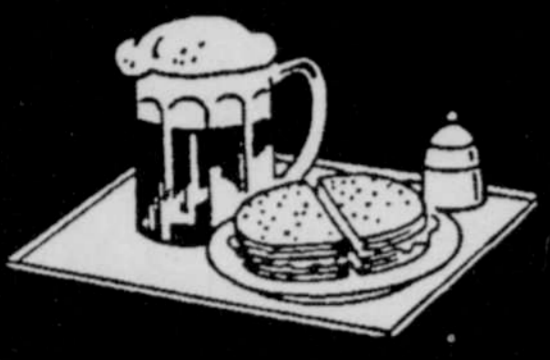


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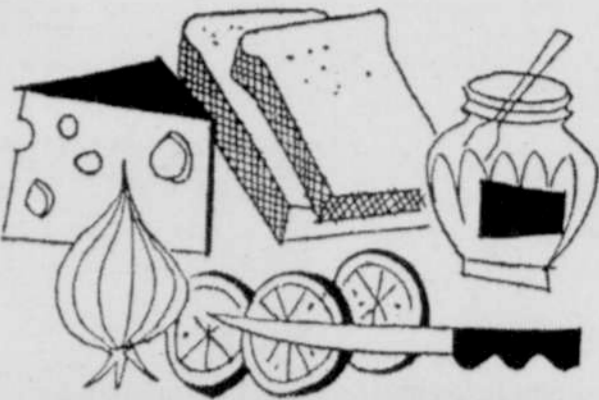
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BY MICHAEL E BARRETT

Gastronomica Africana


The quantity of Portland's African restaurants is small, but the few we have focus on the authenticity of their fare, offering restaurantgoers a touch of culture—and maybe a geography lesson—about a vast continent with unique culinary temptations. Two such establishments particularly await your inquisitive mind and empty stomach.

Marrakesh • 1201 N.W. 21st Ave.

Tickets! Money! Passports! We're going to Marrakesh. Actually, you don't need a passport, just a Portland Streetcar ticket and \$17.50 to experience an authentic North African feast. Sitting on a beanbag under a sultanate tent, you'll find yourself licking the savory drippings of honey, saffron, almonds and braised meat from your fingertips—literally. (As in the restaurants and homes across Morocco, there is no flatware in sight.) Your personal banquet begins with aromatic lentil soup to warm the tummy. The subtle sweetness of the B'stilla Royale, a kind of chicken puff pastry appetizer, will catch your taste buds by pleasant surprise, but your epicurean adventure piques with the main course. I recommend the lamb with eggplant, served simmering in tomato sauce. It's your lucky day if the special includes apricots. Sit back and enjoy the ambiance over a glass of rich mint tea and tip the traditionally clad server generously—or at least give him a wink when he moistens your hands with sweetly scented orange blossom water!

Horn of Africa • 3939 N.E. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

Moving across the continent to East Africa requires but a short journey across the river to Northeast Portland, where Horn of Africa presents the palate with delicacies from its namesake. Start off with a sambusa, a seasoned pastry with meat or lentils, curiously similar in name, appearance and taste to an Indian samosa. Try a deep-fried bajiya, similar to a latke but made of ground split peas, garbanzo beans and herbs. Saffron rice and biddeena (sponge bread) are staple gastronomic accouterments to a variety of meat and vegetarian specialties. Choose beef, chicken, lamb or beans and receive a simple but tasty collection of spices and marinades that complements the zesty aroma that drew you through the front door in the first place. Paprika, onions and garlic infuse themselves into most dishes, and an alternative preparation for the lamb or chicken is homestyle curry. Unlike yellowish curries of India, African curry is greener in appearance, subtler in taste and milder to the tongue, albeit a touch oilier. Inclined to introduce an African touch to your home kitchen's repertoire? Horn of Africa also boasts its own mini-grocery featuring many of the spices, herbs and other transoceanic goodies found on the restaurant's menu.



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