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Born and raised in Lebanon with an education in chemistry, [Carole Moawad](#) hadn't ever predicted that she would someday be the co-founder of [M'OISHI](#), the UAE's homegrown mochi ice cream manufacturer. In March 2017, she opened her first M'OISHI store in City Walk, Dubai. Today, she is the owner of 13 M'OISHI cafes across the UAE and one franchise in Saudi Arabia. [Hodema](#) consulting services finds out a little more about this Dubai delight.

How and why did you start M'OISHI in Dubai?

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Being a foodie, I always searched for new desserts. I tried the mochi ice cream the first time in Lebanon with my friends and it stuck in my mind as an interesting choice of dessert. Going back to Dubai, I began researching mochi in general and discovered the history behind it in Japan, and that no one serves it in the Middle East nor GCC. I immediately thought of creating an authentic Japanese coffee shop based on mochi ice cream along with other Japanese confectionery. Back then, I was working at Munich Re Dubai, a reinsurance company. After discussing it with a friend who loved the idea and jumped on board, I launched the project in parallel with my job. My brother and another friend also joined as investors. All the stakeholders, whether freelancers or startups were passionate about the project. We prepared the recipes at home, organized photoshoots in the neighborhood, and created the branding with a startup company in Lebanon. As for the name, it came about by pure coincidence. Oishi means delicious in Japanese so I added the M to make it sounds like mochi 😊 to end up with M'OISHI!

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What were the main challenges faced during the project's development phase?

The challenge lay in recruiting chefs, especially since there is no mochi production in this region. We, therefore, created awareness campaigns to explain what mochi is. By the time we launched the brand, we had some funny encounters. Some customers were waiting for it to warm up forgetting there was ice cream inside; others thought the rice dough was a package so they removed it and ate what was inside...

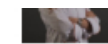
Another challenge faced was filling out the necessary paperwork, answering factor-specific questions, getting to better know the suppliers and other stakeholders... You could say that every day was a learning opportunity interrupted by moments of fear, but never doubt!

Are you planning to expand your brand?

We are planning to expand the brand as a Japanese café-restaurant in the Middle East region as well as in Europe, North Africa and the United States -by chronological order. We want to launch the concept as part of M'OISHI lifestyle community dream!

What are your future projects?

I would love to run my own photo gallery and display pictures of street images I took myself. I would also love to create an online shopping platform and a furniture design concept to name a few...



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April 10, 2020



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