For our Sankofa dinner celebrating cultural diversity in Black History Month at Green Templeton College, we will be turning to the Middle East to explore Black culture through its three signatory dishes of the Middle Eastern cuisine.

The iconic Kabsa dish will feature as the main course for the supper, which is traditionally composed of rice, chicken, lamb and/or vegetables, brought together with a combination of infamous Arabic spices including cloves, cardamom, saffaron, black lime, & bay leaves. This dish traces its origin in the Arabic peninsula generally, but is most famous within the Arab states of the Persian Gulf, including Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman and Bahrain. The name Kabsa literally means "pressed together", in reference to the cooking method of the dish in which the rice, meat, & vegetables are cooked together in one pot from start to finish.

As for the starter, the Tabouleh salad, which traces its origins in the Levant area of the Middle East, has been chosen as it is a favourite amongst non-Arabs and Arabs alike, due to its high nutritional value, and simple ingredients which are easy to source. It consists of finely chopped parsley, tomato, mint, onion, burgul (or quinoa) which is dressed with a generous helping of olive oil, mixed together with some lemon and salt and pepper.

Last but not least, we will end our journey in exploring the diverse Black culture through the Middle Eastern cuisine with Muhalabia, which is a milk based dessert that traces its origins to the 10th century but is remains widely enjoyed across many areas of the Middle East. Its consistency is akin to the Italian panna cotta, but its method of preparation is similar to a milk pudding in that it mainly consists of milk which is usually thickened with corn starch and flavoured with mastic and finished with drops of orange or rose blossom syrup.

All the above dishes have been carefully selected as to represent and celebrate many areas of the Middle East where black culture is present but is often underrepresented. The aim is to highlight the diversity of black culture by taking Middle Eastern cuisine as an example. As all the above dishes can be made vegan, lactose or gluten free, the hope is to motivate as many people as possible to participate in exploring the rich Black history of the Middle East through three signatory dishes of its cuisine.