BITE by BITE

Conquering My Culinary Bucket List One Dish at a Time By Emily Banks Wooten

Tou as the cook must bring soul to the recipe. - THOMAS KELLER

Taste of the Middle East

complicated masterpieces - just good food from fresh ingredients."

"You don't have to cook fancy or - JULIA CHILD

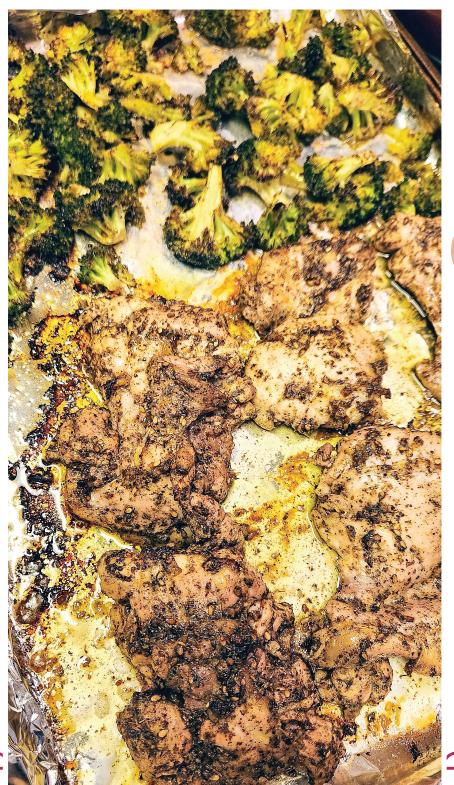
probasked in multiple differ- then came home and got busy. ent directions for

faculty meetings, afterschool NHS meetings, I didn't use the optional tahini for serving part time jobs, etc., it really is imperative to or the chopped fresh parsley leaves for garhave several of these type dishes in your back nish. I served it with a simple green salad pocket to pull out when you need to.

So when I recently saw a headline online that said, "It Took Just 4 Ingredients and 20 Minutes to Make the Best Chicken Dinner," of course I had to take a peek. The recipe was for Za'atar Chicken Thighs with the choice of broccoli or cauliflower.

If you're not familiar with za'atar, it is a pungent, strongly aromatic herb that is nabeen tive to the Middle East and tastes like a blend the of marjoram, oregano and thyme. It is often most since start- mixed with olive oil and salt and drizzled ing this food page is over hot bread or used as a dip for bread. It suggestions for quick can also be sprinkled over meats and vegetaand easy weeknight bles as a seasoning. I happened to have some meals. And trust me, za'atar on hand, left over from a Geoffrey Zano one likes find- karian recipe so I thought why not give it a ing these Holy Grails try. I picked up some fresh lemons, broccoli more than me. When and boneless, skinless chicken thighs on the your family is running way to pick up Daughter from school and

This recipe truly came together quickly editorial meetings, and easily and tasted wonderful. We opted press conferences, for the broccoli instead of the cauliflower. and we thoroughly enjoyed it. This one will definitely go into the rotation. By the way, I'm not sure if za'atar is available locally or not at this time. I couldn't find it previously and ended up ordering it from Amazon. Try this. I really think you'll be surprised at how flavorful it is. ■



3a'atar Chicken Thighs

From yahoo.com

- -2 medium lemons, divided
- 4 tablespoons olive oil, divided
- 3 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon za'atar, divided
- 1½ teaspoons kosher salt, divided
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper - 2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken thighs (6 to 8)
- 2 medium broccoli crowns or 1 medium head cauliflower (1½ to 2 pounds)
- Tahini, for serving (optional)
- Chopped fresh parsley leaves, for garnish (optional)

• Finely grate the zest of 1 medium lemon into a medium bowl. Juice the zested lemon until you have 3 tablespoons. Reserve 1 tablespoon lemon juice; add the remaining juice to the bowl of zest. Cut the remaining 1 lemon into wedges and reserve for serving.

• Add 2 tablespoons of the olive oil, 3 tablespoons of the za'atar, 1 teaspoon of the kosher salt, and 1/4 teaspoon black pepper to the bowl of zest, and stir to combine. Add 2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken thighs and rub all over with the za'atar mixture. Let marinate at room temperature while you prep the vegetables and heat the oven, at least 10 minutes.

• Arrange a rack in the middle of the oven and heat the oven to 425 degrees.

• Cut 1 medium broccoli crown or 1 medium head cauliflower into ½ -inch thick pieces and place on a rimmed baking sheet. Drizzle with the reserved lemon juice and remaining 2 tablespoons olive oil. Season with the remaining 1 teaspoon za'atar and ½ teaspoon kosher salt, and use your hands to toss until evenly coated. Push the vegetables to the sides of the baking sheet in an even layer to make room for the chicken. Place the chicken in a single layer on the baking sheet.

• Roast until the chicken is lightly browned, cooked through, and an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part registers at least 165 degrees, 20 to 25 minutes. Squeeze the reserved lemon wedges over the chicken. Drizzle some tahini all over and garnish with chopped fresh parsley leaves if desired.