

## FAMILY TIME

## The many cultures behind Israeli cuisine

*Modern Israeli Cooking: 100 New Recipes for Traditional Classics*, by Danielle Oron, Page Street Publishing Co., 208 pages, \$28

AJW Staff Report

Danielle Oron is the Israeli-born chef and owner of Moo Milk Bar, a milk and cookies bakery in Toronto, and the author behind the popular blog titled "I Will Not Eat Oysters." She studied at the French Culinary Institute (now the International Culinary Center) and blends that classical French training with her Israeli and Moroccan background to create a unique and refreshing perspective on food and cooking.

Her new book is *Modern Israeli Cooking: 100 New Recipes for Traditional Classics* (Page Street Publishing Co.), which showcases the melting pot of cultures that make up the food of Israel.

"Many ethnicities influence the cuisine you'll find [in Israel] today, including Moroccan, Eastern European, Yemeni, Egyptian, Iraqi and Turkish," Oron writes in the book's introduction. "So when I use the term 'Israeli cooking,' it doesn't necessarily mean it was born in the state of Israel,



Photos courtesy of Page Street Publishing Co.

**Ceviche, which can be found in almost all posh Tel Aviv restaurants, is the best way to showcase a fresh piece of fish.**

it means that you can find it there now. It's a combination of old-world and new-world cuisines."

Oron understands what home cooks really want to eat and has organized the cookbook in her own way. Instead of the traditional chapters — such as Ap-

petizers, Entrees and Desserts — Oron presents her recipes in the occasion-based way that Israelis think about cooking: Weekdays, Fridays, Beach, Slow Cooking, Brunch, Mid-night, Salads and Sides, Sweets and Staples.

Among her offerings are Spinach Falafel with Green Tahini and Sauerkraut, Harissa Lamb Meatballs, Chermoula Fish Tacos, Beer-Braised Holiday Brisket, Roasted Tomatillo and Poblano Shakshuka, and

Roasted Radishes with Sumac — all presented in beautiful full color photographs.

The recipes are not kosher and reflect an American-Israeli style, much like Oron, who moved to New Jersey

with her family as a toddler.

This attractive volume allows its readers to create new dishes that call on the ancient traditions of the Middle East. It's the best of Israeli cooking, Oron writes, "bold, in your face and full of love."

Below is Oron's recipe for Salmon Ceviche.

### Salmon Ceviche

*with avocado, fennel salad and za'atar pita chips*

Seafood is abundant in Israel. This is a simple dish that isn't Middle Eastern in origin, but ceviche is the best way to showcase a fresh piece of fish. You'll find ceviche in almost all posh Tel Aviv restaurants. Please find the best quality sushi-grade salmon in the market. This works really well with other fish like sea bass or striped bass. Go for whatever is freshest!

#### Ingredients:

Fennel Salad  
1/2 bulb fennel, sliced thin  
1 tsp. lemon juice  
Salt to taste  
White pepper to taste

Za'atar Pita Chips  
1 pita, torn into 1-inch pieces  
1-1/2 tsp. olive oil  
1-1/2 tsp. za'atar (eastern Mediterranean spice blend)  
Maldon salt

### Salmon Ceviche

3/4-lb. sushi-grade salmon fillet, cut into 1/4-inch cubes

1 ripe avocado, cut into 1/4-inch cubes  
1 scallion, sliced on the bias  
1-1/2 tbsp. lemon juice  
1/2 tsp. sesame oil  
1/2 tsp. olive oil  
Salt to taste  
Black sesame seeds to garnish  
Maldon salt  
Za'atar

#### Preparation:

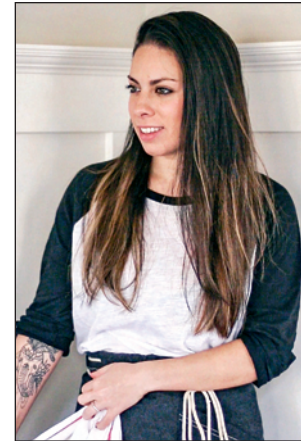
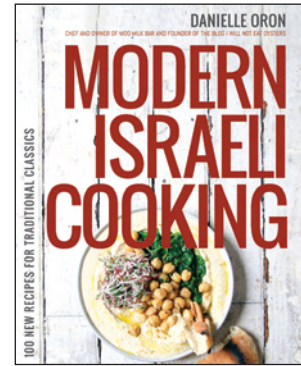
For the fennel salad, toss the fennel, lemon juice, salt and white pepper to taste in a small bowl. Cover and set in the fridge to marinate for 20 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F. Toss the torn pita, olive oil, za'atar and Maldon salt to taste in a bowl. Transfer the pita to a tinfoil-lined baking sheet for easy cleanup. Toast in the oven for 8-10 minutes until golden brown and crisp. Set aside.

For the salmon ceviche, combine the salmon, avocado, scallion, lemon juice, sesame oil, olive oil and salt to taste in a bowl. Toss using your hands. Marinate in the fridge for 10 minutes but no longer than 15, otherwise the acid "overcooks" the salmon.

Plate the fennel salad at the bottom of the serving dish, top with the ceviche and garnish with black sesame seeds and Maldon salt, and sprinkle with za'atar. Serve with the za'atar pita chips on the side

Makes 4 servings.



Danielle Oron

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