

BOCA



LOCAL INGREDIENTS *An Illustrated Guide*

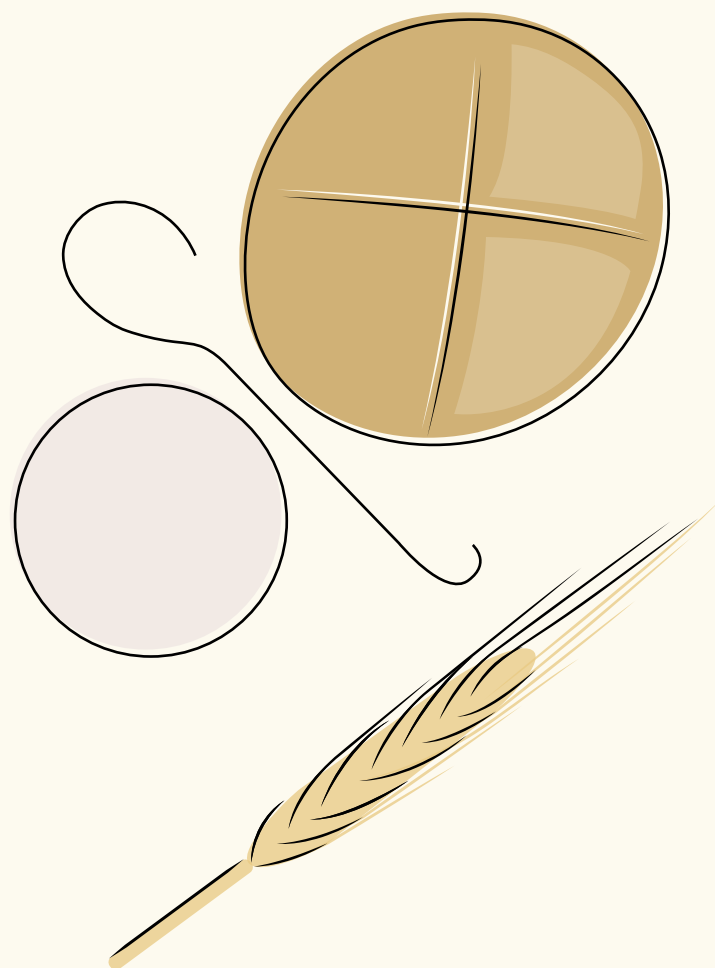
‘We have the sun, the sea and the sand. And if we can grow food using the three S's, which are abundant here, we have a solution for the world.’ H.E. Mariam bint Mohammed Almheiri, Minister of State for Food and Water Security.

We live in the desert, but the UAE is far from being a barren land. The Hajar mountains of the North are biologically rich habitats, while the Central Region’s oases are home to modern hydroponic, organic and traditional farms, and the bounty from the Arabian Gulf and the Indian Ocean is plentiful. We live in abundance; we just have to look a bit closer and work slightly harder.

Local ingredients have always taken precedence in our menus. Here we share the highlights from this season.

Rye + Sourdough

Meet sisters, Orea and Massa Mare, born in our bakery four years apart. The two 'bread mothers' evolved together and are still growing wilder and bolder. This season we serve our bread with a charred eggplant allioli.



Khobez | Malva Parviflora

خبيز

Also known as Mallow, one of the more common native desert plants in the UAE and across the region. It has an unmistakable long petiole (the stalk that attaches the leaf to the stem) with a circular to kidney-shaped and toothed leaf. The taste is mildly bitter. We use it fresh and in a puree form.



Homaid | Rumex Vesicarius

حميض

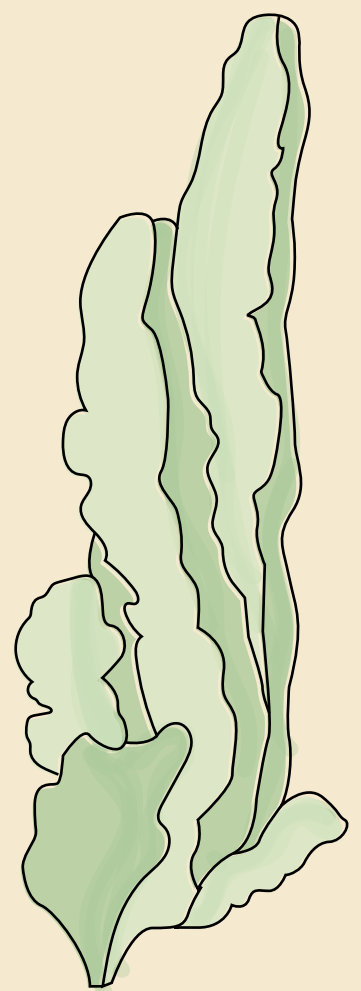
Found in both rocky and sandy terrains across the country, it translates loosely to 'sour-y'. The leaves are triangular to oval and the flowers bloom green with a red tinge. They have a slightly sour and bitter taste. We use Homaid leaves fresh and in a puree form.



Khansour | Caralluma Arabica

خنصور الجبل

A rare native plant that grows in the mountain areas of Ras al Khaimah, it has been recently introduced to the Jebel Hafeet Natural Reserve for conservation. Blooms a dark ruby flower, this succulent is extremely bitter. It has been traditionally used in medicine and cooked in a stew. We pickle it in this menu edition.



Seedaf | Pteropryum سیداف

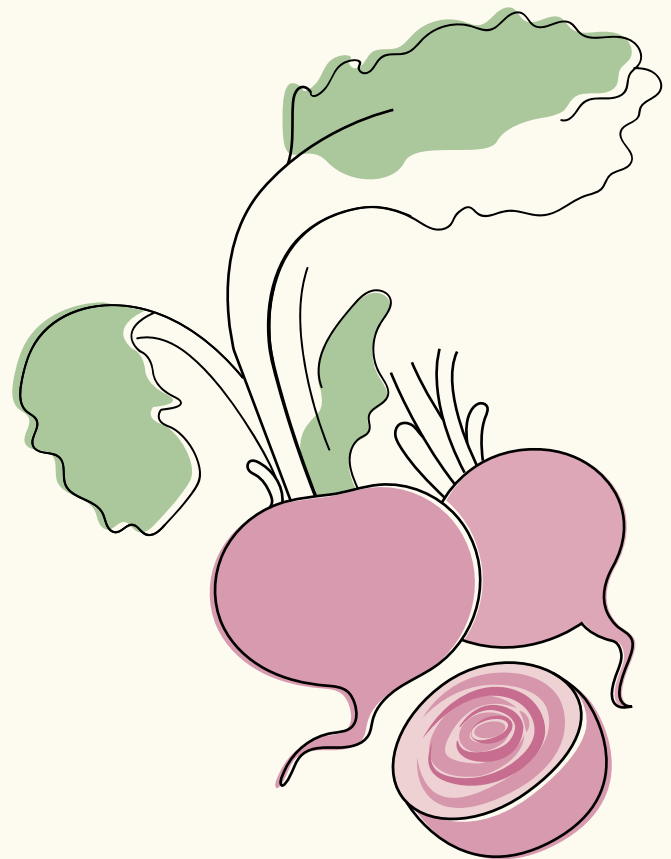
A shrub common in the valleys of the UAE. The thorny leaves are slightly salty and are used fresh throughout our menu and in a vinaigrette with Dibba Bay oysters. A good complement to rosemary.



There are many more edible native desert plants to explore. Head to our Desert Garden to see what we managed to source ourselves or visit the Jameel Arts Centre in Jaddaf, Dubai and check out 'Desert is a Forest' by Sunoj D and Namrata Neog.

Beetroot

Grown by traditional farms across the country and the region. We roast it and hang it to dry-age for five days, just like a fine steak! Aging pulls out the moisture, intensifies the flavor and gives the humble beetroot a meatier texture.



New hydroponic, vertical, organic and traditional farms are popping up across the UAE and we try to explore as many of them as we can. We are now proud to source our herbs, tomatoes, cucumbers, mushrooms, sweet potatoes, yellow potatoes, and passion fruit locally and regionally.

Mary Anne's Edible Flowers

Just off the stretch between Dubai and Al Ain is a small indoor farm run by Mary Anne. She produces the edible flowers and microgreens used in our menus and delivers them to us personally only hours after they have been harvested. These nutrient dense plants are grown in indoor aquaponics which means that they are pesticide-free, and that water usage is reduced by 90% compared to traditional farming methods.



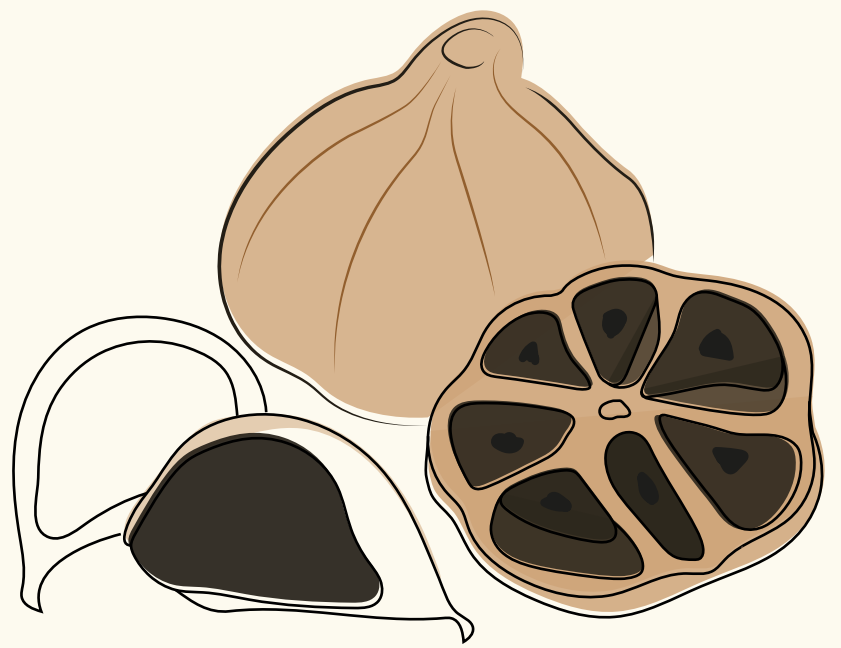
Saline Water Crops

Pearl Millet, Salicornia and Quinoa are crops identified by the ICBA (The International Center for Biosaline Agriculture) research center in Dubai as nutrient dense plants that can tolerate high heat, salty waters, and poor soil. Although currently sourced from outside the region, we use these products throughout our menu as a salute to the non-profit center's work that aims to improve agricultural productivity and sustainability in marginal environments.



Black Garlic

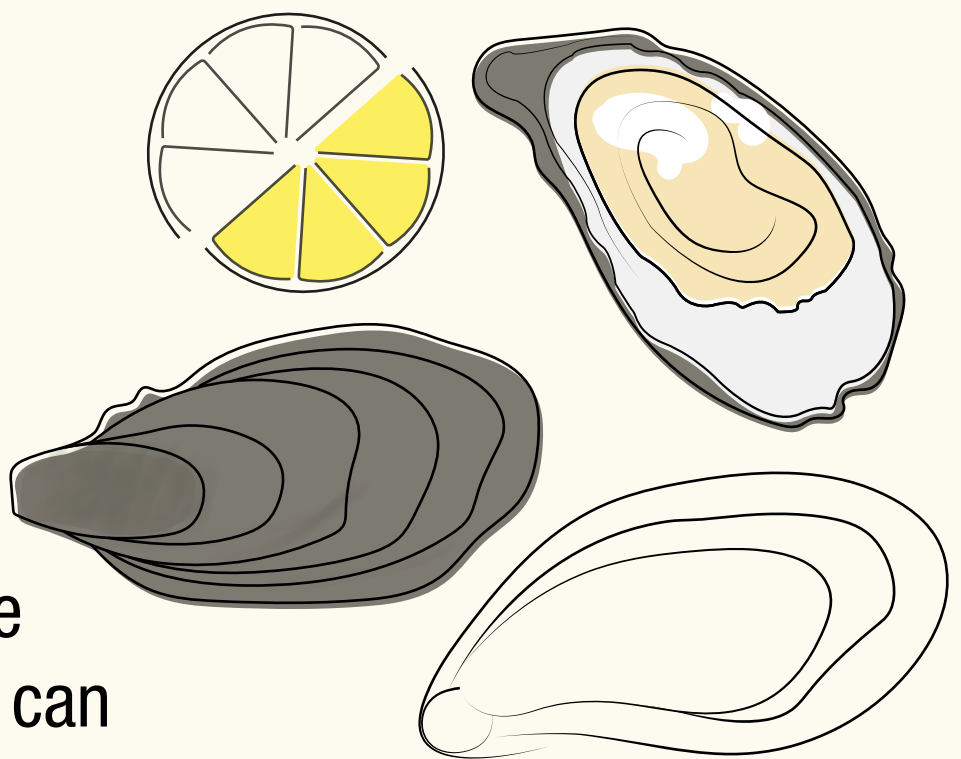
Produced in-house through aging regular garlic at 60°C and a constant 90% humidity with no additives, preservatives, or burning. The result is a breakdown of the garlic's sharpness, a caramelized taste, and a sticky date-like texture.



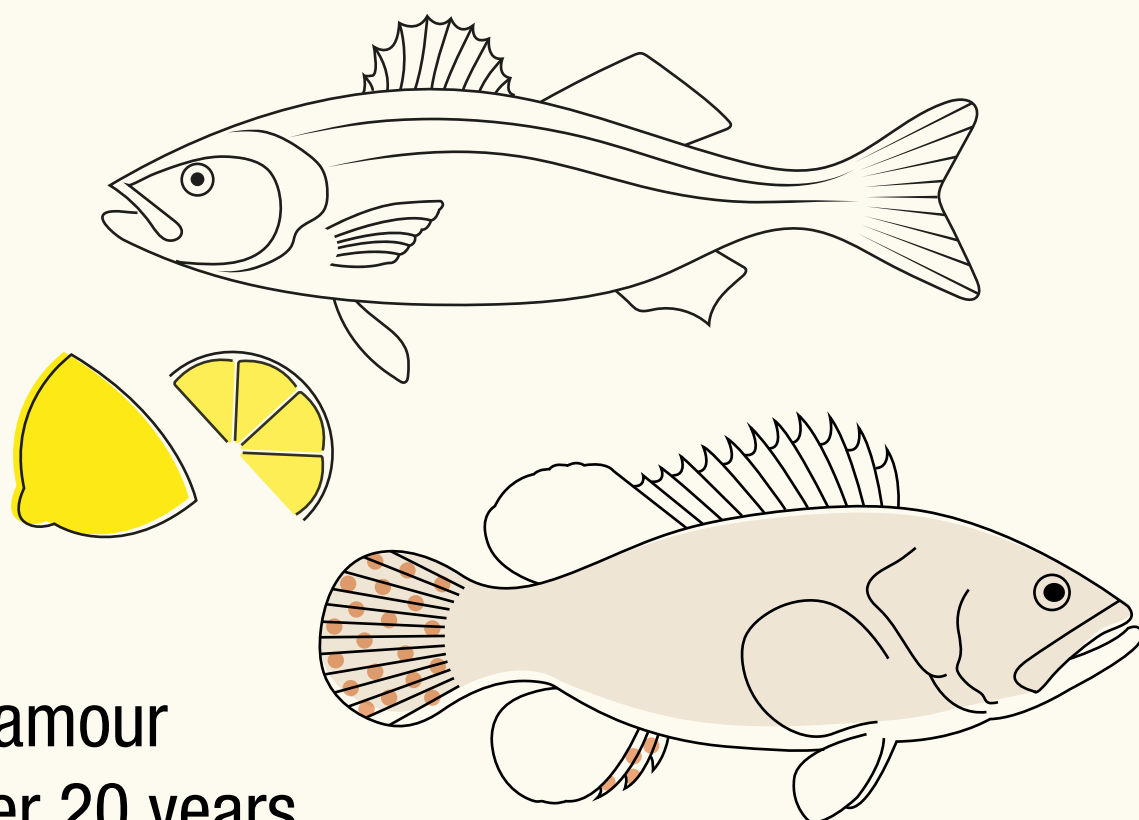
We are also proud to produce our own pickles, piccalillis, and kimchi in our kitchen. Recently we made quince jelly from small organic quince producers in Lebanon thanks to the efforts of local hero and farmer, Yazen Al Kodmani, @yazenalkodmani of Emirates Bio Farm @emiratesbiofarm.

Dibba Bay Oysters

Thanks to local hero, Ramie Murray, we now have world class oysters that we can call our own. Grown in the pristine waters of Dibba in Northern Fujairah these oysters carry the right balance of saltiness, acidity, sweetness and 'meatiness'.
@dibbabay



Local Fish & Seafood



Did you know that Hamour has a life span of over 20 years but because of overfishing they are only growing to a maximum age of eight years in the Arabian Gulf*. That is why we prefer to use sustainable Hamour and Seabass from the UAE's 'FishFarm'. The fish grow 4.5 KM off the coast of Dibba, Fujairah and receive only organic feed. With every Hamour we source from 'FishFarm' we are making sure that at least one Hamour stays and grows in the wild.


In this menu also expect to see the underrated Sardines and a fish found in abundance in the Gulf, the Kingfish, also known locally as Kan'ad كنعاد. Clams, prawns, and a type of octopus used in our menu are also found in abundance in the Arabian Gulf, the Gulf of Oman and nearby Indian Ocean.

**UAE National Framework Statement for Sustainable Fisheries (2019-2030)*

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WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO

The Food and Water Security Office

<https://www.foodsecurity.gov.ae/> |  @mariammalmheiri

Marine Environment & Fisheries Sustainability,
UAE Ministry of Climate Change & Environment

<https://www.moccae.gov.ae/> |  @moccaeuae

Jameel Arts Centre, please visit their ‘Desert is a Forest’
by Sunoj D and Namrata Neog.

Jaddaf Waterfront, Dubai | hello@artjameel.org

 @jameelartscentre

International Center for Biosaline Agriculture, please visit
the ‘Emirates Soil Museum’ located at the ICBA’s HQ.

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