fermentation stage and use only buttermilk instead of the combination of milk and yogurt.

If using yogurt and milk, start at least 3 hours and up to a day in advance by placing both in a bowl. Whisk well and leave in a cool place or in the fridge until bubbles form on the surface. What you get is a kind of homemade buttermilk, but less sour.

Tear the bread into bite-size pieces and place in a large mixing bowl. Add your fermented yogurt mixture or commercial buttermilk, followed by the rest of the ingredients, mix well, and leave for 10 minutes for all the flavors to combine.

Spoon the fattoush into serving bowls, drizzle with some olive oil, and garnish generously with sumac.



***Jerusalem: A Cookbook*** by Yotam Ottolenghi and Sami Tamimi;  
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