

## Nine Spice Mix

*This spice mix is featured in many of the dishes in this book, lending them a uniquely Palestinian flavor. —Reem Kassis, The Palestinian Table*

First they tango on my tongue,  
nimble couples careening,  
then together  
form an Arab-style line dance  
stepping, stomping, swaying.

West Indies allspice dazzles,  
berries tangling with cinnamon sticks,  
while cloves, Indonesian natives,  
lead with a spirited solidarity solo.

Coriander seeds offer greetings in Hindi  
as others toast comrades in languages  
beyond borders and blockades.

Lifting up sisterhood, sun-wizened nutmeg  
starts a sibling dance with mace.  
Cumin demurs, then surprises  
with subtle exultation.

Queen of spices cardamom,  
host of the party, gives a nod to flavors  
in hiding: lemony, sweet, warm,  
fragrant, nutty, pungent, hot.

Encouraged, feisty black peppercorns  
shimmy center stage, organizing  
the unique union of nine  
for a vivacious global salute  
to the Palestinian palate.

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