PRESS RELEASE

# Istanbul Grill California Publishes a Meze and Shared Plates Guide

Istanbul Grill California - Mediterranean Restaurant & Catering

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FOUNTAIN VALLEY, CA - Istanbul Grill California has published a reader guide to Turkish meze, dated November 18, 2026. The article explains the small plates that usually open a Turkish or Mediterranean meal, and how they are meant to be shared at the table. It also describes how those dishes sit before, or alongside, a main plate of grilled meat, rice and vegetables.

The guide was written for diners who recognize hummus or stuffed grape leaves but may not know how a meze course is put together. The full meze guide is available on the restaurant website, and more about the business is available from Istanbul Grill California .

The article describes meze as small dishes shared at the start of a Turkish or Mediterranean meal, usually eaten with warm bread. The word is often traced to the Persian for "taste" or "snack," with versions of the tradition found across Turkey, Greece, the Balkans and the Levant. Cold meze are mostly vegetable, legume and yogurt dips finished with olive oil, while hot meze include fried or baked bites.

Five cold meze appear individually and together on the Appetizer Sampler. They are hummus, chickpeas with tahini, garlic and lemon; babaganoush, smoked eggplant with tahini, olive oil and garlic; ezme, finely chopped tomatoes, onions, walnuts and hot peppers; dolmas, grape leaves stuffed with rice and herbs and served with yogurt; and labne, thickened yogurt with dill, garlic and walnuts. The guide compares hummus and babaganoush as two tahini and garlic dips that differ in base and flavor, one nutty and lemony, the other silkier and smoky.

“In Turkey, a meal rarely starts with the main course. First come the meze: a few small plates in the middle of the table, a basket of bread and time to talk,” said Okan Ustun, founder of Istanbul Grill California.

The guide also covers hot meze, including falafel and cheese-filled phyllo rolls known in Turkey as sigara boregi. A chart lists which dishes are spicy, which are vegetarian, and which contain sesame, walnuts, dairy or wheat. Guests with food allergies or vegan requests are asked to confirm details with a server, including whether dolmas can be served without yogurt.

Practical sections show how to build a balanced spread with something creamy, something smoky, something fresh and spicy, and something to bite, plus plenty of bread. Suggested quantities range from one dip for a single diner to the Appetizer Sampler for a table of three to five. The article notes that ezme can be spooned over grilled meat, and that labne balances spicy and smoky dishes served beside a main plate.

Istanbul Grill California serves these dishes every day from 10 AM to 1 AM at 18010 Newhope St Ste D in Fountain Valley, for dine-in, pickup and delivery. The dinner menu lists the cold and hot appetizers alongside the grill dishes. Readers can also find the restaurant on a Google Maps listing .

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