



## Teacher/Viewing Guide

### Arab American Stories – Episode 106

Kamal Al Faqih  
Chef and Author

Grade Level 9-12

#### Episode Overview:

In this episode, the chef and author Kamal Al Faqih shares his love of traditional Lebanese food and the recipes and techniques he learned from his mother and her family. When he was a child, his family trips to Lebanon inspired his appreciation for both his heritage and the food of his parents' native land. Back home in Virginia, he realized how good the food was at his house because all the neighborhood kids would want to come over for dinner. Later, he and his mother opened Med Catering in Washington D.C. where he cooked for presidents and senators, kings, queens and ambassadors. Kamal tells how he worked in the kitchen with his mother to perfect the recipes that launched their catering company and took it to the heights of success. These recipes then became basis of his first cookbook, where he shares his love of Lebanese cuisine with the world. He also talks about his plans for his next cookbook, which he is writing with his mother, who now lives with him in California.

#### Previewing Questions:

1. What is the connection between food and family?
2. What is a family recipe? How are they passed down?
3. What is the traditional food of your family or culture?
4. How could you take your love of food and family and turn it into a career?

#### Vocabulary:

1. Kibbeh: A Lebanese dish made of burghul, minced onions, and ground red meat—usually beef or lamb.
2. Catering: Providing food, typically at social events, in a professional capacity.
3. Family recipe: Ingredients, ideas, and processes of traditional family meals.

#### Lesson Overview

**Review:** After viewing the segment on Kamal Al Faqih, students should be prepared to discuss the connection between family history, traditions, and food.

#### Post-viewing Class discussion:

After viewing the segment, consider the following questions:

1. How are culture and food connected?
2. Why is it important to learn recipes from the older generations of your family?
3. Are their gender roles associated with cooking in your family?

**Journal option:** In this episode we learn about how history and family are passed down through food and recipes. Have students respond to the following writing prompt:

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Think of events, holidays and other gatherings. What food was served? Who does the cooking for family holidays? What role does food play in your family?

**Activity:** Classroom Cookbook: Ask students to think about a favorite family event or gathering. What do they remember from that event? Most likely many of the students will mention the people that were there, the things they did, and the food they ate. In many cultures, food is one of the most common things associated with family gatherings. One way to learn about the history and culture of different people is to look at the foods that they eat.

In this activity, ask your students to select one of their family's favorite recipes, interview their family about the cultural and family traditions associated with the dish, research the recipe and its ingredients, and create a flyer about it that will become part of a class cookbook. Students should use both oral interview and Internet research to gather the details they will need to create their page for the class cookbook. They should include images and use appropriate formatting for their page. You can give students a template document to follow, but should also encourage them to be creative. The recipe should include the ingredients, instructions, and two or three paragraphs about why the food is special to their family and the history of the recipe.

Students should present their recipe in class. The cookbook can either be printed or digital (hosted on your school website, a blog or other repository.)

As an extension activity, students can take their copy of the class cookbook home to share with their family and create a fellow classmate's recipe from another culture or tradition. Or you might consider having students prepare their own recipe and host an international dinner.

**Explore online:** Use the following resources to allow your students to further explore the topic and the Arab American community.

1. <http://www.cookingwithkamal.com/>
2. <http://skilletdiaries.com/>
3. <http://www.foodtimeline.org/>

**Interdisciplinary Options** Global Studies, Writing, Digital Media/Technology

### Common Core Alignment

- RI 7 Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized in each account.
- W6 Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology's capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.
- SL2 Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.
- SL5 Include multimedia components (e.g., graphics, images, music, sound) and visual displays in presentations to clarify information.