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Safari Safari Express present world class African food

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photo: Suluki Fardan

Jamal Hashi, owner and chef at Safari Express is on a mission to bring the beauty of African food culture to Minnesota and the world. Safari Express is located at Midtown Global Market at Lake St. & Chicago in South Minneapolis. It is step two in a family enterprise that he and his older brothers, Abdi Hashi and Sade Hashi, have launched. Safari Express is the fast food take out version of the elegant and friendly Safari Restaurant, downtown Minneapolis at 1410 Nicollet.

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Hashi shared his vision of connecting Midwesterners with Africa's rich and varied culinary palette during a live broadcast interview on the Conversations with Al McFarlane radio show. The show is presented weekly Tuesdays from 11am to 12 Noon from the Midtown Global Market Food Court stage, and is carried on KFAI fm 90.3 and fm 106.7 in St. Paul. The broadcast is live to the internet at KFAI.org and archived podcasts are available at insightnews.com/policy forum.

Hashi, who came to the United States about 12 years ago as a high school student, grew up in the Washington, D.C. area. He said he had family in Minnesota and heard that Minnesota was particularly inviting to and supportive of Somali immigrants. So he moved here and, with his brothers, began pursuing the dream of bringing the best of East African cuisine to Minnesota.

"Our food is both unique and diverse," he said. "We have traditional Somali and East African recipes, and we have dishes, particularly ones with special spices, that reflect centuries of contact between East Africa and India." "Somalia was also colonized for a period of time by the Italians," Hashi said. "As a consequence, we have a lot of Italian pasta dishes, modified to reveal African and Indian influence."

Hashi said there are several signature Safari dishes, including one called Chicken Fantastic, a spicy chicken and vegetables dish in a creamy white sauce, that will introduce American palates to a new adventure in African cooking. Safari and Safari Express feature chicken curry, beef curry, and delectable dishes named chicken suqqar, chicken baryanni and beef solan. On Fridays, Safari Express serves goat curry an entree which is absolutely, unequivocally excellent. The goat curry is available daily at the Nicollet Av. Safari restaurant.

Hashi said the word Safari means adventure. Hashi and company deliver without fault on the promise of their name. For information: safariexpressstogo.com or call 612-872-4604 (Nicollet) or 612-874-0756 (Midtown).

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