

FOOD, CULTURE & EVERYDAY LIFE

FUL

A Taste of Egypt
and the Arab Table



One humble bean. Many flavors. A shared story.

A photographic guide to Egyptian ful, its variations and the culture around the bowl.

Begin with the ful bowl

This book focuses on ful: cooked fava beans, the many ways people season them, and the everyday relationships around a meal. Egypt is the starting point. Other Arab-country examples appear only where they help explain the dish and its variations.

For a reader unfamiliar with Egyptian food, ful offers a useful introduction. The ingredient list can be modest, while texture, timing and seasoning carry considerable skill. A warm bowl may be breakfast, a sandwich filling or part of suhoor, the meal before dawn during Ramadan.

Food culture is lived, not fixed

There is no single recipe every Egyptian follows. Cooks differ over how much to mash the beans, whether to use garlic and which oil or topping to add. The same is true across countries. This ebook distinguishes an everyday foundation from optional variations rather than calling every combination an official tradition.

Read, taste and ask

First meet the dish, then try the base recipe. Explore one variation at a time and ask a cook what matters to them. The photographs provide real settings from Cairo, Alexandria and Aswan. Their captions distinguish a photographed meal from a contextual city view.

Recipes are practical WCE home adaptations and have not been kitchen-tested. Use fully cooked beans for the short recipes. Quantities use a US cup, about 240 ml; 1 tablespoon is 15 ml and 1 teaspoon is 5 ml. Optional ingredients may change allergen and dietary suitability.

© 2026 World Cultures & Education. Editorial direction: Dr. Wagih Elgohary. Contact: FLtoday70@gmail.com. Photograph rights belong to the credited creators; see page 25. This edition uses original text and licensed photography rather than reproducing the supplied social-media poster.

Follow the bean, then the story

MEET & COOK

- 04 A real Egyptian breakfast
- 05 What is ful medames?
- 06 Texture, time and the cooking pot
- 07 The base recipe: your first bowl

CHOOSE YOUR FLAVOR

- 08 Tahini and lemon
- 09 Tomato sauce and onion
- 10 Alexandria-inspired garlic and vegetables
- 11 Ful with eggs
- 12 Chili and fresh vegetables
- 13 Butter and cheese
- 14 Sausage and basturma

FOOD, PLACE & PEOPLE

- 15 Bread and breakfast companions
- 16 Cairo: the street around the bowl
- 17 Cairo: café conversation
- 18 Alexandria: place and personal taste
- 19 Aswan: markets and local voices
- 20 Ful beyond Egypt

SPEAK, SHARE & REMEMBER

- 21 Hospitality and useful Arabic
- 22 “If the ful runs out...”
- 23 A ful tasting workshop
- 24 Preserve the recipe and the memory
- 25 Photograph credits and further reading
- 26-30 Named restaurants and their street stories
- 31 Additional restaurant photo credits

Try the base recipe before adding a strong topping. This makes the bean's own texture and flavor easier to notice.

A breakfast you can see



Photo: Zachbe at en.wikipedia | CC BY-SA 3.0 | Full credits: page 25.

Ful, bread and vegetables | A cart breakfast in Cairo

This photograph shows an actual meal: stewed beans with bread and vegetables. Notice how the bowl is part of a spread rather than an isolated object. Bread provides a way to eat; vegetables introduce contrast; the cook's seasoning gives the beans their character. This is one presentation, not the required arrangement for every Egyptian breakfast. The home recipe in this book is a separate adaptation.

Look, then ask: What can this picture show about a meal's setting, and what must a cook or resident explain?

What is ful medames?

Ful medames is a preparation of cooked fava beans, also called broad beans. The Arabic word ful refers to the beans; medames identifies the cooked dish. English spellings such as ful, foul and fūl represent the same word.

A foundation, not a fixed topping list

Cooked beans form the foundation. Lemon, cumin, salt and oil are familiar seasonings, but proportions differ. Some cooks mash the beans; others leave more whole. Tahini, garlic, vegetables, eggs or meat are choices added to the foundation.

When people eat it

Ful is strongly associated with Egyptian breakfast and also appears at suhoor during Ramadan. It can be eaten from a bowl or tucked into bread. A dish with an everyday role can still hold deep family memory: a parent's preferred seasoning, a familiar stall or a breakfast shared before work.

A newcomer's first taste

Start with a mild bowl and notice three things: the beans' earthy flavor, their softness and the balance of lemon and oil. Add chili later if desired. A spoonful before adding toppings helps you understand what each addition changes.

Fava beans are not the same as kidney beans or chickpeas. If you substitute another bean because fava beans are unavailable or unsuitable, describe it as a bean dish inspired by ful rather than the same preparation.

Ask a cook: "Do you prefer the beans whole, partly mashed or smooth, and why?"

Texture, time and the pot

A familiar bowl begins before the final seasoning. Slow cooking makes the beans tender; retained liquid gives the dish a moist consistency. The pot, heat level and bean variety affect the result. A traditional bean pot is often called a dammasa in Egypt.

Learn the sensory cues

Tender: a cooked bean should yield easily when pressed.

Moist: enough liquid remains for the bowl to feel soft rather than dry.

Thickened: mashing some beans creates body without requiring every bean to disappear.

Balanced: seasoning supports the bean rather than covering it completely.

A practical first approach

Use canned or otherwise fully cooked fava beans for the short recipes here. Warm them with a little liquid, then mash and season. This allows you to learn the finished texture without managing a separate dried-bean process.

If you begin with dried beans

Follow reliable instructions for the specific bean product and cooking equipment. Dried fava beans require a separate preparation and thorough cooking process. Bean size, skin and storage age change timing; the quick recipes in this ebook are not instructions for cooking dried beans.

Storage is part of cooking

Refrigerate leftovers promptly in a covered container and reheat thoroughly. Keep fresh toppings separate when possible. This preserves contrast and makes it easier to adjust the next bowl.

Practical skill: Add water in small amounts, stir, and stop when the consistency suits your way of serving.

Your first ful bowl

ABOUT 15 MINUTES | Start with fully cooked fava beans

Ingredients: 2 cups cooked fava beans; $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ cup bean liquid or water; 1 tablespoon olive oil; $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon cumin; 1 tablespoon lemon juice, plus more to taste; a small pinch of salt. Optional finish: chopped tomato and parsley.

Method

1. Put beans and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup liquid in a saucepan. Warm gently for 5-7 minutes, stirring, until hot throughout.
2. Mash about one-third of the beans. Add a little more liquid if too thick.
3. Stir in oil and cumin. Heat gently for another minute.
4. Remove from the heat, add lemon and taste. Add salt only if needed; canned beans may already be salted.
5. Serve warm with bread and optional vegetables.

Adjust without losing the foundation

For a smoother bowl, mash more beans. For a looser bowl, add warm water a spoonful at a time. For brighter flavor, increase lemon gradually. For a gentler bowl, begin with less cumin. Your preference is part of the recipe.

One important ingredient precaution

Fava beans can trigger a serious reaction in people with G6PD deficiency. Anyone who has been advised to avoid them should choose another dish. If cooking for guests, ask about relevant food restrictions and label toppings such as tahini, egg and cheese.

The variations on pages 8-14 start with this quantity of beans. Where another sauce supplies lemon, oil or salt, begin with a lightly seasoned base to avoid doubling those ingredients.

Cultural value: Small choices let a familiar shared dish become an individual plate.

Tahini and lemon

Tahini is a paste made from sesame seeds. With lemon and water, it creates a creamy sauce that blends into warm beans. The result can be rich without becoming heavy if you keep enough liquid in the bowl.

For one base batch

Mix 2 tablespoons tahini with 1 tablespoon lemon juice. Stir in 2-3 tablespoons water gradually until smooth and pourable. Add to 2 cups warmed cooked beans, or offer as a topping. Add cumin and salt to taste; use less added oil than in the base recipe if preferred.

A texture lesson

Tahini may thicken when lemon first touches it. Keep stirring and add water little by little. Taste the sauce before adding it to the bowl. This helps you control acidity rather than discovering too late that the whole bowl is too sharp.

Serve and compare

Try chopped parsley or tomato on top. Put a plain spoonful next to a tahini spoonful and compare creaminess, aroma and acidity. Let everyone describe the difference in their own language.

Ingredient clarity

Tahini contains sesame. A chickpea spread or bean sauce without tahini is not automatically safe for a sesame-allergic guest if utensils or preparation surfaces have been shared. Ask what precautions they need.

This is a serving variation, not a claim that every Egyptian household uses the same tahini mixture.

Flavor words: creamy, nutty, bright, smooth. Which describes your bowl most accurately?

Tomato sauce and onion

A cooked tomato base gives food a different character from a fresh tomato garnish. Soft onion adds sweetness, while cumin and garlic can supply warmth and depth.

For one base batch

Use 2 cups cooked fava beans, 1 small chopped onion, 1 tablespoon oil, ½ cup crushed tomatoes, ¼ teaspoon cumin and an optional small garlic clove. Keep a little bean liquid or water nearby.

Method

Cook onion in oil over medium-low heat for 5-7 minutes until softened. Add optional garlic and cumin for 30 seconds. Add tomatoes and simmer for about 5 minutes. Stir in the beans and enough liquid to keep them moist. Warm thoroughly, then taste before adding salt or lemon.

Keep fresh and cooked versions distinct

Fresh chopped tomato makes a brighter, more textured topping. Cooked sauce becomes part of the bean mixture. Both are useful choices, but they do not produce the same experience.

A family comparison

Ask whether a cook adds the beans to the sauce or spoons the sauce over them. A small procedural difference can preserve whole beans or create a more blended texture.

Serve with bread and fresh cucumber. Keep chili separate for guests who prefer a milder bowl.

Cultural value: The order of cooking can be family knowledge, even when the ingredient list looks familiar.

Alexandria-inspired freshness

The label “Alexandrian ful” can refer to different combinations at different stalls and homes. Garlic, peppers, lemon and vegetables often feature in descriptions. Here the name indicates an inspiration, not one official city recipe.

For one base batch

To 2 cups warmed beans, add 1 small crushed garlic clove, ½ small finely chopped pepper and ½ chopped tomato. Season with ½ teaspoon cumin, 1 tablespoon lemon juice and 1 tablespoon oil, adjusting to taste. Finish with parsley if desired.

Choose your texture

For a crisp version, fold most vegetables in after the beans are heated. For a softer version, cook the pepper and garlic briefly in the oil before adding beans, then stir in tomato. These choices create noticeably different bowls.

Garlic deserves restraint

Raw garlic can dominate a small batch. Start with less if you are unfamiliar with it. Cooking garlic gently softens its sharpness; burning it adds bitterness.

Place is a question, not a shortcut

Ask an Alexandrian cook what the name means to them. A city can inspire recognizable preferences without requiring every resident to share one taste. The photograph on page 18 provides the coastal setting; it does not establish a particular ful recipe.

Useful question: “What makes your version Alexandrian: the ingredients, the technique or where you learned it?”

Ful with eggs

An egg can sit beside the ful, top the bowl or be cooked in the same pan. These are different serving approaches. Choose one that suits your kitchen and the people eating.

The simplest version

Prepare one base batch of ful and serve with 2 hard-boiled eggs, peeled and halved. Add fresh tomato and bread. This keeps the egg separate so guests can choose their portion.

A pan version

Spread the warm ful in a small frying pan with enough moisture to prevent sticking. Make two shallow spaces and crack an egg into each. Cover and cook gently until the whites and yolks are firm, adding a small splash of water at the edge if needed.

A balanced bowl

Because the egg adds richness, taste before adding more butter or oil. Lemon and fresh vegetables can provide contrast. The goal is a pleasant combination rather than adding every possible topping.

For a shared table

Label the dish for egg. Keep a separate bean portion if a guest avoids eggs. Use clean utensils between the two bowls. A topping should widen choice rather than make participation harder.

This recipe is a home adaptation. It is not presented as the only Egyptian way to prepare ful with eggs.

Cultural value: Serving a component separately can make a familiar meal more welcoming to different guests.

Chili or fresh vegetables?

Chili ful

Start with the base recipe. Add a small amount of chili sauce or finely chopped fresh chili, stir and taste. Heat differs greatly between chilies and sauces, so a fixed spoonful can produce very different results. Offer extra at the table.

A guest who prefers a mild bowl is not failing a cultural test. Keep most of the batch mild and season an individual serving. Lemon and cumin can remain expressive without chili.

Vegetable ful

For one base batch, fold in $\frac{1}{2}$ chopped tomato, $\frac{1}{4}$ finely chopped cucumber or pepper, and 2 tablespoons parsley shortly before serving. A little finely chopped onion is optional. Adjust lemon after adding the vegetables.

If you prefer cooked vegetables, soften a small amount of onion, pepper or diced carrot separately, then combine with the beans. Say whether your version is fresh or cooked so the reader knows what texture to expect.

A two-bowl experiment

Make one mild vegetable bowl and one gently spicy bowl. Compare freshness, heat and bean texture. Ask which would work best in a sandwich and which you prefer with a spoon.

Wash fresh produce and keep raw toppings separate until close to serving. Avoid overwhelming the beans with so many additions that their flavor disappears.

Flavor words: crisp, juicy, spicy, cooling. Discuss what each addition does rather than simply calling one "better."

Butter or cheese

Butter ful

Prepare 2 cups warm beans with cumin and a little liquid. Stir in 1 tablespoon butter until melted. Begin without the oil in the base recipe, then decide whether any extra is needed. Add lemon gradually and taste before salting.

Butter creates a rich finish. The beans still need moisture; butter does not replace cooking liquid. Serve immediately while warm.

Cheese-topped ful

Prepare a lightly salted base batch. Add 2-3 tablespoons crumbled cheese to individual servings, or sprinkle a suitable melting cheese over the warm beans and heat gently until melted. Choose the cheese according to the flavor you want.

Some cheeses are much saltier than others. Taste the cheese first and reduce added salt in the beans. Tomato, cucumber or lemon can provide a useful contrast.

Describe the adaptation honestly

Cheese-topped ful is offered here as a creative serving option, not a fixed regional category. A reader benefits from knowing whether a recipe follows a family tradition or is a new combination.

At the table

Butter and most cheeses contain dairy. Offer plain ful alongside if needed. Plant-based alternatives also have ingredients and allergens to check; a substitute should be described clearly.

Cultural value: Creativity can sit beside tradition when both are named accurately.

Sausage and basturma

Strong meat toppings change the bowl substantially. They can add concentrated salt, spices and richness, so begin with a lightly seasoned bean base.

Ful with sausage

For 2 cups cooked beans, use about 100-150 g / 3½-5 oz sausage. Cook it thoroughly according to the product's instructions, then slice or crumble it. Fold into warm ful or spoon over individual servings. Add cooked onion or tomato if desired. Taste before adding extra salt or oil.

Ful with basturma

Basturma is strongly seasoned cured beef. Use a small amount, about 30-50 g / 1-2 oz, thinly sliced, for one base batch. Follow the product's preparation instructions and add near the end. Its salt and spice coating can dominate, so start modestly.

Ask about ingredients

If halal suitability matters, verify the meat product rather than assuming a sausage or cured meat is suitable from its name. Recipes, curing ingredients and certifications differ. Keep a meat-free portion separate for guests who need it.

A bowl with room for contrast

Serve fresh vegetables and lemon alongside. Avoid combining meat, egg, cheese, butter and tahini simply because each is available. Select a clear flavor direction.

These are optional hearty variations. The everyday bean foundation is already a complete starting point for an enjoyable meal.

Tasting principle: Strong toppings should support the beans; add a little, taste, then decide.

Bread carries the story

Aish baladi, Egyptian everyday flatbread, is a familiar companion to ful. In Egyptian Arabic, aish can mean both bread and life. The word offers a useful opening for discussing a staple's place in everyday meals.

Three ways to serve

A bowl: use a spoon or small pieces of bread to pick up manageable bites.

A sandwich: use thicker ful so the filling stays in place; add vegetables without overfilling.

A shared spread: provide serving spoons, separate toppings and space for each guest's plate.

Choose a few companions

Fresh tomato and cucumber add contrast. Pickled vegetables bring sharpness. Ta'ameya, Egyptian falafel commonly made with fava beans and herbs, is another familiar breakfast food. Eggs and tea may also appear, depending on the household and the occasion.

Keep the focus clear

The purpose is not to make the largest possible breakfast. A small bowl, fresh bread and one accompaniment can show the dish clearly. Too many toppings can distract from the texture you worked to achieve.

Sharing without awkwardness

Use clean serving utensils and avoid returning bitten bread to a communal bowl. A spoon is always a practical option. Explain unfamiliar foods and let guests choose how to eat comfortably.

Conversation: What staple food in your own language carries a meaning beyond its literal ingredients?

Cairo: the street around the bowl



Photo: Radosław Botev | CC BY 3.0 pl | Full credits: page 25.

Al-Mashhad al-Husseini Street | 2019

Signs, shopfronts, seating and pedestrians place food businesses inside ordinary city life. Ful belongs to this wider world of work, shopping and social contact. The photograph provides a Cairo street setting; it does not show a confirmed ful vendor. Ask residents where they eat breakfast and what they order rather than reading an entire food culture from one image.

Look, then ask: What can this picture show about a meal's setting, and what must a cook or resident explain?

Cairo: conversation has a setting



Photo: Michał Huniewicz | CC BY 2.0 | Full credits: page 25.

Al-Fishawi Café | Cairo

A café photograph gives social space a visible form: seats, decoration and people close enough to talk. Ful remains the focus of this book, while the café helps explain how meals and drinks sit within a longer visit or conversation. This image is contextual; it is not evidence that this café serves ful or a recommendation of its current menu.

Look, then ask: What can this picture show about a meal's setting, and what must a cook or resident explain?

Alexandria: place and personal taste



Photo: Vyacheslav Argenberg | CC BY 4.0 | Full credits: page 25.

The Corniche and Mediterranean shoreline | 2007

Alexandria supplies the setting for our garlic-and-vegetable variation, but the sea view does not prove a recipe. It helps readers place the city geographically. The meaningful next step is to ask a local cook what “Alexandrian ful” means in their household or neighborhood. One city can contain many versions of a familiar dish.

Look, then ask: What can this picture show about a meal's setting, and what must a cook or resident explain?

Aswan: markets and local voices



Photo: Vyacheslav Argenberg | CC BY 4.0 | Full credits: page 25.

Photo: Petar Milošević | CC BY-SA 4.0 | Full credits: page 25.

Aswan market street | 2007; Souq entrance | 2023

Markets show the movement of people and goods around everyday meals. These photographs do not identify a particular ful stall. They invite questions about where residents shop, what they eat for breakfast and how preparation differs between families. Aswan is home to communities with distinct identities, including Nubian communities. Let cooks name their own food knowledge and traditions.

Look, then ask: What can this picture show about a meal's setting, and what must a cook or resident explain?

The bean travels; recipes differ

Cooked fava-bean dishes appear in several Arab countries. Similar names create a connection, while preparation and serving choices preserve local differences. The examples below are introductions, not a recipe atlas.

Sudan

Ful is familiar in Sudanese food life. Oil, seasoning and accompaniments vary by cook and setting. Rather than attaching a fixed topping list to every Sudanese bowl, ask which version the person grew up eating and what they choose now.

The Levant

Fava beans may be served with lemon, garlic, olive oil, tahini or vegetables in different combinations. Some preparations combine beans with chickpeas. Names, proportions and textures change; a restaurant menu is not a complete description of household practice.

Saudi Arabia and Yemen

Ful can appear as a breakfast food, with local and family preferences for cooked seasonings and bread. Urban food life also reflects migration and exchange. Ask what the preparation is called locally and which bread accompanies it.

Compare without ranking

Use four questions: Are the beans whole or mashed? Is the flavor mainly lemon, tomato, sesame or spice? Which bread is served? When is the dish eaten? These comparisons reveal difference without pretending one version is the correct answer for everyone.

Shared food does not require shared identity. Credit a specific cook, family or community when adapting their recipe, and leave room for their explanation of belonging.

Interview prompt: "What would you recognize immediately as your family's version of ful?"

Make the bowl welcoming

Offering food can express care. A guest can return that care through gratitude, curiosity and clear communication about what they can eat. Generosity does not require pressure to take a larger portion.

Serve a mild bean base and place stronger toppings separately. Identify sesame in tahini, dairy in butter or cheese, and egg or meat where used. Ask about restrictions before the meal, not after someone has taken a bite.

A few useful words

فول | Ful | Fava beans; in context, the cooked dish.

عيش | Aish | Bread in Egyptian Arabic.

شكرا | Shukran | Thank you.

بالهنا والشفا | Bil-hana wish-shifa | An Egyptian wish for enjoyment and well-being while eating.

تسلم إيدك | Tislam idak | A warm Egyptian compliment to the cook; forms vary.

Two phrases in English are enough to begin

“Thank you. What do you add to your ful?” invites a story. “It was delicious; I am full” sets a polite boundary. You can participate warmly before learning much Arabic.

Pronunciation varies by dialect. The transliterations are accessible approximations, not a complete phonetic guide. Show the Arabic phrase to a speaker and ask how they say it.

Cultural value: Welcome becomes meaningful when each person can join the meal comfortably.

If the ful runs out...

إذا خلص الفول أنا مش مسؤوووول!

“If the ful runs out,
don't blame me!”

The stretched final word makes the delivery playful and dramatic. This playful sentence also appears in El-Tabai El-Domyati's own company profile. It is included as a circulating food-related slogan, not an original invention by the author. See page 27 for its source and context.

What the joke adds to a meal

Imagine a host setting a fresh bowl on the table and joking that it may disappear quickly. The humor can communicate affection, appetite and a reminder to save some for everyone. Tone and relationship matter: the same sentence can feel different among friends and strangers.

Translate the spirit

A literal word-for-word translation does not always preserve the joke. “If the ful runs out, don't blame me!” keeps the lighthearted warning. Explain the food term first, then let the sentence work naturally.

Invite, don't assume

Humor is personal. Not every Egyptian shares the same jokes, and a newcomer may need context. Use the line as an invitation to enjoy the bowl, not as a test of whether someone understands a whole culture.

A tasting-table caption: “Choose your topping—and please leave a little ful for the next person!”

Host a ful tasting workshop

A small tasting can teach more than a crowded menu. For four participants, prepare about two base batches, bread and fresh vegetables. Increase quantities if the tasting will be a full meal rather than a sample.

Prepare three versions

Keep one bowl simply seasoned with lemon and cumin. Make a second with tahini sauce and a third with tomato sauce. Label ingredients and use separate spoons. Provide a tahini-free option and discuss relevant restrictions before serving.

A 45-minute learning sequence

First 5 minutes: introduce ful and show the breakfast photograph.

Next 10 minutes: explain the base ingredients and how mashing affects texture.

Next 15 minutes: taste the three versions. Compare aroma, acidity, creaminess and consistency.

Next 10 minutes: invite each participant to connect the meal with a food from home.

Final 5 minutes: share a new word and one question for a local cook.

When preferences differ

If someone says, “My family makes it differently,” ask what changes and why. The difference is useful knowledge. If someone declines a topping, offer another choice without interpreting the refusal as dislike of the culture.

A simple record

Write the version tasted, texture noticed, favorite addition and question raised. Ask permission before recording a guest's story or taking their photograph. No participant should have to speak for an entire country.

Outcome: Participants can identify ful, explain one preparation choice and ask a respectful question about its cultural setting.

Preserve the recipe and memory

A recipe is more than quantities. A cook may judge thickness by the way a spoon moves, add lemon in stages or recognize a bean variety by its skin. Record these cues alongside the written method.

Ask a cook

Who taught you to make ful? What did breakfast look like then? Do you mash the beans? Which oil do you choose? What would you never leave out? How has your recipe changed? What should a newcomer understand before trying it?

Credit the voice

Ask permission before recording or publishing. Let the cook choose how to be named and review the account when practical. Separate their memory from historical claims that need further evidence. A family recollection is valuable without being a national origin story.

Your recipe record

Write the dish name, cook's credit, family or place context, date, ingredients, quantities, tools, method, texture cues and serving companions. Mark substitutions. If two relatives differ, preserve both versions rather than forcing one winner.

Further context

The [Egyptian Tourism Authority's official site](#) offers wider cultural and travel context. To investigate ful in greater depth, seek local cooks and specialist food histories. Photographs in this edition document places and meals; they do not establish disputed origins or current restaurant menus.

Prepared for readers unfamiliar with Egyptian and Arab food traditions. No single bowl represents every household or community. Contact WCE: FLtoday70@gmail.com.

Begin with the bean.
Remember the person.

Free to reuse, with credit

The six photographs below are licensed for reuse under the stated Creative Commons terms. They remain copyrighted by their creators. Images are reproduced without cropping, with proportional resizing for layout. No photographer, café or restaurant endorsement is implied.

1. Ful medames.jpg

Zachbe at en.wikipedia | CC BY-SA 3.0 | [Source file](#) | [License](#)

2. Al Mashhad al-Husseini street Cairo 2019.jpg

Radosław Botev | CC BY 3.0 pl | [Source file](#) | [License](#)

3. Al-Fishawi Café (17771173263).jpg

Michał Huniewicz | CC BY 2.0 | [Source file](#) | [License](#)

4. Egypt, Alexandria, The Corniche of Alexandria, Mediterranean Sea.jpg

Vyacheslav Argenberg | CC BY 4.0 | [Source file](#) | [License](#)

5. Market, People, Aswan, Egypt.jpg

Vyacheslav Argenberg | CC BY 4.0 | [Source file](#) | [License](#)

6. Aswan Souq.jpg

Petar Milošević | CC BY-SA 4.0 | [Source file](#) | [License](#)

CC BY requires appropriate attribution and license information. CC BY-SA also requires the same or a compatible license for adapted photographs. The individual photo licenses apply to those images; original WCE text and branding are separate. Retain credits and identify changes if reusing or adapting an image.

The breakfast photograph is a Cairo cart meal. The street, café, waterfront and market images supply geographical and social context. They are not all photographs of ful vendors. Photographs span different years; source pages contain dates and original descriptions.

Source and license check: 14 October 2026. Food descriptions are an introductory educational account, not an exhaustive regional recipe survey. Home adaptations have not been kitchen-tested.

A memorable name, a local story

الجش | El-Gahsh | Sayyida Zaynab

El-Gahsh is documented in reporting on Cairo's ful and ta'ameya culture. A 2024 El Watan feature records family members and a long-serving worker describing continuity from a small cart to a familiar breakfast business. Earlier accounts differ on the origin of the name; it is better to preserve that uncertainty than invent one settled story. [R1]

البغل | El-Baghl | Sayyida Zaynab

In a 2013 Youm7 interview, Mohamed Mowafi described El-Baghl as a family name he chose to use for his ful-and-ta'ameya business. He linked its memorable identity with the surrounding neighborhood and Ramadan suhoor custom. This is the owner's reported account, not independently verified founding documentation. [R2]

For a reader unfamiliar with Egyptian humor

El-Gahsh can mean a young donkey, and El-Baghl a mule. In these contexts they are business names, so a literal translation alone does not explain the owners' or customers' relationship with them. A shop name can be playful, familial and commercially memorable at the same time.

Read the linked reports to view their published photographs. The report images are not reproduced here because no open reuse license was established. A license for a general Cairo street photograph is not a license for a newspaper's restaurant photograph.

[R1] El Watan, 17 May 2024: feature and photographs.

[R2] Youm7, 4 August 2013: interviews and photographs.

A brand and a neighborhood counter

التابعي الدمياطي | El-Tabei El-Domyati

The business's own company profile traces its family story to Damietta in 1910 and its move to Cairo to 1953. Other newspaper histories give different early dates, so these dates are explicitly identified as the company's account. Its name connects the brand with a place and a family. [R3]

The company profile also uses the line “If the ful runs out, I am not responsible.” This supports treating the sentence as part of a circulating commercial food story rather than attributing its invention to this ebook's author. The historical details attached to the slogan remain claims made by the business.

نعمة | Neama | Agouza, Giza

A directory listing identifies Cafeteria Neama at 172 Nile Street in Agouza and classifies it under ful-and-ta'ameya and food service. Customer recollections connect it with takeaway sandwiches and the nearby Nile setting. Those recollections are useful examples of personal food memory, not verified founding history or current service guarantees. [R4]

What makes these examples useful?

A family brand and a neighborhood counter show different ways a familiar dish becomes recognizable. Repetition, location, service and customers' memories can matter alongside the recipe itself. Exact founding years require better evidence than a popular reputation alone.

[R3] El-Tabei company account; compare Youm7, 11 September 2009.

[R4] Neama directory and customer recollections. Photos on these external pages are not automatically licensed for ebook reproduction.

Mohamed Ahmed: a real storefront



Photo: Marsupium | CC BY-SA 4.0 | Full credits: page 31.

Foul Mohamed Ahmed | Ramleh Station area, Alexandria | December 2021

Here the setting is a named ful house rather than a generic street. The photograph's source identifies the restaurant as Foul Mohamed Ahmed. Its frontage makes the name part of the urban scene. The following page shows actual food photographed there. These are archival images; they do not establish current opening hours, prices or the founding year.

Look, then ask: What can this picture show about a meal's setting, and what must a cook or resident explain?

The restaurant, then the bowl



Photo: Marsupium | CC BY-SA 4.0 | Full credits: page 31.



Photo: Marsupium | CC BY-SA 4.0 | Full credits: page 31.

Ful and accompanying dishes at Mohamed Ahmed | December 2021

These photographs document a serving of ful and a wider group of dishes at the same restaurant. Compare the bean texture, serving vessels and accompaniments with the Cairo breakfast photograph. They illustrate one meal presentation, not a recipe to reproduce exactly. No claim is made that the home variations in this ebook are the restaurant's own recipes.

Look, then ask: What can this picture show about a meal's setting, and what must a cook or resident explain?

A name needs a neighborhood

Abu Ahmed and El-Omda are among the names suggested for this street-food collection. Both names recur in restaurant directories. A name alone is not enough to match a photograph or a historical account to the intended business.

أبو أحمد | Abu Ahmed

Directories identify separate ful-and-ta'ameya businesses under this name in Nasr City and Shubra, as well as an Abu Ahmed El-Domyati listing in Alexandria. These records do not establish one shared business or a common history. A specific city, neighborhood or branch is needed before assigning a photograph. [R5]

العمدة | El-Omda

Listings under El-Omda occur in Maadi, El-Marg, Ain Shams and other places. They should not be silently combined into a single historic restaurant. The next research step is to match the intended shop by neighborhood and signage, then seek a dated owner account or local reporting. [R6]

A useful visitor's habit

Record the full name, street, branch, photograph date and photographer. Verify current details before visiting. For historical writing, distinguish an owner's memory from documents and independent reports.

[R5] [Nasr City listing](#); [Shubra listing](#).

[R6] [El-Omda directory results](#).

These examples establish name ambiguity, not historical fame or current opening status.

Mohamed Ahmed photographs

The following three photographs are by Marsupium and are licensed CC BY-SA 4.0. Reproduced without cropping, with proportional resizing. Attribution and share-alike terms apply to adaptations of the individual photographs. The photographer and restaurant do not endorse this ebook.

Fast food restaurant at Ramleh Station, Alexandria.jpg

Marsupium | CC BY-SA 4.0 | [Original and description](#) | [License](#)

Foul Mohamed Ahmed - dishes.jpg

Marsupium | CC BY-SA 4.0 | [Original and description](#) | [License](#)

Foul Mohamed Ahmed - foul.jpg

Marsupium | CC BY-SA 4.0 | [Original and description](#) | [License](#)

Images in the earlier cultural journey retain their credits on page 25. The restaurant reports linked on pages 26-27 remain external reading and photo-viewing resources; their photographs have not been copied into this edition.

Research check: 14 October 2026. Exact restaurant identities, historical claims and image rights are separate questions. Public visibility on a website does not by itself grant a reuse license.