



Yalla Eat! | Middle Eastern Restaurants in Detroit

Looking to explore Middle Eastern culture? There's no better place to start than with the cuisine — and nowhere in the United States are you likely to find a range of Middle Eastern restaurants on par with metro Detroit's.

Middle Eastern food is heavy on vegetarian dishes, marinated and grilled meats and legumes such as lentils and chickpeas. It also depends on a liberal use of yogurt, sauces and spices including cumin, cardamom, nutmeg and turmeric.

If you don't know your kibbeh (balls/patties of fried bulgur, onion and ground meat) from your kafta (Lebanese beef kebobs), that's OK. Visit these restaurants and enjoy eating your way up the learning curve.

1 DAY | 1-3 HOURS

FEATURES

Food & Drink

DESTINATIONS

Detroit, Wayne, Macomb, Oakland, Beyond Detroit

1 MIDDLE EASTERN RESTAURANTS



Najeeb Kabob House

This authentic, unprepossessing spot located in a tiny strip in Warren is a find. Step inside and be greeted by an immaculate dining area, friendly staff and Arabic music wafting through the speakers. The menu's prices can't be beat, and the portions probably can't be, either. Be warned: You'll have a hard time not filling up on the fresh, delicious flatbread before your food arrives.

Dish to try: The flatbread, more of the flatbread and an Iraqi salad. Plus a chicken cream chop sandwich for \$2.99.

Bucharest Grill

Bucharest bills itself as a Romanian restaurant, but its menu offers a handful of Middle Eastern options, including a falafel wrap, stuffed grape leaves and a fattoush salad. Bucharest has three Detroit locations.

Dish to try: After eating what some say is the **best chicken shawarma sandwich** ever, try an order of the stuffed grape leaves, made with beef, not lamb.



M&M Cafe

If you're looking for a hidden-gem experience, head to M&M. This Dearborn mom-and-pop spot is cash-only, closed on weekends and doesn't even trouble itself with a website (though it hardly needs one, given the streams of effusive online reviews). It's also easy to miss on Michigan Avenue; one online reviewer aptly described it as "dressed in urban camouflage." But those who make the effort to find it will be glad they did. M&M is Lebanese-influenced; among its specialties is a delectable lemon chicken, and other menu items include grilled kafta and kabobs. And while its Mediterranean-spiced Maurice burger is a diner favorite, the menu offers vegan options, too. Don't dawdle waiting for your bill. M&M runs on the honor system, so just tell the cashier what you ordered on your way out.

Dish to try: Super hard to pick ... the Mediterranean-spiced Maurice burger or the lemon chicken, and be sure to add any of the homemade soups.



2BOOLI

The menu at this bright, colorful [restaurant in Farmington Hills](#) is rooted in recipes passed down through the Ansara family, the restaurant's proprietors whose earlier generations arrived in the United States from Lebanon in the mid-20th century. The house specialty is the lemon oregano chicken, marinated kabobs sautéed in an oregano reduction sauce. Try one of 2Booli's inventive fish options, including a delicious blackened salmon pita and a grilled tilapia pita. The restaurant also offers several Italian dishes. A

second location recently opened in Troy.

Dish to try: Lemon oregano chicken, hands down.

CK Mediterranean Grille

CK Mediterranean Grille is a favorite of the downtown Detroit work crowd. Its extensive menu is about two-thirds vegetarian and almost entirely gluten-free; its garlic sauce and shawarma combo both have loyal followings. CK is a fast-casual restaurant, making it easy to grab a healthy entrée and go. But an outdoor patio, available in the warm-weather months, makes a leisurely meal a pleasurable option. (The downtown restaurant is closed on weekends. Check out other locations in Berkley and Southfield.)

Dish to try: A large order of the roasted red pepper hummus (see the recipe below)

La Saj Lebanese Bistro

La Saj in Sterling Heights is a good option for groups that need to please a variety of palates. The menu offers some Italian-inspired dishes and a variety of creative vegetarian options. But for those who want true Middle Eastern fare, La Saj won't disappoint. The saj is a modern update of an old-time method of cooking: Food is placed on a metal dome, which is heated from below and maintains a cooking temperature of 500 degrees, searing food quickly. La Saj prides itself on its light, thin, seasoned bread, which is combined with various dishes. Among the specialties is saji kafta — skewers of ground beef, lamb, parsley and onion. Hummus can be ordered with toppings including chicken tips, fresh vegetables and ground beef.

Dish to try: Nothing beats food served on a stick, so sample the saji kafta (skewers of ground beef, lamb, parsley and onion). It comes with seasoned rice and saj-fried veggies.

Anita's Kitchen

Anita's, a popular Lebanese restaurant in Ferndale, has drawn a loyal crowd since opening more than 30 years ago (the original Troy location is now closed). It manages to be a good option for both those looking for a nice evening out and those seeking a quick, casual meal. Anita's offers outdoor seating and inviting décor; a distinctive wine menu, with many options coming from the Middle East; daily features such as lamb with green beans; an addictive eggplant salad and several creative pita pizzas (the Zaatar is topped with garlic, dried thyme, sumac, sesame seeds, labneh, goat cheese and kalamata olives).

Dish to try: Poke your fork into the eggplant salad — roasted eggplant, tomato, red onion, parsley, garlic, lemon and olive oil.

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CHICKEN SHAWARMA SANDWICH



The chicken shawarma sandwich is to Middle Eastern food what the taco is to Mexican cuisine — a dependable, tasty staple that you can grab and go. In its most basic form, it's marinated grilled chicken strips, garlic sauce and tangy dill pickles wrapped tightly in a pita. Like the taco, however, it can be re-imagined in a variety of ways. Here are three variations you can find in metro Detroit.

1. Najeeb Kabob House in Warren:

Chicken, garlic sauce, red cabbage, yellow peppers, tomato, pickles, black olives shawarma

2. Bucharest Grill:

Chicken, cabbage, tomato, pickles, fries, garlic sauce

3. The Jefferson House in the Crowne Plaza Detroit Downtown Riverfront hotel:

Chicken, garlic spread, dill pickle, lettuce, tomato



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MORE MIDDLE EASTERN RESTAURANTS



Sooo Many More Middle Eastern Dining Options in the D

[Al-Ajami](#) in Dearborn • [Al-Ameer](#) in Farmington Hills • [Amani's](#) in Dearborn • [Assaggi](#) in Ferndale • [Beirut Garden](#) in Southgate • [Beirut Palace](#) in Sterling Heights • [Elie's Mediterranean Grill/Bar](#) in Birmingham • [Fattoush Village](#) in Livonia • [Grape Leaves](#) in Troy • [Hazim Kabob House](#) in Sterling Heights • [La Palma](#) in Detroit's Midtown • [Le George Mediterranean Bistro](#) in Northville • [Lebanese Grill](#) in Troy • [Olga's](#) in various cities in metro Detroit • [Ollie's Lebanese Cuisine](#) in Dearborn • [Phoenician](#) in Birmingham • [Sahara Restaurant](#) in Oak Park • [Steve's Backroom](#) in St. Clair Shores

On the Go – More Restaurants

Dearborn offers so many wonderful places to sample Middle Eastern food, it's nearly impossible to choose just one. Fortunately, you don't have to on the **Yalla Eat! Culinary Walking Tour**. Hosted by the Arab American National Museum, these 2.5-hour tours explore the restaurants and shops along Warren Avenue. A second tour explores the Middle Eastern grocers and butchers in Eastern Market. Tours include an overview of the history of Arab-Americans in metro Detroit.

Read more about [Detroit restaurants](#).

Photo credits: Najeeb Kabob House, M&M Cafe; La Saj Lebanese Bistro, Bucharest Grill, Anita's Kitchen and 2Booli by Cybelle Codish; CK Mediterranean Grille, shawarmas and Arab American National Museum by Bill Bowen