

café noma

BY RALPH BRENNAN

Women of the Nile

*Queen Nefertari's Exhibit at the New Orleans Museum of Art Inspires
Chef Chris Montero to Invite Egyptian Born Women Chef to Consult with
the Café NOMA Team on a Culinary Journey Through Egypt
March 17-July 17, 2022*

Queen Nefertari, the royal wife of Pharaoh Ramesses II (reigned 1279–13 BCE), is linked to some of the most magnificent monuments of ancient Egypt. Ancient artifacts from her tomb will travel across land and sea to the **New Orleans Museum of Art to be featured in the exhibition Queen Nefertari's Egypt, on view March 18, 2022, to July 17, 2022.** In the museum's restaurant, **Café Noma**, **Executive Chef Chris Montero** will present dishes that showcase Egyptian culinary customs and the culinary evolution from ancient to modern times.

The New Orleans Museum of Art has become a preferred place to exhibit such rare collections since one of the most famous of the Egyptian exhibitions, *Treasures of Tutankhamun*, reigned over the museum's corridors in 1977. Representing, equally, the true culture of the Nile, Queen Nefertari's tomb is the largest and most richly decorated in the Valley of the Queens. "NOMA is delighted to be able to present some of the priceless creations from Queen Nefertari's tomb, where visitors can appreciate this great history up close," **Susan Taylor**, Montine McDaniel Freeman Director.

The discoveries made by a team of archeologists led by Ernesto Schiaparelli, then director of the Museo Egizio in Turin, about the role of Nefertari and other powerful women in ancient Egypt have come back to share their importance through the 230 exceptional objects in this exhibition. This includes statues, jewelry, vases, papyrus, steles, wooden coffins, and stone sarcophagi, as well as tools and various items of daily life from the artisan village of Deir-el-Medina, home to those who created the royal tombs. These astonishing finds showcase the legacy of the royal wives, sisters, daughters, and mothers of pharaohs, as well as the female artists who contributed to the creation of these stunning objects – and, how fortuitous that the exhibition begins in March with **Women's History Month**.

At **Café NOMA**, Ralph Brennan and the team have taken their cues from the exhibition that honors skilled women and have collaborated with a woman chef who is inherently familiar with Egyptian cuisine. **Dina Daniel**, chef and owner of **Fava Pot** restaurants in the Washington, DC area, is a Coptic Christian from Cairo, Egypt, who arrived in the United States in 2004 with a desire to share her culture through food. Chef Daniel has become a true treasure to the **Ralph Brennan Restaurant Group** team. She has worked closely with **Chef Chris Montero** to curate a special, authentic menu, unique to Café NOMA. "Her in-depth knowledge and guidance assisted Chef Montero in presenting dishes that pay tribute to her native country, taking diners on an epicurean journey through Egypt," said Ralph Brennan. In addition, Montero has had the good fortune to connect with chef and boutique owner, **Khaled Hegazzi** of Pharaoh's Cave - a New Orleans' resident, he is also a native-born Egyptian from Alexandria. Hegazzi has been instrumental, on the ground in New Orleans, assisting with an authentic hand in the preparation and execution of the dishes for this highly anticipated celebration.

For the next five months at Café NOMA, there will be tasteful choices and exciting specials, in addition to the regular menu which would make a suitably fit for any Queen or Pharaoh!

Dishes may include: *Gebna Maleyah*, [Fried Feta Cheese], *Haman Mahshi*, [Stuffed Quail], *Lamb Fattah*, [Spiced Lamb and Toasted Pita], *Kunafa*, [Pastry with Rose Water and Pistachio], *Falafel*, *Hummus*, *Baba Ghanoush*, *Dulmas*, and *Tzatziki*.

Special Programming for the duration of the Queen Nefertari Exhibit [March-July 2022]: Monthly Dinners for the "Evening with Nefertari" Series – The premier Dinner is on March 31, 2022, hosted by **Chef Chris Montero** and **Guest Chef Dina Daniel**, includes Private Tour of the Exhibit and a Four-Course Menu served in an exclusive room within the New Orleans Museum of Art. **Artful Palate Series** – Guest chef cooking demonstrations of Egyptian dishes, with the initial presentation by **Chef Dina Daniel** on March 29, 2022. **Nefertari Hour** – An afternoon "happy hour" offering flavorful Flatbreads, plus Wines, Cocktails, and Floral Teas. **Nefertari Daily Menu** – Featuring Egyptian specials.

Queen Nefertari's Egypt is organized by the Museo Egizio, Turin, and StArt, in collaboration with the New Orleans Museum of Art. The presentation in New Orleans is made possible by the generous support of New Orleans & Company; Eugenie and Joseph Jones Family Foundation; JPMorgan Chase & Co.; Charitable Lead Annuity Trust under the Will of Louis Feil; Consulate General of Italy in Houston; Lake Lawn Metairie Funeral Home and Cemeteries, a Dignity Memorial provider; Nina Dhurandhar, MD; Mallory Savoie; Elisabeth French; and Kenya and Quentin Messer.

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