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Siraj, where Emirati cuisine meets the Levant

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Siraj restaurant Dubai

In an interview with Culinary Enthusiast and Event Management Expert [Heba Rumhein](#), Lebanese-based consulting company [HODEMA](#) learns all about the interestingly-unique origins behind the creation of the [Siraj](#) restaurant brand, Dubai.

Where did the idea of the restaurant come from?

It all began with my passion for decor, food and culture. I love everything that is unique and healthy and Siraj is a perfect amalgam of both. Food holds great significance to both my family and I, considering that while growing up, they owned and ran a hotel. It was during that period that I learned that the most successful point of entry into any market is individuality and authenticity. Keeping my passion close to heart, I began to browse the outlets in the area before arriving at the conclusion that there were neither any Emirati nor Syrian fine dining restaurants. I then began working on creating a combination of both cuisines under a new restaurant concept. We eventually launched Siraj, an eatery whose interior architecture and menu items perfectly capture the essence of the concept, with a twist. My twist!

What about the food you offer?

Our recipes are inspired by Emirati and Syrian cuisines coupled with my own touch. We created salads enriched with dates and 'halawa' dressing (known as ra-hash), both ingredients are quite popular in the Arab world. Next, we came-up an assortment of new dishes inspired by Arabic spices for both cuisines and merged these with salmon, lobster and seabass. This resulted in the creation of 'Labneh Salmon', 'Safron Lobster' and 'Lobster Kibbeh' dishes, which quickly became some of Siraj's signature menu items. Something interesting not many people are aware of, is that our food is extremely healthy. For instance, 60% of the fat in the food is removed from the recipes. This was achieved through the collaboration with an experienced dietitian to ensure the best possible outcome. Siraj was meant to be a



Heba Rumhein, Founder of Siraj



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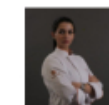
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How COVID-19 is changing the

gourmet experience, one where we engage all our guests' senses in a holistic singular experience and I believe we managed to achieve that quite successfully.

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What, other than the unique menu items, is the secret to Siraj's success?

If I were to choose just one element, I would say love is the key and it is with love that we cook, serve and work. Another equally important factor to our success is the food itself. People love the flavors and the combination of ingredients. The menu is authentic (with a twist), therefore, if you crave a dish from Siraj, you will only find it at Siraj! The third and final factor contributing to a winning formula is location, which in our case happens to be at the heart of Souq Al Bahar overlooking the fountain.

How do you describe Dubai's F&B market today?

Competitive to say the least! F&B standards in Dubai are dramatically rising. Wherever you go in the city, you find the broadest diversity of cuisines on offer. One second you are walking into a classy fine-dining environment and the next moment you find yourself in an amazing street-food joint, both of which remarkably follow high culinary standards. Surprisingly, this was not the case some 15 years ago. Back then, the restaurants did not have as much to offer. On the other hand, today, one can attend several large-scale world-class events focused on food and marketing cuisines such as Dubai Food Festival and [Gulfood](#). These will continue to elevate the bar and in turn the entire industry.

What plans does the future hold for Siraj?

I would love to franchise the Siraj brand in the world's top cities. I would also like individuals to value and appreciate the history behind Siraj, not just view it as a regular restaurant; therefore, we aim to explain the culture we are promoting as well as the food and idea behind our concept. Our mission is and will always be to lend equal focus to the customer experience as well as the food. Lastly, we are also working on adding a vegan/gluten-free menu to guests who have dietary restrictions or specific preferences. This will be an offering we believe holds great promise.

[SirajRestaurant](#)



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