

Tadiwa TENDAYI

A GIFT FROM CHEF TADIWA

The Honest Kitchen

How I cook, and what I refuse.

Tadiwa Tendayi · Coastal Mediterranean · Abu Dhabi and Dubai



CONTENTS

Inside

A note from me	3
What I refuse, and why	4
Six principles I cook by	5
A few honest swaps	6
How I build a plate	7
Going to the source	8
What is always in my kitchen	9
The recipe, olive oil and mandarin cake	10
Serving it, for an afternoon tea	12
With love	13

Come in



I am Tadiwa. I cook coastal Mediterranean food in private homes, and I learned to cook long before I knew it was a profession.

I grew up in Harare, between my mother's kitchen and my grandparents' farm. Nothing we ate came from a packet. The vegetables were pulled from the ground that morning, the eggs were still warm, and a meal was something you gave to people, never something you rushed. That is still how I cook today.

This little book is simply how I cook at home. A few honest beliefs, some small changes anyone can make, and one cake I love. Nothing complicated, nothing to prove. It all rests on one idea I believe completely, that the real luxury is honest food, with nothing hidden.

I hope it changes one small thing in your kitchen. That would make me very happy.

What I refuse

People ask what makes my food taste the way it does. Honestly, it is as much what I leave out as what I put in. Here is what does not enter my kitchen, and why.

No seed oils. I cook with good olive oil and butter. Real fats, the kind used for centuries, with flavour of their own.

No stock cubes. I make my own stock, the long way. It is mostly time, not effort, and it is the difference you taste underneath everything.

No jarred sauces. A good sauce takes minutes from real ingredients. Once you make your own, the jar never tastes the same again.

No refined sugar. I sweeten with honey and ripe fruit. The sweetness is gentler, and you taste the thing itself, not just the sugar.

No processed meat. If I would not be proud to make it by hand, it does not go on the plate.

The luxury is in what I refuse.

Six quiet lessons

Not recipes. Just the handful of things that, once you cook by them, change everything else.

01

Build around one good ingredient.

Start with the best thing you can find, then do as little to it as possible. The ingredient is the dish.

02

Taste as you go. Not once at the end, but all the way through. Cooking is a series of small corrections, and your mouth is the only real recipe.

03

Simple is harder than complicated. With three ingredients there is nowhere to hide. That is exactly why simple food, done well, feels like luxury.

04

Season in layers. A little salt at each stage, not a lot at the end. Flavour is built slowly, not rescued late.

05

Let the season choose. Cook what is at its best right now. Out of season, even the finest hand cannot make it sing.

06

The table is part of the meal. How you set it down, the calm of the room, the people around it. The food is only half of dinner.

A few honest swaps

Small changes you can make today. Each one quietly lifts everything you cook.

A seed or vegetable oil *becomes* **good extra virgin olive oil**

Artificial vanilla essence *becomes* **a real vanilla pod, or pure extract**

Margarine *becomes* **butter, the real thing**

Garlic powder *becomes* **a fresh clove, crushed**

A neutral oil for high heat *becomes* **beef tallow, or ghee**

Bottled salad dressing *becomes* **olive oil, lemon, salt**

A stock cube *becomes* **homemade stock, or water and care**

Bottled lemon juice *becomes* **a real lemon, zested and squeezed**

Refined white sugar *becomes* **honey, or ripe fruit**

Pre grated cheese *becomes* **a block, grated when you need it**

Sugar in your baking *becomes* **apple sauce, or mashed banana**

Table salt to finish *becomes* **flaky sea salt, at the end**

How I build a plate

A plate is not a pile of ingredients. It is one good thing, supported.

I start with the hero, the fish, the vegetable at its peak, the good piece of meat, and I decide that everything else exists to make that one thing taste more like itself. Then I balance four things by taste, never by rule. Salt, to wake it up. Acid, a squeeze of lemon or a little vinegar, to lift it. Fat, usually good olive oil, to carry the flavour. And heat, char or warmth, for depth.

At the end, almost always, two final touches. A thread of good olive oil, and something fresh and bright, herbs, zest, a little acid. That last brightness is what makes a plate feel alive rather than heavy.

That is the whole method. One hero, balanced with care, finished with brightness.

Going to the source

The best cooking decision I make each week is made before I cook at all. It is where I shop.

I go to the source when I can. The market, the fishmonger, the farm. I buy what looks best that day, not what a recipe told me to buy before I left the house. Good ingredients ask very little of you. A perfect tomato needs salt and oil, nothing more. A tired one needs rescuing, and you can taste the rescue.

So the honest secret is not a technique. It is buying well, buying in season, and then having the confidence to do less. The shorter the distance from the ground to your plate, the less you have to do to it.



What is always in my kitchen

If you keep these few things good, you can cook almost anything honestly.

Good extra virgin olive oil, the one thing worth spending on

Fresh herbs, parsley, basil, mint, whatever the season gives

Flaky sea salt, and fine salt for cooking

A good vinegar, red wine or sherry

Honey, for sweetness that tastes of something

Whole spices, toasted and ground as needed

Lemons, always, for brightness

Real butter

Garlic, fresh, never powder

Good eggs

None of it is rare. All of it is real. That is the whole pantry.

Olive oil and mandarin cake

This is the cake I make when I want something generous that hides nothing. Olive oil instead of butter, honey instead of sugar, mandarins for brightness. One bowl, no fuss. Serves eight to ten.

WHAT YOU NEED

3 large eggs

120ml honey

150ml good extra virgin olive oil

Zest of 3 mandarins

Juice of 2 mandarins, about 80ml

200g plain flour

50g ground almonds, optional, for a softer crumb

1.5 teaspoons baking powder

A pinch of sea salt

To finish: a little warmed honey, and a few mandarin segments

HOW TO MAKE IT

- 1 Heat your oven to 170C. Line a 22cm round tin.
- 2 Whisk the eggs and honey for a few minutes, until pale and a little thick.
- 3 Pour in the olive oil slowly, still whisking, then add the mandarin zest and juice.
- 4 Fold in the flour, almonds, baking powder and salt, just until smooth. Do not overmix.
- 5 Pour into the tin and bake for 40 to 45 minutes, until golden and a skewer comes out clean.
- 6 Cool a little, brush the top with warmed honey, and finish with mandarin segments.

Chef's note. The better your olive oil, the better this cake. It is the main flavour here, so use one you would happily taste on its own.



Serving it, for an afternoon tea

A few quiet ways to serve this cake so it feels like an occasion, not just a slice.

Slice it thin. A generous cake in thin slices feels more refined than thick wedges. Let people come back for more.

A spoon of something cool beside it. Thick yogurt or labneh with a thread of honey. The gentle tang balances the sweetness.

Keep the tea simple. Fresh mint tea, or a light black tea. Nothing strong enough to fight the mandarin.

Ceramic and linen. A plain plate, a linen cloth, a little space around everything. The calm is part of the pleasure.

One small detail, not a decoration. A few mandarin segments or a curl of zest on the board. Restraint always looks more expensive.

*Set it down without ceremony, and let everyone
help themselves.*

With love

Thank you for letting me into your kitchen. I hope one small idea in here stays with you, an oil you change, a sauce you make yourself, a table you set with a little more care.

Everything I believe about food comes down to this. Use real things. Do less to them. And give the result to people you care about. That is the whole of it, and it is enough.

Made with love,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chef Tadina". The script is fluid and cursive, with the word "Chef" written in a smaller, more compact style than the name "Tadina".

Tadiwa TENDAYI

If you would ever like me to cook for you, in your own home in Abu Dhabi or Dubai, that lives with my brand, Satisfate Luxe. And if you are a restaurant or a household who would like to work with me, you can write to me directly.

Tadiwa Tendayi

Chef Founder, Satisfate Luxe

HELLO@TADIWATENDAYI.COM

INSTAGRAM: @CHEF_TADIWA

SATIATE LUXE: SATIATELUXE.COM