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G R E E K
Food & Wine



The National Herald

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On a Thankful Heart

By Rev. Andrew Demotses
 Goarch.org

During the month of November, we are reminded of our obligation to give thanks to Almighty God for the many and countless blessings that surround us. It is a sad commentary on our human nature that we must institutionalize a day of thanksgiving lest no one give a thought to this most basic of responsibilities.

And Yet, all of Scripture is very sensitive to the need for us to give thanks. When the people of Israel were led into the land of Canaan, they were told by the God of our fathers to "beware that thou forget not" all that had been done for them. Nonetheless, they quickly forgot the mighty acts by which the Lord had formed them into a great nation, and it became necessary for the psalmist to remind them to "forget not all His benefits." In the healing of the 10 lepers, only one returned to give thanks, and Christ asked, "Were there not ten cleansed, but where are the nine?"

Surely God does not need our feeble thanks. It must be for our benefit, therefore, that we are required to be grateful. Indeed, a fundamental requirement for spiritual growth is a thankful heart. If we are to give thanks, we not only remember all that we should be thankful for, but to whom those thanks are due; we are bound to remember not only the gifts received, but the Giver as well. It is in this awareness that a life of faith has its foundation. We begin to live each day for what it is, a gift from God. We strive not to waste it, but to treat it as an investment trusted to our care. We also see our successes and our pos-



sessions for what they are, gifts made possible by the intellect, the health, and the opportunities that have been placed in our path. Gratitude helps us to understand our proper place in the scheme of creation.

To be thankful is to look up at Another far greater than ourselves, and to know that we are not gods ourselves. In that knowledge is the beginning of all wisdom. God asks us for thankful hearts not because He needs them, but because we do.

Thanksgiving: An American Holiday, With Greek Roots?

By Eleni Kostopoulos
 The National Herald Staff Writer

Fighting over the best piece of carved turkey, engaging in unique family conversations, hearing the football match on TV from the adjacent room, expressing gratitude to God for all our blessings; these are some of the things we look forward to when celebrating Thanksgiving Day, a typically American holiday that has its humble beginnings on the Plymouth Plantation in the early 1600s. History, however, tells us that many rituals we anticipate in the modern world during the end of November, closely resemble traditions practiced by the Ancient Greeks.

Also during the autumn season, a festival known as Thesmophoria used to be held in about 50 cities or villages of Ancient Greece, in honor of the goddess Demeter, who taught mankind to tend the soil.

According to N.S. Gills of about.com, there was no question but that the festival, held during a month known as Pyanopsion (Puanepsion) in the lunisolar calendar of the Athenians, was part of the goddess' worship.

She writes: "Since our calendar is solar, the month doesn't exactly match, but Pyanopsion would be, more or less, October into November, the same months as the Canadian and U.S. Thanksgivings. In ancient Greece this was the time of the fall planting of crops like barley and winter wheat.

On the 11-13 of Pyanopsion, Greek matrons took a break from their usually homebound lives to participate in the autumn sowing (Sporetos) festival known as Thesmophoria. Although most of the practices remain a mystery, we know that the holiday was a bit more involved than our modern versions, and that no men were allowed to participate.

The matrons probably symbolically relived the anguish Demeter suffered when her daughter Kore/Persephone was abducted by Hades. They also probably asked for her help in obtaining a bountiful harvest."

As we learn in the classroom, Thanksgiving represents a time to give thanks for harvest, and to express gratitude in general. Demeter, who is the Greek version of the Roman goddess Ceres, was indeed the goddess of grain.

Gills writes: "It was her job to feed the world, but when she discovered her daughter had been kidnapped, she became so depressed she wouldn't do her job.

Finally, she found out where her daughter was, but that didn't help much. She still wanted Persephone back and the god who had abducted Persephone didn't want to return his lovely prize. Demeter refused to eat or feed the world until the other gods arranged a satisfactory resolution to her conflict

with Hades over Persephone. After her reunion with her daughter, Demeter gave the gift of agriculture to mankind so we could

plant for ourselves."

Yet another theory exists on an Ancient Greek-originated Thanksgiving, complete with a parade and full-fledged banquet. An article on dl.ket.org states: "The Greeks called their Thanksgiving Day ELEUTHERIA, and they celebrated it in the month they called Maemacterion (November on our calendar). They did not, however, feast on turkey. Their 'kill' to be shared by all present at the banquet was a black bull -- much more practical since the whole town was expected for dinner.

"The Greek Thanksgiving Day was started after the battle of Plataea, 479 B.C. Every year, on the 16th day of the month of Maemacterion, a procession through town would start at dawn, at the signal of a trumpet. The procession was followed by wagons decorated with myrtle boughs (cf. our Thanksgiving Day parade floats decorated with roses and flowers), the black sacrificial bull and young free youths (cf. the marching groups of young people in our Thanksgiving Day parades). At the rear of the procession came the Archon of Plataea, dressed in the garments of victorious military leader and carrying a sword (cf. our parade Grand Marshal dressed in military garb).

Since the Greeks were not as fanatical about athletics as we are, they only had their Eleutherian Bowl every fifth year, instead of the annual contests we enjoy on Thanksgiving Day. Even though we live in the New World, and we like to serve turkey instead of beef on Thanksgiving Day, we continue to walk in the footsteps of our predecessors, the ancient Greeks."

Thanksgiving-like rituals may date back to ancient times, but Thanksgiving traditions have been clearly shaped by ever-evolving eras.

One tradition that remains, however, is that of giving thanks; perhaps this Thanksgiving we should also thank the Ancient Greeks for officially launching the custom of designating one period to practice gratitude. We mustn't forget, nevertheless, to remain eternally thankful for our blessings in our daily lives as well.



cepagenoir.files.wordpress.com

Demeter, the goddess who taught mankind to tend the soil, was honored during the autumn season in Ancient Greece during a festival known as Thesmophoria, similar to modern-day Thanksgiving Day.

Aromas of Greece: Honey, saffron, mastiha, herbs



The quality of Greek honey remains as stunning today as it has been throughout time.

In the incredibly rich and varied Greek flora, there are at least 120 different flowering plants and trees that provide fodder for Greek bees, and theoretically just as many different types of honey, the best known of all, thyme honey.

Chios Mastiha, a unique appellation-of-origin Greek product is produced only in the Greek island of Chios.

Its versatile substance comes from the resin that seeps like teardrops from the bark of a scrubby tree.

It is a strange but beguiling crystal that flavors Greek cakes and breads, an ouzo-like liqueur, a chewing gum is also used in making an impressive catalogue of potions and lotions that seem to be good for whatever ails you.

Greek red saffron (krokos) is renowned for its excellent quality which is determined by the density of its color.

It has been cultivated in Kozani for two centuries.



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By Tracy Ellen Kamens, Ed.D.,
DWS

Certified Wine Educator

While Greek wines haven't made big headlines in recent years, Greece has a long vinous history dating back 4,000 years and is actually considered to be the birthplace of food and wine as a culture. Among its more well-known wine exports is Retsina, which owes its unique flavor to its infusion with pine resin. While not most people's preference, traditionally, this process actually served a purpose, acting as a preservative and preventing oxidation long before the advent of refrigeration and other modern technology.

Other additives, such as opiates, were also common in ancient Greece, which gave rise to those bacchanalian parties. As further evidence of its forward thinking, Greece also pioneered the concept of using specific vessels for specific wines long before Riedel crafted his first crystal stemware. Moreover, antique amphorae also sported the first wine labels, with seals indicating the vintner, vintage, etc.

But, it wasn't until more modern history that Greece has once again become a world class producer of wine.

Previously, wines were high in alcohol, low in acidity and prone to oxidation due in part to poor wine-



grapes that have been cataloged, Greece provides great diversity and originality in its wines. Yes, you can find the usual suspects – Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot – but more importantly, and more significantly, are grapes such as Roditis, Assyrtiko, Agiorgitiko and Xinomavro.

Amidst the Aegean Islands, Santorini seems like an unlikely place for wine production. Here, soils are a mix of volcanic and minced rock while the climate is extremely dry and windy, so much so that vines must be trained low to the ground in a circular pattern, resembling a woven basket.

Yet despite this inhospitable climate, Assyrtiko thrives, producing wines with vibrant acidity and minerality that develop a beautiful richness over time. Among other whites, Athiri grapes are grown in Rhodes and Santorini, providing wines with low acidity, good weight and high aromatics. Roditis is the grape best known for the wines from Patras, which are elegant, light white wines, displaying notes of citrus flavors.

Red grape star Agiorgitiko provides dark color and soft tannins and results in wines with a roundness and balance similar to Pinot Noir. Found in Nemea (the largest red wine appellation in Greece), on the Peloponnese, these wines can be aged and have nice acidity and good aromatics.

It's All Greek to Me: Greek Wines Make a Comeback in U.S. Market

making, high yields and over-oaking. Conversely, today, Greek wines are clean and fresh, with balanced structure and acidity and are quite food friendly. Combining Old World tradition with New World technology, many producers are using indigenous grapes grown at low yields and applying new technologies such as refrigeration to produce high quality wines.

Geographically, Greece resembles an outstretched hand, reaching into the water. Located within the Mediterranean Sea, Greece is a country primarily made up of volcanic islands and qualifying as the third most mountainous country in Europe.

Not surprisingly, this is a country whose vineyards are made up of small plots of land with ancient soils, in isolated areas and at high elevations (among the highest in the world, second only to Argentina).

Given its maritime location, it has a Mediterranean climate, with a heavy influence from the sea. In fact, low rainfall plagues most of Greece, with moisture coming from fog instead.

Home to over 300 indigenous



Another well-respected red variety is Xinomavro, which loosely translates as sour black. This grape is grown in Naoussa within the region of Macedonia, and is responsible in part for the blend in Rapsani on Mount Olympus.

Greece is also known for its dessert wines. Mavrodaphne grapes are generally used to produce sweet, fortified wines that are similar in style to ruby Ports. Other sweet Greek wines include Muscats of Samos as well as those from Rion and Patras, with notes of apricot, honey, orange peel and spice.

The wine renaissance taking place in modern Greece is long overdue, but well worth the wait. And, just in time, too, as Greek food has become an important trend in Metropolitan restaurants. In fact, in recent years, one magazine declared that "octopus is the new calamari."

But, regardless of what you order, Greek wines are food friendly wines that can pair easily with a wealth of cuisines. And, with your newly acquired knowledge, reviewing a list of Greek wines should no longer have you saying, "It's all Greek to me."



TASTE THE EXTRAORDINARY FLAVORS OF CYPRUS

Cyprus is the jewel of the Eastern Mediterranean and has a long tradition of fine food culture. Quality and freshness are at the core of Cypriot home cooking, so it's no surprise these elements are key to all products Cyprus exports. Explore the foods of Cyprus and discover a world where the past and present explode in a burst of fresh flavors.

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Your Road Map to Discovering Great Greek Cheeses Savoring a Variety of Flavors and Textures from all Parts of Greece

ANTHOTIROS

Anthotiros is traditional Greek whey cheese with Controlled Denomination of Origin (DOC). It has been manufactured in Greece for many centuries from whey of ewe's and goat's milk or mixtures, with the addition of small quantities of milk and/or cream, in the regions of Macedonia, Thrace, Thessalia, Sterea Hellas, Peloponnissos, Ionian islands, Aegean islands, Kriti island and Epirus. There are two types of Anthotiros: Fresh and Dried. Fresh Anthotiros has soft texture, mild taste, very pleasant organoleptic properties, and is consumed as

a total cheese consumption of 25 Kg, which is the highest in the world. Feta is a cheese with Controlled Denomination of Origin (DOC) manufactured from pure ewe's milk or a mixture with up to 30 percent of goat's milk in the regions of Macedonia, Thrace, Epirus, Thessalia, Sterea Hellas, Peloponnissos and Mitilini island. It has salty, slightly acid taste, natural white color and pleasant organoleptic characteristics. Feta is manufactured mainly in mountainous and semi-mountainous regions of Greece where the use of any harmful substances (fertilizers,

table cheese after ripening for at least for three months. It is also consumed fresh as "saganaki" (shallow-fried cheese). The mean composition of Formaela of Parnassos is, moisture: 34.6 percent, fat: 32.9 percent, proteins: 27.7 percent and salt: 2.1 percent.

GALOTIRI

Galotiri is one of the oldest traditional cheeses of Greece with Controlled Denomination of Origin (DOC). It is manufactured from ewe's or goat's milk or mixtures in the regions of Epirus and Thessalia. It has a soft and spreadable texture with sour-ish and a very pleasant,

percent and salt not more than 2 percent.

GRAVIERA OF NAXOS

Graviera of Naxos is traditional Greek cheese with Controlled Denomination of Origin (DOC). It is manufactured from cow's milk or mixtures with small quantities of ewe's or goat's milk on the island of Naxos. It is a hard cheese of propionic fermentation which is ripened for at least for three months. It is considered to be a cheese of high quality with unique organoleptic properties and is consumed as table cheese. Graviera of Naxos must contain up to 38 percent moisture and at least 40 percent fat in dry matter.

KALATHAKI OF LIMNOS

Kalathaki of Limnos is traditional Greek cheese with Controlled Denomination of Origin (DOC). It is manufactured from ewe's milk or mixtures with small quantities of goat's milk on Limnos island. Kalathaki has a soft texture, is slightly sour and has a salty taste and pleasant organoleptic properties, similar to those of Feta cheese. It is consumed as table cheese, in Greek salad, in cheese-pastries and very often as "saganaki" (shallow-fried cheese). The mean composition of Kalathaki of Limnos is, moisture: 53.6 percent, fat: 25.3 percent, protein: 17.4 percent, salt: 2.4 percent and a pH of 4.5.

KASSERI

Kasseri is traditional Greek cheese, of "pasta filata" type, with controlled Denomination of Origin (DOC). It is manufactured from ewe's milk or a mixture with goat's milk in the regions of Macedonia, Thessalia, Mitilini island and Xanthi. Kasseri is a semi-hard cheese which is consumed as table cheese or used in the preparation of pizza. The mean composition of Kasseri is: moisture 42.2 percent, fat 25.2 percent, protein 25.8 percent, salt 3.1 percent and pH 5.7.

KEFALOGRAVIERA

Kefalograviera is traditional Greek hard cheese with Controlled Denomination of Origin (DOC) which is manufactured from ewe's milk in the regions of Western Macedonia, Epirus, Etoloakarnania and Evritania. As the name of the cheese indicates, its organoleptic properties stand between Kefalotiri and Graviera cheese. It ripens at least for 3 months and is consumed as table cheese, grated cheese, and quite often as "saganaki" (shallow-fried cheese). The mean composition of Kefalograviera is: moisture 35.4 percent, fat 31.3 percent, protein 25.9 percent, salt 3.4 percent and pH 5.6.



KEFALOTIRI

Kefalotiri is traditional Greek cheese with Controlled Denomination of Origin (DOC), the long history and name of which are intimately connected with the customs and dietary habits of the Greeks. It is manufactured from ewe's or goat's milk or mixture of the two in the regions of Macedonia, Sterea Hellas, Peloponnissos, Thessalia, Crete island, Epirus, Ionian islands and Cyclades islands. Kefalotiri is considered the ancestor of many hard Greek cheeses. It has a salty and piquant taste and a unique rich aroma which is obtained after ripening for at least 3 months. It is consumed as table cheese, grated cheese, in cheese-pastries and as saganaki (shallow-fried cheese). The mean composition of Kefalotiri is, moisture: 36.3 percent, fat: 28.8 percent, proteins: 26.6 percent, salt: 3.9 percent and a pH of 5.1.

KOPANISTI

Kopanisti is traditional Greek cheese with Controlled Denomination of Origin (DOC) which is exclusively manufactured in Cyclades islands from ewe's, cow's or goat's milk or mixtures. The main characteristics of Kopanisti are the intense salty and piquant taste and the soft texture and rich flavor which approaches that of Roquefort. It is consumed as table cheese, in cheese-pastries and as a snack with wine and ouzo. The mean composition of Kopanisti is, moisture: 60.2

percent, fat: 19.4 percent, protein: 16.7 percent, salt three percent and a pH of 4.6.

LADOTIRI OF MITILINI

Ladotiri is a traditional Greek cheese with Controlled Denomination of Origin (DOC) which is exclusively manufactured on Mitilini island from ewe's milk or mixture of it with goat's milk. It is ripened for at least three months and is also known with the name "Kefalaki" (small head) due to its particular shape. The main characteristic of this traditional cheese is that is preserved in olive oil and this it is called Ladotiri because (ladi=olive oil, tiri=cheese). It has strong flavor, a hard texture with slightly salty taste and is mainly consumed as table cheese. The mean composition of Ladotiri is, moisture: 33.6 percent, fat: 31.6 percent, protein: 2.7 percent and a pH of 5.3.

MANOURI

Manouri is the most exceptional traditional Greek whey cheese with Controlled Denomination of Origin (DOC). It is exclusively manufactured in Central and Western Macedonia and in Thessalia from whey derived from ewe's or goat's or a mixture of them, with the addition of milk and/or cream (in larger percentages than these used for anthotiros), when making hard cheeses. Manouri is a soft cheese with unique taste and flavor. The

Continued on page 19



table cheese or used in the preparation of cheese-pastries. Dried Anthotiros has hard texture, salty taste, a very rich flavor and is consumed as grated or table cheese. Fresh Anthotiros contains up to 70 percent moisture and fat in dry matter of at least 65 percent, while dried Anthotiros contains 40 percent and 65 percent, respectively.

FETA

Feta is the most famous traditional Greek cheese, dating back to the Homeric ages. It is a white soft cheese, ripened and kept in brine for at least two months. It has been and still remains a significant part of Greek diet and its name is often connected with the Greek history and tradition. The average (per capita) annual consumption of Feta in Greece is more than 12 Kg, out of

pesticides etc.) is very scarce. It is distributed to the market in barrels, in tin boxes or in the form of plastic-wrapped pieces and is consumed as table cheese, in the famous Greek salad, in cheese-pastries and quite often as saganaki (shallow-fried cheese). The average composition of Feta is, moisture: 52.9 percent, fat: 26.2 percent, proteins: 16.7 percent, salt: 2.9 percent and a pH of 4.4.

FORMAELLA OF PARNASSOS

Formaela of Parnassos is traditional Greek cheese with Controlled Denomination of Origin (DOC). It is manufactured from ewe's or goat's milk or mixtures, in the region of Arachova at the foot of the Parnassos mountain. It is a hard cheese with piquant taste and rich flavor, which is consumed as

refreshing taste and is consumed as table cheese. The mean composition of Galotiri is, moisture: 70.8 percent, fat: 13.8 percent, protein: 9.8 percent, salt: 2.7 percent and a pH of 4.1.

GRAVIERA OF CRETE

Graviera of Crete is traditional Greek cheese with Controlled Denomination of Origin (DOC), which is exclusively manufactured in Crete from ewe's milk or mixtures with small quantities of goat's milk. It is ripened for at least for five months. Graviera of Crete is a high quality hard cheese of propionic fermentation with a slightly sweet taste and very pleasant organoleptic properties. It is consumed as table cheese. Graviera of Crete must contain moisture up to 38 percent, fat in dry matter at least 40

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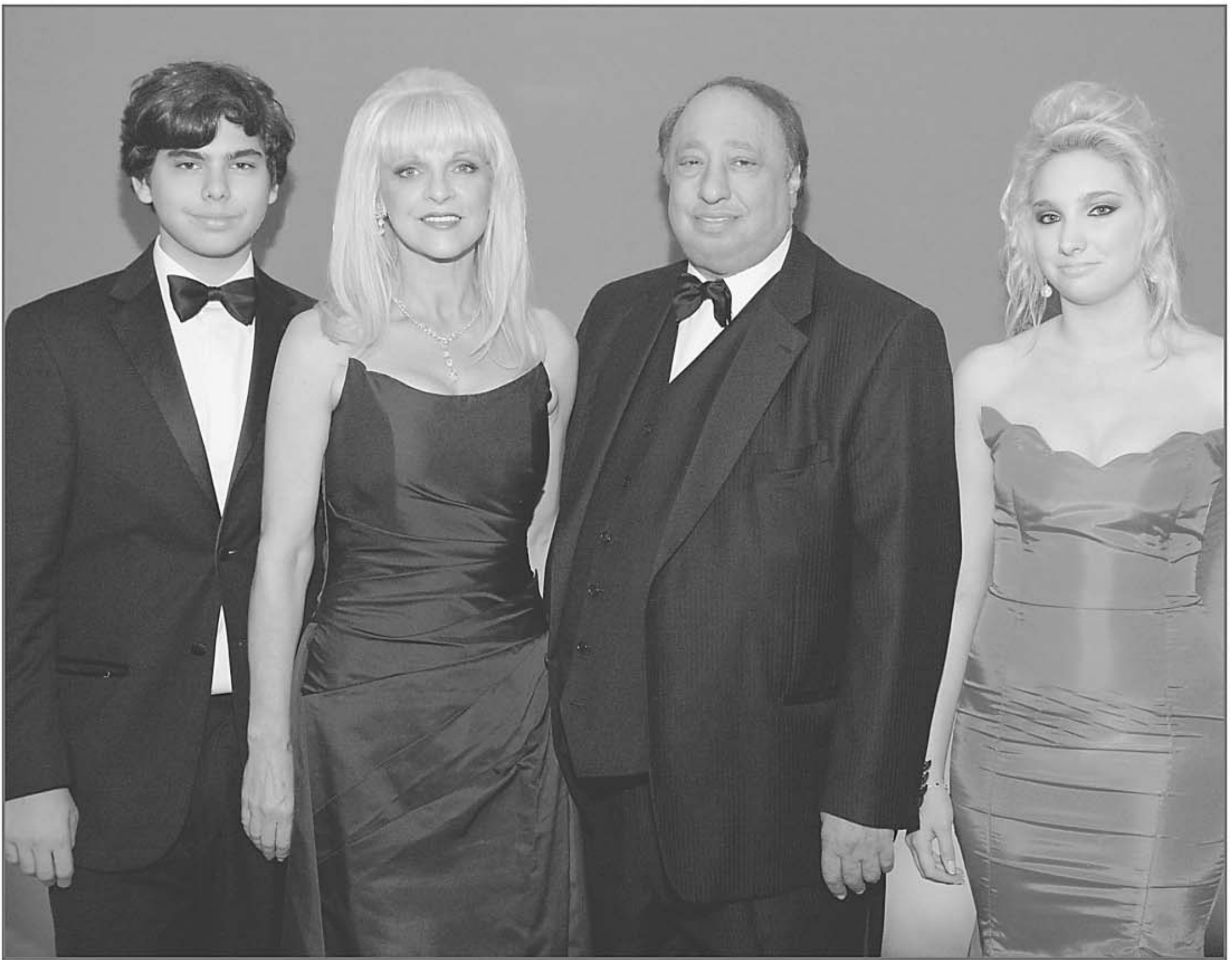
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Chef Michael Psilakis Finds Culinary Inspiration in Villages of Greece

By Jane Black

Washington Post Staff Writer

Michael Psilakis needs a goat. He reserved one, but there was confusion about when the famous chef from New York would pick it up, and the village butcher sold it to someone else. Without it, Psilakis could not make the braised goat, the moussaka, the pasta with goat ragu or the traditional Cretan wedding rice, which is cooked in goat broth. Most of the menu he has planned to show me would be ruined.

"Typical," Psilakis says as he winds his way past fresh seafood, vegetables, local honey and touristy T-shirts in the central market of Heraklion, Crete's largest city. He lights a cigarette and inhales deeply. "This is so Greek."

Psilakis, 40, is one part irritated but two parts amused. He has spent his entire professional life evangelizing about and explaining Greek food, so anything typically Greek, even a typically Greek mistake, gets a pass. His haute establishment Anthos is the only Greek restaurant in the United States to have received a Michelin star; his more rustic Kefi helped establish Manhattan's Upper West Side, long a culinary desert, as a dining destination. This past spring, he was invited by the White House to cook for a Greek Independence Day celebration. Now Psilakis has a new cookbook, "How to Roast a Lamb" (Little, Brown, 2009), that tracks his culinary development from the souvlaki and



Michael Psilakis, seen here, is the founder and Executive Chef of New York-based Anthos restaurant, known for its elegant Greek cuisine.

cheese pies called tiropitas he watched his mother make when he was growing up on Long Island to the smoked octopus with fennel puree and lemon confit that is a signature dish at Anthos.

Psilakis (pronounced see-LAH-kees) is serious about wanting Americans to understand Greek cuisine. In part, it's because he is, like all good chefs, reverent toward food, particularly its power to evoke memories and its ability to unite the family at the table. (Psilakis often compares his childhood to a scene from the movie "My Big Fat Greek Wedding" in which the protagonist describes her family this way: "You never just have a minute alone just to think, 'cause we're always together, just eating, eating, eating!")

In part, though, it's because Psilakis has something to prove: that Greek food deserves the same respect among Americans that French and Italian cuisine receive. Greeks were making wine centuries before the first vines were planted in Burgundy. The Mediterranean diet was born in Crete, where Psilakis's father grew up, not in Italy. Yet France had Julia Child. Italy has Marcella Hazan. "How many times has someone asked me if this is really Greek food?" he says of the sophisticated dishes at Anthos. "They don't get it."

"How to Roast a Lamb" aims to define Greek food. But the book is also a love letter to Psilakis's family. The recipes are a tribute to his mother: her spanakopita, stuffed baby eggplant and pastitsio, a kind of Greek lasagna scented with nutmeg. Many of the stories focus on his father, Gus, who died in September 2007. Indeed, the book's title stems from one of Psilakis's formative food memories: the first time he watched his father slaughter a lamb and understood where meat actually comes from.

Food was at the center of his family life. But Psilakis did not decide to cook until -- wait for it -- he began working as a waiter at T.G.I. Fridays, he said. Making people feel welcome and feeding them was what he had always done at home. It felt right. Soon, friends invited him to help open a small Italian restaurant. Later, Psilakis took over, working some days as both chef and waiter to make ends meet. In 2004, he opened Onera, Greek for "dreams," in Manhattan. His mission to promote Greek food had begun.

Greeks don't like change, Psilakis tells me as he carries the goat we eventually found at another butcher into the kitchen at the Boutari winery outside Heraklion. The building is a blend of yellow stucco and glass that reflects the surrounding hills, planted in vineyards and olive groves. Even this nod to modernity is an affront to some Cretans, who with varying degrees of success have fought off invasion by the Romans, the Venetians, the Turks and, during World War II, the Germans. To Psilakis, however, the building embraces the soul of Greek wine, and interprets and elevates it.

That is Psilakis's goal for Greek cuisine. The meal he has planned uses local ingredients, such as the goat and wild oregano (which has a lemony finish "that you simply cannot find in the States"), and the way Greeks employ them. Psilakis's goat, for example, will go into several dishes. The meat will be braised with aromatic vegetables and tomatoes; some of the sauce will be reduced to dress homemade pasta called hilopites. The bones will be used for stock, which Psilakis will in turn use to cook the rice. If there's any leftover goat, he'd like to make moussaka.

Psilakis knows this is not the way Americans cook. He also knows most of them are unfamiliar with or afraid of goat and octopus, the base for another dish on his menu. "I know Americans don't make this to then make that," he said. "But I wanted to show how it was done."

We start with the goat. Psilakis and Harris Sakalis, one of his former sous-chefs who now lives in Greece, make quick work of butchering the animal into recognizable cuts. Goat, Psilakis says, is lean like lamb. Rich cuts such as the tenderloin can be roasted, but much of the meat is best braised to avoid drying it out.

Psilakis's recipe calls for dried oregano, thyme and rosemary, but he encourages home cooks to use whatever spices they like. For his part, he puts cinnamon sticks and bay leaves in almost everything. Cooks who don't want to use goat can easily substitute another lean meat, such as chicken, pheasant or rabbit.

With the goat simmering on the stove, we move on to the octopus and chickpea salad. It's a dish I requested. Octopus is transcendent when it is cooked well, which it usually isn't. Instead of being tender and meaty, it arrives like octopus jerky. The chew is enough to put many Americans off octopus for good. (Also off-putting, I learn upon my return, is that Mediterranean octopus is considered unsustainable by the Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch. Squid is an acceptable substitute in this recipe, though cooking procedures and times will need to be adjusted.)

Braised Goat

Summary:

Goat takes longer to cook than lamb and is less forgiving of cooking errors. If this dish yields leftovers, use them to make a goat moussaka. Serve with a rice pilaf.

4 to 6 generous servings

Ingredients:

- 1 goat leg, on the bone, cut crosswise into 4 pieces (a scant 2 1/2 pounds, or a scant 3 1/2 pounds with the neck)
- Kosher salt
- Freshly cracked black pepper
- 3 tablespoons blended oil (90 percent canola oil, 10 percent extra-virgin olive oil)
- 5 medium cloves garlic, coarsely chopped
- 1/2 large Spanish or sweet onion, coarsely chopped (1 cup)
- 1 medium carrot, peeled and coarsely chopped (3/4 to 1 cup)
- 2 ribs celery, coarsely chopped (1 cup)
- 3 tablespoons tomato paste
- 1 cup dry red wine
- 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 2 teaspoons dried Greek oregano
- 2 tablespoons Dijon-style mustard
- 4 quarts water
- 5 large sprigs thyme
- 2 sprigs rosemary
- 1 tablespoon homemade or store-bought roasted garlic (see NOTE)
- 3 fronds of dill, chopped (1 tablespoon)
- 3 or 4 mint leaves, finely chopped (1 tablespoon)
- Extra-virgin olive oil

Directions:

Season the goat pieces liberally with kosher salt and pepper. Heat a large, heavy-bottomed pot or Dutch oven over medium-high heat, then add the blended oil. When the oil is very hot, add the goat pieces and sear until deep golden brown on all sides. (This could take a total of 20 to 30 minutes.) Transfer the meat to a platter and pour off most of the oil.

Add the garlic, onion, carrot and celery to the pot; cook for 3 to 5 minutes, stirring, until they have softened slightly. Add the tomato paste and cook for 1 minute, stirring to coat and to slightly caramelize the tomato paste.

Add the red wine and vinegar, stirring to deglaze the pot. (Use a wooden spoon to scrape up any browned bits from the bottom of the pot.) Cook for about 20 minutes, allowing the liquid to evaporate almost completely. Add the oregano, mustard, water, thyme and rosemary; mix well.

Return the goat pieces to the pot; season the mixture with 1 1/2 tablespoons kosher salt and a generous grinding of pepper. Bring just to a boil, then reduce the heat to medium-low. Partially cover and cook for as long as 2 1/2 hours; at the start of cooking, skim off any scum that rises to the top (you may need to do this twice in the first 30 minutes or so). The meat should be tender and falling off the bone.

Transfer the goat and any vegetables that haven't melted away to a platter; discard the cooked herbs. Cover loosely to keep warm.

Increase the heat to high under the pot; reduce any remaining pan juices until thickened (this can take a few minutes), then add the roasted garlic, chopped dill and mint; stir to combine.

Drizzle the reduced pan juices over the goat and vegetables on the platter, then finish with a drizzle of the extra-virgin olive. Serve warm.

NOTE: To roast garlic, lop off the top of a head so that its cloves are exposed a bit. Drizzle with olive oil and wrap tightly in aluminum foil, then roast for about 40 minutes in a 400-degree oven. Squeeze the cloves into a small bowl and mash to form a puree.

Recipe Source: Adapted from "How to Roast a Lamb: New Greek Classic Cooking," by Michael Psilakis (Little, Brown, 2009).

The mistake cooks make with octopus, Psilakis says, is that they think of it as seafood, most of which is best lightly sautéed or grilled. But octopus, like goat, is a braising meat: brisket of the sea, if you will. For his family members, who appreciate a chewy texture, he'll grill octopus. But in every dish at the restaurant, the octopus is braised first to break down the fibrous meat.

Preparing octopus right turns out to be easier than I expected. One slice removes the head, then I pop out the pointy beak and cut apart the legs. (Most octopus is sold frozen and already prepared.) We heat a skillet and sear the meat, being careful not to crowd the pan. When the octopus turns a brilliant violet, we add a whole garlic clove and bay leaves. (The recipe calls for crushed pepper flakes, but we don't have any.) Then, we cover the pan and put it in the oven. The heat pulls water from the octopus to create the braising liquid.

While the octopus cooks, we prepare the salad. The chickpea confit calls for dried beans to be cooked, then cooled and drained and cooked again in fruity olive oil and spices. But Psilakis says it's fine to use canned chickpeas to save time. He does recommend the extra confit step, which adds richness and a layer of flavor from the aromatics. As with a braise, Psilakis is

happy for cooks to replace the garlic, cumin and mustard seeds he calls for with whatever they like; fennel, star anise and cardamom all work well.

Dinner is served under an arbor crawling with vines and shiny white grapes. We start with the octopus and chickpea salad, flecked with plump sun-dried tomatoes and fresh herbs. Alongside the braised goat is the rice, cooked in the goat stock and finished with a pat of goat butter, and quick-pickled beets served with Greek yogurt and a generous glug of the winery's olive oil. "There's a beauty in rustic food that you can never capture in haute cuisine. It takes you on a journey," Psilakis said. "I know you've had a meal, probably in Italy, that takes you somewhere."

That I indeed had that meal in Italy seems to frustrate Psilakis. It's not only that people think first of Italy. It's that Psilakis doesn't believe food should be treasured only when it is exotic. His dearest food memories are these: making his parents poached eggs and blueberry muffins and serving them in bed, pitting cherries for preserves with his mother, growing tomatoes and hunting rabbits with his father. Food marks special occasions, Psilakis said. "But the point is, you don't have to go on a vacation to have a moment like that. You can have it at home."

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How to Roast a Lamb
new greek classic cooking

MICHAEL PSILAKIS
"Michael Psilakis is the Greek-American Mario Batali." —The New Yorker

Inside the Mind (and Kitchen) of Greece's Most Important Cook: Vefa

Vefa's Pumpkin Pie From Sterea Ellada

(Kolokithotropita Strifti)

- 3 lb (1.5 kg) pumpkin or white or yellow winter squash, peeled and cut into pieces
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- generous 1 cup (225 g / 8 oz) superfine (caster) sugar
- scant 1/2 cup (80 g / 3 oz) shortgrain rice, parboiled
- 1 small onion, grated and blanched
- 1 tablespoon ground cinnamon, plus extra for dusting
- cup (150 ml / 1/4 pint) olive oil or melted clarified butter, or a mixture
- 1 lb 2 oz (500 g) ready-made phyllo (filo) or Homemade phyllo dough (filo pastry),
- confectioners' (icing) sugar, for dusting

Grate the squash and toss with the salt, then let drain in a colander overnight.

Squeeze out the remaining liquid and mash the squash with a fork in a bowl.

Add the sugar, rice, onion, cinnamon, and 4 tablespoons of the melted butter, oil, or mixture.

Preheat the oven to 350°F (180°C / Gas Mark 4) and brush a 14-inch (35-cm) round baking pan with melted butter or oil.

If using homemade phyllo dough, divide it into 12 equal pieces and roll out into very thin sheets.

Brush half of each sheet with melted butter or oil, fold the other half over it, and brush it again.

Spread 3-4 tablespoons of the filling along the long edge and roll it up into a cylinder. Coil the roll into a spiral in the center of the baking pan. Repeat with the other phyllo sheets to form a large spiral. Brush with melted butter or oil and bake for 1 hour, or until golden.

Sprinkle with confectioners' sugar and cinnamon and serve warm or cold.

Makes: 1 large pie
Preparation time: 12.5 hours (including draining).
Cooking time: 1 hour

By Eleni Kostopoulos
The National Herald Staff Reporter

A Thanksgiving feast with a Greek twist would be incomplete without touches of delectable dishes of authentic cuisine, and there perhaps exists no more suitable, experienced and well-respected home cook than Vefa Alexiadou to translate those special Greek touches to a traditional Turkey tabletop. With her newest sizeable cookbook, "Vefa's Kitchen", dubbed by critics as the first "Big Fat" bible of authentic Greek cooking, Ms. Alexiadou features more than 650 easy-to-follow recipes fit for all seasons and holidays. The primary ingredient to Ms. Alexiadou's success, however, is, and always has been, love.

"I grew in a home where the preparation of food was really a fundamental concern," Ms. Alexiadou told The National Herald in a recent interview. "The aromatic scents that came from the kitchen dominated the whole house. Preparing and cooking food was a ritual that surpassed the simple biological need for food, transubstantiating flavors of dishes during seasons and periods of feasts and fests."

Tradition in Greek cuisine is almost as important as the food itself, according to Ms. Alexiadou, who noted the strong connection between scents and childhood memories.

"Each specific period of time was marked by a characteristic dish: How can I imagine a Christmas without melomakarona? Easter without lamb on the spit? The day of Euaggelismou without fish?"

Ms. Alexiadou added that her mother, who was a wonderful homemaker herself, was one of the main reasons she took up cooking as a profession.

"My mother was the model of an ideal woman," Ms. Alexiadou said. "She was the one who inspired me, who instilled in me a passion with her love of cooking. [When my profession developed], it was the presentation of dishes from television that [inspired me even more]. Specifically, it was the enormous success of Cook Julia Child, a woman who made her mark in America."

With her own unique style, many agree Ms. Alexiadou became the "Julia Child" of Greece, presenting recipes and decorative ideas in daily emissions that were cherished by millions of Greeks, and eventually, by Greeks outside of the border.

"My books, particularly those translated in the English language, have successfully circulated in America for many years as well as in Australia, Canada and in other An-



Vefa Alexiadou, seen above, has earned her title as the leading culinary authority in Greece, having authored about a dozen cookbooks.



Volos-born Alexiadou, right, combines her culinary talents with science; she holds a degree in chemistry from the Aristotle University.

glophone countries where Greek communities thrive," said Ms. Alexiadou. "[I knew] people wanted to explore the gastronomy of Greece, because that is the mother of Mediterranean diet; [Greek food] travels beyond the community and becomes familiar to the world. Being a participant of the Frankfurt's Bookfair for 25 years, I had the big dream to find a big foreign publisher to publish my Greek cuisine. Thanks to Edouard Cointreau, who recommended me unequivocally to Phaidon Press, as the best person for this difficult undertaking, all my efforts came through. The Bible of authentic Greek Cooking, titled "Vefa's Kitchen" became a reality on June 2009. After 25 years, my efforts were crowned with success."

"Vefa's Kitchen" now circulates in

plenty is the key of all the recipes in the large and colourful hardback, marked by picturesque photos both of delicious dishes and the beautiful parts of Greece from which they originate. The ingredients used in the book are simple, and the procedures are both easy-to-find and well-detailed.

"The dishes were born through my experimentations. One of my specialties and my beloved dishes is mantilakia ala Vefa, the food that really established me in the world of gastronomy. Apart from the unique relish, the dish also had an attractive presentation which in 1980, when my first book "Invitation in Dinner" was circulating, was a pioneering move for the Greeks. At the time, Greeks weren't known for presenting dishes to catch the eye, but they



the English language, as well as in Italian, Spanish and French.

"The whole world now is offered the possibility of cooking and of knowing how many simple, tasty and healthy ways of cooking stem from Greece," she said. "Now I want to pass the secrets of the simple, tasty and healthy cooking of Greece beyond the Greek communities."

"Vefa's Kitchen" has been described as a heavy bible representing Greek cooking and culture. Containing hundreds of traditional recipes, collected from all over Greece, the first edition of "Vefa's Kitchen" has already sold out. Sim-

were more focused on flavor alone. This is also the difference that made my books stand out for Greeks all over the world."

Ms. Alexiadou told TNH the secret to success, in and out of the kitchen, is to love what you do.

"I belong in the category of individuals who really love their professions. Besides material remuneration, you enjoy the joy and the satisfaction that is provided when your job is also your pastime. You work with a bigger appetite, more mirth; you attribute effortlessly and better; you are not tired and you are never bored."



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A Greek American Thanksgiving: Holding on to My Bountiful Family Customs

By Maria A. Karamitsos
Special to The National Herald

As long as I can remember, in our family, this uniquely American holiday was always Greek-infused. Even with five of my mother's six siblings married to non-Greeks and of different religions, every holiday, every event, had its own Greek flavor.

My late grandfather, James Lalagos, who was a well-known businessman in Chicago's original Greektown, had a very special recipe for a meat dressing. He passed away in 1963, however, the family has faithfully and lovingly prepared this recipe in his honor at every Thanksgiving. He'd said it was a family recipe he'd brought from Greece, which he refined at his Acropolis Tavern and Restaurant. Made of ground beef, chestnuts, pine nuts and more, this distinctive "stuffing" was something we always looked forward to with great anticipation. In fact, for years, the making of this dressing, with its many steps — and of course to make enough to feed a small army — my aunt and uncle would host a party the weekend before Thanksgiving, to gather people to assist in the preparations. Everyone had a task. We'd sip wine, tell stories, eat pizza or sandwiches, and listen to Greek music. The party grew to include neighbors and friends, and many of us believed it was more fun than the actual holiday itself.

Now the Thanksgiving bounty contained more than Papou's special dressing. My father, Gregory Fotinopoulos, who also was in the restaurant business for many years, counts among his specialties roasted lamb with potatoes and Greek rice pudding. My dad would never show up to a holiday without his special dishes; and so a holiday wasn't a holiday without them. Yes, we had lamb on Thanksgiving in addition to the turkey. The menu always included pastitsio, plus spanakopites and tiropites, made



from Yiayia's recipes. Plates of feta and kasseri cheeses, plus Greek olives, as well as Greek salad, also adorned the table. As I grew older and began to cook, I would bring mezedakia; usually something seasonal, so on Thanksgiving, I'd prepare kolokithokeftedes, and my uncles would always request my meatless dolmadakia. One of my aunts would usually make taramosalata and skordalia as well. Greek music would typically dominate the occasion. Dessert always included Yiayia's kourambiedes and koulouria, as well as pumpkin pie, sometimes pecan pie, and Dad's rizogallo. A few years back, I took over the baking of Yiayia's cookies, and began to bake melomakarona as well. Though traditionally a Christmas cookie, this confection, featuring a mix of clove, nutmeg, cinnamon and allspice — an amalgamation whose aroma evokes the feeling of fall — seems so appropriately suited for Thanksgiving. To some, this cornucopia may seem an odd combination of tastes and smells; however, to us it is a return to our childhood, to the home, heart and love of Yiayia. This is how every holiday has been celebrated in our family, along with other items traditional to a specific holiday, such as red eggs at Easter.

As the years have gone by, Yiayia has passed on and the family has grown, though the Thanksgiving gathering has gotten smaller. Cousins now attend parties with their in-laws. I often hear them reminisce about the uniquely Greek-spiced Thanksgiving we would have, and so enjoyed.

This year, as I embark on hosting Thanksgiving for the very first time, I'm developing the menu based on our distinctively Greek-inspired tradition. Yes, we'll have turkey, sweet potatoes and pumpkin pie. Nevertheless, our table will also include traditional Greek foods, and certainly, since it's a party at our home, there will be Greek dancing. Family, friends, delicious food, music and dancing; sounds like the recipe for a perfect holiday.

Utilizing Your Cultural Roots to Spice Up a Traditional Thanksgiving Day Dinner

By Michele Kayal
The Associated Press

Nothing says Thanksgiving like... pastitsio?

"For Thanksgiving, my mother actually did a turkey, which was a pretty big step for her, but everything else on the table was Greek," says Michael Psilakis, the chef behind New York's Anthos restaurant.

For his family, pastitsio, a lasagna-like dish of noodles and egg, Greek bechamel sauce, was just as important as the bird.

Thanksgiving called for a similar blending of cultures in the Korean household of chef David Chang, who dubs the famous pork buns, ginger scallion noodles and ramen of his Momofuku restaurants "American" food.

"Thanksgiving was almost a potluck," Chang says, remembering the dozens of relatives who tot-

tered in with heaping trays of short ribs called kalbi-jim, the pickled cabbage called kimchi, and the noodle dish chop che. "We would have Korean dishes that were traditionally cooked on celebratory occasions and your Thanksgiving go to classics. It was a feast."

Americans come from more than 125 nations, according to Census figures, and more than 299 million people — or 97 percent of the population — claim ethnic roots. So it's only fitting that on this iconic American holiday people draw on the melting pot for inspiration.

At the turn of the 19th century, Thanksgiving was appropriated as a way to "Americanize" new immigrants, says Sandra Oliver, the editor of Food History News and co-author of "Giving Thanks," a history of the holiday.

"There was considerable effort

put into teaching these kids about the Thanksgiving holiday — it was done in the schools — and attributing all kinds of virtues to the sainted pilgrim forefathers, really elevating them beyond their significance," Oliver says.

"There are pictures of these little kids kitted out in pilgrim hats, no matter who they were. It met with some success. Kids are really good about going home and saying, 'We have to have turkey on Thursday.'"

The founders probably didn't count on the ingenuity of the newcomers, many of whom did adopt the holiday, but in their own way.

Marcela Valladolid, author of the cookbook "Fresh Mexico," grew up crossing the U.S.-Mexico border every day, leaving her Tijuana home before dawn to attend school in San Diego. She says she absorbed both cultures "100 percent" and so has her Thanksgiving cele-

bration.

"We don't segregate it," she says. "It's not like the turkey is American and then there are tamales. There's chili in the turkey."

Valladolid glazes her turkey with an apricot, tequila and chili sauce and serves it alongside roasted chipotle acorn squash and Brussels sprouts in morilla cream. Valladolid says the feast was inspired by her cross-border experience, but also was a way to make the holiday truly inclusive for everyone in the family.

"My father barely speaks English," she says. "This holiday is very new for him. He started celebrating Thanksgiving when he married my mom. Try to sit down and have Thai food for the first time. It's intimidating. And I imagine that was the way my father felt the first time he sat down in front of a big fat turkey."

If Valladolid sees ethnicizing Thanksgiving as a way to bring the family's older generation into the new tradition, others see the reverse: a way to preserve and communicate culture to the next generation.

At New York's Tabla, Bombay-born chef Floyd Cardoz is known for merging Indian spices and sensibilities with American ingredients. After more than 20 years in the United States, he does the same at his Thanksgiving feast.

Cardoz brines his turkey in a pungent solution of fresh ginger and bay leaf, then dry rubs it with black pepper, chilies, fresh garlic and crushed bay leaf. "I rub it all over the bird and under the skin too," he says. "It makes it more flavorful."

His stuffing spikes a cornbread base with Goan-style pork sausage, redolent of vinegar, garlic, cloves

and cinnamon. The homemade cranberry sauce has touches of ginger, black pepper, cloves and cinnamon. "So it's a little more interesting than plain old canned cranberry," he says.

He also makes sure there's lots of heavy, Indian-style snacking on items such as samosas and spiced potato dumplings before the meal, and that there are plenty of Indian specialties as well, like rice pulao and a Goan pork stew full of pork belly, shoulder, liver and chili.

"By putting our beliefs into a meal, it ties my past with my kids' future," says Cardoz, whose sons are 12 and 16.

"At some point when they have their kids and they're doing their Thanksgiving tradition, maybe there will be something from India in there, and it will bring them back. It ties up the generations when you do this."



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Turkey with Chestnut Stuffing

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INGREDIENTS:

- 1 turkey (with intestines finely chopped)
- 1 onion chopped into fine pieces
- 3 spoonfuls bread crumbs
- 5 spoonfuls butter
- 1 chirp cup of wine milk
- 1 and 1/2 to 2 pounds of chestnuts boiled and cleaned
- Some cinnamon
- Juice of a lemon
- Salt
- Pepper

PREPARATION:

Wash the turkey well. Add salt and pepper. In large saucepan, add two spoonfuls of butter and diced onion. After onions are sautéed and soft, add diced intestines. When they have browned, add milk and leave the food to boil for several minutes. Add chestnuts and after two to three minutes, add a pinch of cinnamon, salt and pepper. When the mixture begins to boil, remove the saucepan from the heat and mix well, adding the serving of breadcrumbs. Mix well. Proceed to stuff the turkey until full and sew the opening.

Rub the turkey with a lemon or add lemon juice. Then, place it in a baking pan, drizzling the remaining butter on top. Cook at 325 degrees (for 8 to 12 pounds, 3 to 3 1/2 hours; for 12 to 14 pounds, 3 1/2 to 4 hours; for 14 to 18 pounds, 4 to 4 1/4 hours). When the turkey is golden brown, place it on the oven-top and add more lemon juice.

When cooking is complete, remove twine and serve on platter.

Kastorian Sarmades (Cabbage Rolls with Avgolemono Sauce)

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 large head of cabbage or 4 to 5 small cabbages
- 1 pound of ground beef
- 1 grated onion
- 1/2 cup of medium grain rice
- 1 egg
- 1/2 cup fresh or 2 tablespoons dried parsley
- salt and pepper

PREPARATION:

Core out a large hole in the cabbage and place hole-side down in a large pot with about 2 inches of water. Boil for 15 to 20 minutes. Lift



cabbage, allowing it to cool off and pulling leaves apart. Place about 1-2 TBL of a mixture of the cooked meat and rice at the base of each leaf and roll away from you. Place in a large pot even making two layers. Fill the pot with enough water and/or chicken broth to cover the rolls and above about 1-2 inches. Place a clean plate on top so they won't open up. Put a lid on and let them simmer for about 30-40 minutes.

Avgolemono: Beat three eggs and the juice of two lemons in a large bowl. When the rolls are done, turn the pot a bit to ladle out the hot broth. Ladle the hot broth into the egg mixture. When the egg/lemon mixture is very hot, pour it back into the pot with the sarmades. Shake the pot to distribute well.

Chef Jim Botsacos' Keftedes with Red Sauce

INGREDIENTS:

- 1/4 cup Bread crumbs - (to 1/2 cup)
- 1 medium Yellow onion; peeled, diced fine
- 4 tablespoons Olive oil
- 1/2 teaspoon Ground cumin

- Kosher salt; to taste
- Freshly-ground black pepper; to taste
- 4 slices White bread
- 1 cup Whole milk -; (to 2 cups)
- 1/2 pounds Lean ground beef
- 1/4 pounds Ground lamb
- 2 Garlic cloves; peeled, chopped
- 3 tablespoons Chopped fresh parsley
- 1 large Egg
- 1/2 teaspoon Dried oregano
- Red Sauce
- Extra-virgin olive oil; for garnish

PREPARATION:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Place bread crumbs on cookie sheet and place in oven on center rack. Toss bread crumbs every couple of minutes, for about 5 to 7 minutes. Set aside to cool. Heat 1 tablespoon of the olive oil in a sauce pan over medium-low heat. Add onions, cumin, and season with salt and pepper. Sauté onions until transparent, stirring occasionally about 5 to 7 minutes. Remove from heat, set aside and cool. Place sliced bread in a bowl and add milk to cover. Soak until bread becomes soft, pressing on bread to absorb liquid. Drain excess milk. In a mixing bowl, combine ground meats and sautéed onion with garlic, parsley, egg and milk-soaked bread. Work mixture with your hands until ingredients are well combined. Add toasted bread crumbs a bit at a time, thor-

oughly mixing with each addition. The meat mixture should be moist to the touch, but not wet. Form meat into small balls about 1-inch in diameter. Set a large, heavy-bottomed sauce pan over medium heat and add the remaining 3 tablespoons of olive oil. Heat until oil is hot, but not smoking. Cook meatballs, turning, until all sides are browned, about 5 minutes. Move meatballs from heat and drain on paper towels. Bring sauce to a simmer and add meatballs. Cook 25 to 30 minutes, uncovered. To serve, plate 4 meatballs per person, sprinkled with additional cumin, fresh parsley and drizzle with extra-virgin olive oil.

***Look for Chef Botsacos making his special keftedes on Late Night with Jimmy Fallon, on the video section of www.thenationalherald.com.**

Milopita – Greek-Style Apple Pie

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 and 1/2 cups flour
- 1/2 pound of butter
- 1 cup sugar
- 4 eggs
- 2 small packets vanilla
- 2 apples cleaned, cored and



- sliced
- Cinnamon for dusting
- 3/4 cup milk or orange juice
- handful of raisins
- handful of walnuts

PREPARATION:

Take a large round pan and coat it with 2 tablespoons of butter, 3 tablespoons sugar and some cinnamon. Place the apple slices in a circle until pan is covered. On top of the apples, sprinkle the raisins and walnuts. For dough, mix eggs, sugar, vanilla, milk or juice and flour until texture is ready and roll out. Place dough mixture on top of apples. Bake at 325 degrees for about 45 minutes or until golden brown. Allow pie to cool until ready to serve.

Spinach Strudels

Allrecipes.com

INGREDIENTS:

- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 1 bunch green onions, chopped
- 2 (10 ounce) packages frozen chopped spinach, thawed, well drained
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh dill
- 3 extra large eggs, lightly beaten
- 7 ounces feta cheese, crumbled
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 40 sheets frozen phyllo pastry, thawed in refrigerator
- 1 cup unsalted butter, melted
- 1/2 cup plain bread crumbs

PREPARATION:

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F (200 degrees C). In a medium skillet, heat olive oil over a medium heat. Stir in green onions and cook until soft, about 5 minutes. Set aside. Meanwhile in a large bowl, combine spinach, dill, eggs, feta, salt and pepper. Add reserved green onions, and mix well. Unfold 1 sheet of the phyllo pastry, brush with melted butter, and sprinkle lightly with breadcrumbs. Lay another sheet directly on top of the first sheet; repeat butter and breadcrumb steps. Continue to do this until you have 10 layers. Spoon 3/4 cup of spinach mixture (in a sausage-like shape) along longer edge of the top sheet. Roll it up, place on baking sheet, and brush lightly with butter. Score off 1-inch rounds by marking with a knife for easier cutting later. Repeat process with the remaining pastry sheets. You will have 4 rolls total when finished. Bake in a preheated oven for 12 minutes or until edges are lightly brown. Cut into individual servings where you have marked. Serve immediately.



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The god Apollo's first love was the nymph Dafni. As he pursued her, she called upon the gods to help her escape him and was immediately transformed into a laurel tree. Still in love with her, Apollo vowed to always wear a crown of laurel. As the originator of the Pythian games, and as the god of poetry, he swore to crown all victors, heroes and poets with wreaths woven of laurel leaves.

The leaf of the laurel tree is also known as the bay leaf (dafni, in Greek). It is an essential ingredient in many cuisines, especially those of the Mediterranean. Used either fresh or dried, the leaves impart a subtle but distinctive flavor and fragrance to food.

On behalf of Dafni, we welcome you and wish you
Καλή Ορεξη!



Queens-based Artopolis is an Odyssey of confectionery, pastries, breads, cakes, tarts, pies, and creations of Mediterranean Delights. Artopolis' Manager Regina Katopodis, right, tends to customers by not only helping them find the best traditional Greek and European-inspired sweets, but by taking the time to learn about them and their likes.

Patisserie Artopolis Commemorates Fall with Festive Cornucopia

By Angelike Contis
The National Herald Staff Writer

Tsoureki filled with chocolate and chestnuts. Pumpkin, apple, pecan and blueberry pies. Cranberry tart made with almond paste. Hungry yet? These are a few of the Thanksgiving options that will be available at Greek bakery/patisserie Artopolis.

"We do the traditional American thing," says the Astoria shop's co-owner and manager, Regina Katopodis, of the biggest food-centric holiday in the U.S. Year round, Artopolis specializes in following the Greek calendar of feasts (as well as some Lenten fasts). But on November 26, there will also be cakes there reading "Happy Thanksgiving" too.

Artopolis, located a short distance from the Astoria-Ditmars subway terminus, quickly became a fixture among sweet tooths since opening in 2003. The shop has the décor of a high-end Athens patisserie, with a central wooden kiosk and packages and ribbons imported from Greece to boot.

"Nothing is too sweet," notes Katopodis of the traditional Greek and European-influenced sweets in the shop. "Nothing is too anything," she adds.

Greek is often the lingua franca as people order bread, boxes of goodies or a quick tiropita (cheese pie) for their children. Retirees and



An employee of Artopolis happily waits behind the baked goods counter to serve the following customer.

younger folk often can be found sipping Greek coffee or frappes at Artopolis' little tables.

As a food lover, I enjoy Artopolis' Belgian chocolate and nut wafers and the luscious traditional galaktoboureko (custard pie) alike. As a journalist though, I'm amazed by

the constant flow of news there.

In between juggling orders and phone calls, the Brooklyn-bred Katopodis spends much of her day talking to customers. She consults with soon-to-be-married couples sampling traditional items like kourambiedes (sugar cookies) and

imported koufeta (sugar coated almonds) for their big day. Katopodis doesn't miss a beat in telling a woman what the best cake is for a 40-year-old male chocolate lover colleague. But Artopolis' manager also inquires about the health of a customer's father. She eagerly takes

a client's cell phone to speak to his son about his flashy new car. ("I love cars!" Katopodis confesses.) And she asks a baritone about his upcoming concert in Cyprus.

Katopodis, whose roots are in Sparta and Mani, is delighted that Artopolis has become a meeting place for Greeks. It's not just "kafetion" gossip, either, she points out, noting that Artopolis has become a gathering place of academics, publishers and artists too. "That's what pleases me so much, that this has become a meeting place, in a more intellectual way."

As for her own Thanksgiving, after spending the day at Artopolis, each year Katopodis races, after 6pm, to her sister's house for "American stuff" like turkey, homemade cranberry sauce, sweet potatoes and Theia (Aunt) Aglaia's amazing stuffing.

Even when she lived in Greece for 14 years, Artopolis' co-owner/manager insisted on celebrating Thanksgiving... though finding a turkey wasn't always easy. When Katopodis was living on Ithaca island in 1978, she had a bird shipped to her from Patras. The coveted turkey arrived - to her horror - still covered in feathers. Thankfully today, she notes, turkeys are more readily available in Greece.

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Food for Thought, a Quiz

- Which of the following is not a type of Greek olive?
 - kalamata
 - stafidholyes
 - kokinosouvles
 - koroneiki
 - megharitiki
- Retsina is one of the oldest, consistently-produced wines in the world. What gives it its unique flavor?
 - lemons
 - green apples
 - pine tree resin
 - raisins
 - jasmine flowers
- What is the basic ingredient in ouzo?
 - aniseed
 - brandy
 - fennel
 - hazelnut
 - mint
- What is the chief food of the traditional wedding feast in Greek villages?
 - fresh fish
 - suckling pig
 - stuffed vine leaves
 - cheese pies and cheesecake
 - spit-roast lamb
- This food is eaten throughout in Greece as an appetizer or a meze, but in Crete, it is a staple. Is it...
 - cod
 - tuna
 - sardines
 - mackerel
 - snails



Answers: 1.C, 2.C, 3.A, 4.E, 5.E

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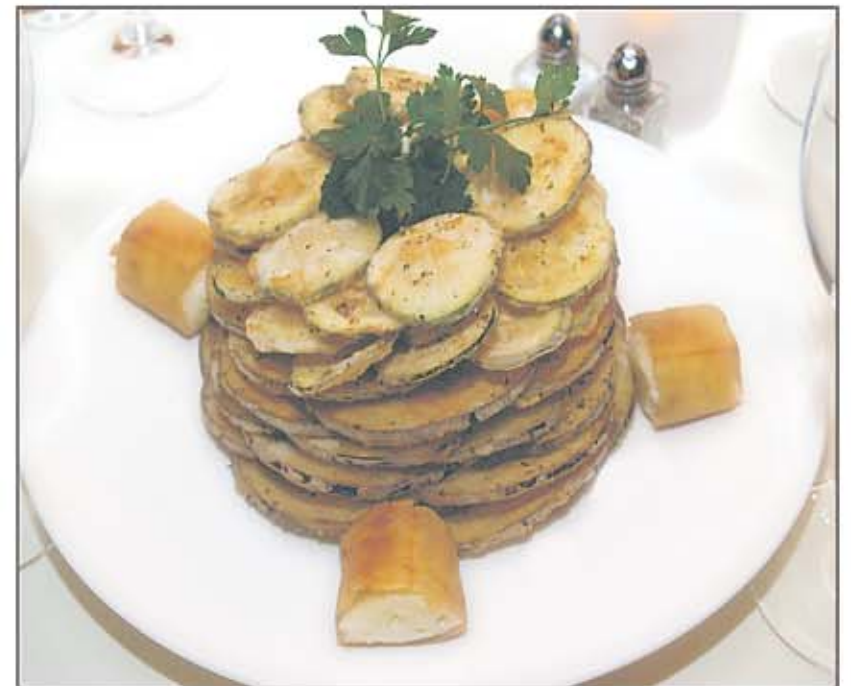
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Greek olives are mainly recognized by their place names (Kalamata, Atalanti, Amfissa, Halkidiki, etc.) or by their curing and processing (cracked, split, salt-cured, brine-cured, etc.). All olives change from green to black as they mature on the tree, and all are bitter and inedible unless cured.

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White dry xynisteri, regional wine.

Red dry maratheftiko, regional wine.

Tasting is Believing

Venus Vini

Commandaria, the amber colored dessert wine, has been produced for over 4000 years and is considered to be the oldest wine in the world. It is produced from the indigenous mavro and xynisteri varieties and enjoys the status of wine with appellation of origin of Cyprus. The combination of the rich black mavro and the fruity white xynisteri, produce the sweet dessert wine which Richard the Lionheart proclaimed the "wine of the Kings and the King of wines".



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Christine Cushing's Cypriot Recipes

Commandaria Roasted Pears Wrapped in Prosciutto

This appetizer is a great twist on a classic prosciutto with melon. The ripe pear is roasted until the wine concentrates its earthy honey notes, creating a perfect balance of fruit and salt.

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 ripe bosc pears, peeled, cored, and cut into fourths
- 1 1/2 cups Commandaria wine (375 ml)
- 1 tbsp. honey (15 ml)
- Several strips lemon zest
- 2 sprigs fresh thyme
- 8 slices prosciutto, cut in half

PREPARATION:

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. In a medium roasting pan or dish, arrange pear wedges, so they are not overlapping.

Whisk together the honey with wine in a small bowl. Pour over pears. Add the lemon zest and thyme sprigs.

Bake the pears for about 25-30 minutes or until pears are soft and golden, stirring occasionally to prevent scorching.

Remove only pears from pan (discard thyme sprigs) and let pears cool on a plate.

Transfer remaining liquid into a small saucepan and simmer uncovered over medium heat until it's the thickness of honey.

To serve, wrap pear wedge in a half slice prosciutto and arrange on platters. Drizzle with reduced wine.

For the creative ones, garnish with herbs such as parsley.

Serves 4



Creamy Wild Mushroom & Commandaria Soup

This Commandaria wine is a perfect match with the earthy flavours of wild mushrooms and takes this classic soup to new heights.

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 Tbsp. Butter (25 ml)
- 4 shallots, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, chopped
- 1/4 tsp. fresh chopped ginger (2 ml)
- 1 leek, thoroughly washed, white part only, chopped
- 2 stalks celery, diced
- 1 cup Commandaria wine (250 ml)
- 5 cups assorted mushrooms (Portobello & shitake), washed and sliced (1.25L)
- 1 pinch grated nutmeg
- 3 sprigs fresh thyme
- 1 small Yukon gold potato, peeled and diced
- 6 cups chicken stock or vegetable stock (1.5L)
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1/2 - 3/4 cup whipping cream (125 -175 ml), depending on your taste
- 1 Tbsp. lemon juice (15 ml)
- Chopped fresh tarragon to taste

PREPARATION:

In a large, pot heat butter on medium. Add the shallots, garlic, ginger, celery and leek and sweat for about 7-9 minutes until just soft. Add the wine and increase heat to high and simmer uncovered until liquid is syrupy and almost evaporated. Add the sliced mushrooms and reduce heat to medium and cook for about 5-8 minutes until mushrooms are soft.

Add the nutmeg, fresh thyme, diced potato, chicken stock, salt and pepper. Bring to a boil. Reduce to low heat and simmer covered for 30 minutes or until vegetables are soft.

Add cream and bring back to the boil. Add the lemon juice and adjust seasoning. Puree the soup with an immersion wand blender for several seconds for a creamier soup. Add freshly chopped tarragon just before serving.

For added flavour, sauté a few small shitake caps in hot butter until golden and serve on top of soup with sprigs of tarragon.

Serves 4-6

Baby Rocket Salad with Halloumi Croutons in Citrus Olive Oil Vinaigrette

INGREDIENTS:

Salad

- 5 oz package baby rocket (arugula), washed
- 5 oz Halloumi cheese cut into 1/2 inch cubes
- 1/4 cup fine corn meal
- 2 tablespoon grape seed oil for frying
- 1 beet, thinly sliced on a mandolin and shallow fried until crisp.

Citrus Dressing

- 2 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- 2 tablespoon fresh orange juice
- Grated zest of 1 orange and 1 lemon
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1/2 teaspoon vin cotto or balsamic vinegar
- Salt and freshly cracked black pepper, to taste
- 1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil

PREPARATION:

1. Wash and dry the arugula and place in a medium bowl.
2. To make the dressing, combine the citrus juices and zests, mustard, vin cotto or balsamic with salt and pepper and whisk well. While whisking slowly pour in the oil and combine well. Set aside.
3. Dust the Halloumi cubes in fine corn meal, tossing gently in a bowl. Transfer to a plate and discard remaining corn meal.
4. In a medium skillet, heat grape seed oil over medium high temperature. Fry the Halloumi for about 5 minutes, turning often to get a dark golden crust.
5. Remove from heat and transfer back to plate.
6. Toss the greens with the vinaigrette and cheese gently to coat. Sprinkle with beet chips and serve immediately.

Serves 4



Improve Your Health with Greek Food

These are major points of the diet followed by the people of rural Crete who scored the highest of all in heart health in several international studies. Incorporating these elements of the Greek diet into everyday menus, combined with increased physical activity, can have a positive effect on heart health.

USE OLIVE OIL

Olive oil is one of the "healthy" fats, meaning it's a monounsaturated fat. This type of fat can actually lower the LDL ("bad") cholesterol, and in 2004, the FDA recognized claims that replacing other fats with olive oil can help reduce heart disease risk.

INCREASE BARLEY PRODUCTS (AND OTHER WHOLE GRAINS)

It's long been known that whole grains can help reduce the risk of heart disease, but just recently, the FDA chimed in once again to recognize claims that barley and barley products do indeed reduce the risk of coronary disease. Barley and other whole grains are an important part of the Cretan diet, used in cracked grain breads and our famous barley rusks.

EAT THOSE LEAFY GREENS

Our Cretan diet is based largely on vegetables, with no shortage of dark leafy greens, both those we pick in the wild and those we buy. Leafy greens contain lutein, known to prevent clogged arteries (atherosclerosis).

DON'T FORGET THE LEGUMES (PULSES)

Legumes are that group of beans, peas, and lentils that are high in fiber and combat heart disease. The Cretan (and Greek) diet is filled with fabulous dishes using many varieties of legumes.

KEEP IT NATURAL

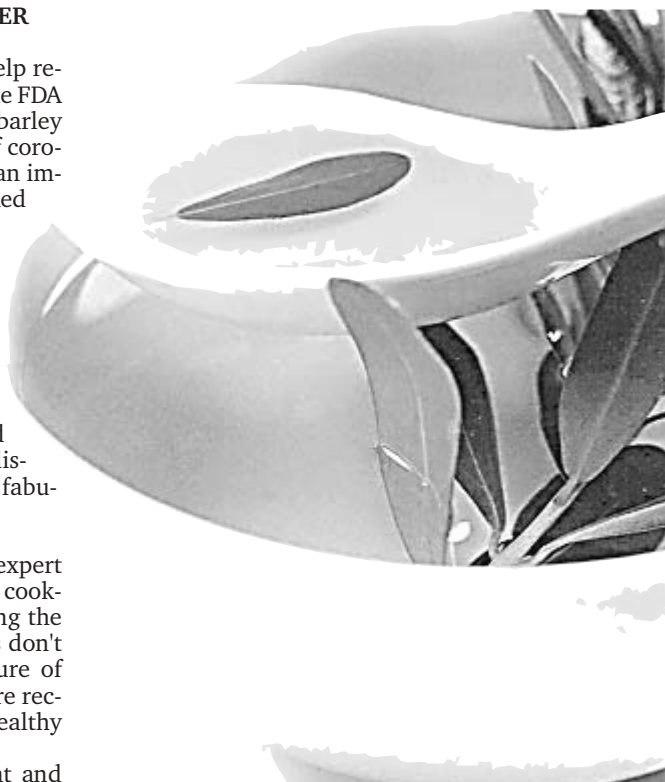
Aglaia Kremzi, a well-known Greek food expert and author, says that the art of traditional Greek cooking is taking a natural, fresh ingredient and doing the least possible to it. Refined and processed foods don't help a healthy heart. Keeping the basic structure of food is important, and sticking with foods that are recognizable in their original form is the key. Shop healthy to stay healthy.

Of course, the Greek diet also includes meat and

fish, but generally in smaller quantities, and less frequently. We also incorporate garlic and onions everywhere possible (we like them), and they are heart healthy additions as well.

Over recent years, the Greek diet, even in rural areas, has been modified by the availability of fast foods, processed foods, and junk foods, so we, too, need to take a lesson from the traditional ways of our parents and grandparents.

From Nancy Gaifyllia, for About.com



Thanksgiving on A Budget: Money-saving tips

From epicurious.com

Go for What's in Season: When planning your meal, first consult the calendar. This is no time for asparagus and artichokes. Buy produce in season, and you will get much more for your money, not to mention livelier flavors.

Buy a Supermarket Bird: In an ideal world we would all be eating heritage turkeys. They have outstanding texture and flavor, and when we buy them, we help preserve unique breeds. But they are anything but a bargain: A 12- to 14-pound bird—which feeds eight—from Heritage Foods USA goes for \$159 including shipping, or more than \$10 a pound. Supermarket

turkeys can be fine alternatives for less than \$2 a pound.

Start from Scratch: Some convenience foods are often ridiculously cheap, loaded as they are with high-fructose corn syrup and chemicals, yet they rarely taste better than homemade. To cut costs and ensure the tastiest of feasts, make your own pie crust, cranberry sauce, and gravy rather than opening up a box or can.

Know When to Buy Canned or Frozen: Some canned and frozen foods are fine alternatives to fresh. Canned pumpkin is one of the great American ingredients, and the generic brands are as good as premium labels. You could make a pie using a fresh cheese pumpkin for

\$5, but you would wind up with a more watery filling than one made from a \$2.49 can.

Don't Be a Slave to a Recipe: If you don't want to spring for three kinds of herbs in your soup or stuffing, choose one. Or none. Nothing but salt and pepper is ever really indispensable. Substitute water for canned stock in a soup; use a slurry of flour and water to thicken your pan gravy rather than making turkey stock.

Make It a Potluck: Don't be embarrassed to ask for help. People are happy to pitch in and bring a dish or two, and potlucks are trendy right now (see our guide to hosting or attending a Potluck Thanksgiving).



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By Aphrodite Matsakis

Special to The National Herald

(The characters in the following story are fictional. Any resemblance to persons living or dead is purely coincidental.)

Once upon a time, there was a Greek American family who's Yiayia and Papou had never heard of Thanksgiving. Trapped inside Hitler's Greece, they hadn't heard of Valentine's Day nor Columbus Day, until the war finally ended and they came to live with their son Tasos in Baltimore, who had risen from dishwasher to the owner of a deluxe diner. He was now also the Papa of two school-age children.

When the Yiayia asked which saint Thanksgiving was named after, the Papa told her that Thanksgiving had nothing to do with saints. Thanksgiving was simply an American holiday when families gathered together to give thanks for all their blessings.

"That's-a-nice," she replied. "How long do we have to fast?" "No fasting," said the Grandson, age 10. "You just have turkey."

Yiayia went white. "You mean we have to invite Turks to dinner?" "No," the Grandson continued. "You just have a big dinner with lots of food, like turkey, pumpkin pie, corn and other foods the Indians used to eat." He tried to explain



for the issue of deserts.

Since the vegans couldn't have dairy products like milk or eggs, galatobouriko, koulourakia and kourampiedes and even most American cakes and cookies, were out of the question. Regular baklava was off limits too, because of the butter used between layers of phyllo. Then Anna remembered her Yiayia telling her about how when she was a little girl, her parents had a fight on Thanksgiving over Karpathanian baklava, and her Yiayia's stories about Karpathians taking their baklava with them on long trips. Because it was made with wheaten flour, it was quite sturdy; and because it contained no milk, eggs or other dairy products, it could last for six months or more without refrigeration.

"Karpathanian baklava is vegan!" Anna announced. She was determined to make it, but the old-timers didn't really use recipes. They made it "me to mati" (they eyeballed it) and it was hard to find any Karpathanian Americans who made it anymore. Undaunted, Anna combed the Internet and tracked down every Karpathanian she could find until she learned how to make this ancient form of trail mix. That Thanksgiving, she adorned the table with a huge tray of Karpathanian baklava, decorated Karpathanian style with colorful bows and ribbons.

This Thanksgiving, as always,

Karpathanian Baklava: a Tale of Cultivating Culture Through Food

about the Pilgrims and the Indians, but all his grandparents could understand was that the Pilgrims, like themselves, were immigrants grateful to have made America their home.

"I'll make the lamb and Yiayia can fix the pastichio," said the Papou.

"No lamb, no pastichio and no Greek nothing," growled the Papa. "This is an American holiday and we're going to do everything American-style. We're Americans now, not Greeks." Although the Papa dearly loved Greek music and traditions, he had experienced so much poverty in Greece, he never wanted to return.

"But what's a holiday without lamb and why can't we have both—turkey and lamb?" asked the Papou. But the Papa wouldn't hear of it.

They argued for hours. The Papou couldn't believe that his son refused to serve lamb on a holiday and, even worse, he was trying to reverse the traditional order of things, where fathers, not children, ruled the roost. Eventually the Papou gave in. After all, his son had brought him and his wife to Ameri-

ca and was supporting them too.

Meanwhile, the Mama was in the kitchen busily creating a Thanksgiving disaster by trying to persuade her meek sister to help her defy her sitherokefalo (iron-headed, stubborn) husband.

"This is America," she whispered on the phone. "Women don't have to listen to their husbands all the time. No matter what Tasos says, at the last minute, I'm going to put feta and olives on the table. What's he doing to do? Throw them at me in front of his parents?"

"I'm making Karpathanian baklava too. There will be so much food on the table, Tasos won't even notice it; and if he does, I'll just tell him it's a new kind of glazed donut. He's never been to Karpathos, so he'll never know the difference. When can I come to your house to make it? I'll need one whole day, maybe more, and all the help you can give me."

The island of Karpathos, located between Crete and Rhodes, features a uniquely flavored and shaped baklava. On Karpathos, the various types of baklava most people are used to are referred to as xeniko baklava (foreign baklava).

Making Karpathanian baklava is a long involved process which begins by rolling out dough then cutting it into one inch strips. The strips are then folded into a criss-cross, diagonal, oval-shape design where one oval shaped ring is surrounded by another, with some space in between. Today a pasta machine might be used to press the dough into the right size strips, but in the olden days, women used their hands.

The dough strips are then held together with cloves, fried in oil and covered in a honey-based syrup. Cinnamon and sometimes powdered sugar and chopped almonds or pistachios are sprinkled on top and stick like glue to the thick honey glaze.

The challenges are many: such as making the strips the correct length and width, arranging them in the right shape, then frying each baklava enough so that it's cooked sufficiently but not so much that it falls apart.

That Thanksgiving, the Mama placed the feta, olives and a small platter of Karpathanian baklava at the end of the table furthest away from where the Papa was sitting. But he

spotted the Greek food immediately and asked the Mama to remove it.

She acted like she hadn't heard him. When he told (ordered?) her a second time, she just smiled sweetly at him and said, "Happy Thanksgiving." In an effort to contain himself, the Papa started fumbling with his komboloi. But then his father chuckled: "Kala na patheis, yie mou. (You deserve it, my son). See what happens when you become so American you don't listen to your father and teach your wife how to drive. Your wife snuck out of the house and drove to her sister's house to do this to you."

The Papa pointed his finger at the Mama and was about to call her a vre gynaika, when the Daughter, age 10, sensing the fireworks that were about to explode, burst into tears. "Why can't we have a nice quiet Thanksgiving like the Americans do? How come there's always fights about Greek stuff? How come we're so American we can't have feta, but so Greek that I have to go to Greek school?"

With that, the adults held their tongues and soon the evening took on a festive air.

In the years to come, the Papa relaxed his "only American" policy and Thanksgiving featured all kinds of foods. Over time, the Mama started buying pastichio, kourampiedes and other time-consuming Greek specialties instead of making them. But Karpathanian baklava was no where to be found and the Mama, who years before had risked the wrath of her husband by making Karpathanian baklava, had begun to groan at the thought of all the work involved. Eventually, it disappeared from the Thanksgiving table, as did the older generation and, in time, she and the Papa too.

By now the 10 year-old, who once had tried to explain Thanksgiving to his grandparents, was a Papa himself. As Thanksgiving approached, his daughter, Anna, announced that she didn't want lamb or turkey. While she was away at college, she had become a vegetarian and some of the cousins coming to dinner were vegan. Her parents promised to provide a vegan Turkey and substitute vegetarian lasagna (with tofu cheese) for pastichio (the Greek lasagna) and the matter was quickly settled—except

the table will be loaded with food, traditional Greek and American dishes, as well as vegan, vegetarian, low-fat and sugar-free delights. But there will be empty spots. The Yiayias and Papous are missing and some of the younger generation can't make it back from college. Others need to spend the holiday with in-laws who live out of town. But come Christmas or Easter, they'll be back. They always come back, not for the food but for what the food represents—that sense of family unity.

Should the Yiayias and the Papous of old be looking down on this year's Thanksgiving table, surely they'll be smiling, but not just because Karpathanian baklava is now the table's centerpiece. They're happy because they see that despite the tensions between them due to differences of personality and the pressures of assimilation, they succeeded in creating a strong sense of family among their descendants, who despite the forces of fragmentation in today's society, are grateful, not only for their many material blessings, but for the simple pleasure of being together—no matter what's on the table.

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Cyprus Wine Association Partners With Chef Michael Psilakis To Celebrate "Eurowines" Campaign

Sharing the History and Promoting the Future of Indigenous Cypriot Varietals

Cyprus is a country steeped in history and tradition, a legacy that includes the country's wines. With fifteen indigenous grape varieties, Cyprus was one of the first countries to produce wine. Today, winemaking is still a central aspect of Cypriot life, making it the highest per capita exporter in the world. Although a small country in comparison to other wine exporting nations, the Cypriot indigenous varietals possess their own alluring quality and taste. Therefore, it is the goal of the newly formed Cyprus Wine Association to promote Cyprus' role in the international wine milieu.

The Cyprus Wine Association is a campaign designed to promote

the export sales of Cypriot indigenous varietals in North America. Today's press event at Anthos, chef Michael Psilakis and restaurateur Donatella Arpaia's acclaimed Modern Greek restaurant, is an important component of the EuroWines campaign which includes initiatives such as nationwide advertising, participation in selected trade shows, seminars, and over 200 in-store tastings in key metropolitan markets including Los Angeles, New York, and Boston.

"The goal of the EuroWines campaign is to assist our U.S. wine industry partners in increasing awareness and knowledge of Cypriot wines among the American consumer," states Mr. Drousiotis, EuroWines Managing Director.

roWines Managing Director.

The luncheon is to raise awareness of Cypriot wines as renowned chef Michael Psilakis serves pristine dishes paired with indigenous wine varietals selected by guest speaker and wine expert, Dr. George Soleas. Here the virtues of Cypriot wine and food will meet as the bright flavors of the wine are enhanced by this award-winning chef's talent for Mediterranean cuisine. Psilakis' depth and knowledge of the cuisine along with Dr. Soleas' wine selection and accompanying lecture will prove most enlightening and palatable.

The Association is comprised of the four main Cypriot wineries: ETKO, KEO, LOEL, and SODAP, which represent 86% of Cypriot wine exports worldwide. All four wineries each carry their own Commandaria dessert wine. The legend of Commandaria dates back as late as 1000 B.C. and was later introduced to Europe by the Crusaders. It is the world's oldest appellation wine in production with a long history of accolades, from the Greek poet, Homer to King Richard the Lion Heart who once said, "I must return to Cyprus if only to taste this wine again." Such testimonials continue into the present with its "Best Buy - Exceptional" ratings from Wine & Spirits Magazine. Wine Enthusiast rates it as one of the "Top 10 Dessert Wines" in the world. And wine expert Jonathan Levine hails its unique flavor, "I love its aromas of dried fruit - apricots and peaches - and undertones of nuts and honey."

In addition to the legendary Commandaria, Cyprus is home to fifteen indigenous grape varieties whose rootstocks have grown undisturbed for over 150 years. Perhaps, a stroke of luck or blessing from the God of Wine, Dionysus, the cursed Phylloxera beetle which decimated the majority of Euro-

pean vineyards never reached Cyprus. Therefore, Cypriot wines are European Vitis Vinifera self-sown plants retaining their classic organoleptic characteristics and potential for long life.

The most widely cultivated of these indigenous varieties are the Xynisteri, Martheftiko, Mavro, and Ophthalmo. The Xynisteri represents Cyprus' white grape variety. It produces a light colored white wine with low alcohol levels and low to medium acidity creating a light tasting, crisp white wine. The majority of Cypriot whites are made from Xynisteri. The unique to Cyprus black grape Mavro makes up the bulk of red wines whilst the more pungent and higher acidity varietals of the Maratheftiko and Ophthalmo have been rediscovered and encouraged to create improved and interesting reds. The Martheftiko is particularly enticing to winemakers. Densely concentrated throughout the mountain regions of Paphos and Pitsilia, it is considered extremely rare and valuable. This grape produces a high quality wine rich both in color and body. Its fruity aroma of cherries and blackberries compliment the country's terroir further distinguishing its true Cypriot character. Enchanted by the wines Maratheftiko produces and enticed by its growing potential, Cypriot wine producers



ABOVE: Cyprus Wine Regions. RIGHT: Traditional wine-making in Cyprus.



are eager to invest in it.

In many ways, the island of Cyprus is unusual. As a country with one of the oldest varietals in the world and a rich history in winemaking, it is an exciting time to witness its reemergence. We hope you will walk away with more than a taste of Cyprus.



Signature Commandaria Cocktail By Avra Estiatorio Restaurant

GLASS SERVING

- 2 parts Red Dry wine
- 1 part Commandaria
- 1/2 part Triple Sec (optional)
- Splash of Orange Juice
- Splash of Sprite
- Chopped Apples & Oranges

PITCHER SERVING

- 1 bottle of Cyprus dry red wine, preferably Mavro
- 1 1/2 cups Commandaria
- 1 cup Sprite or Ginger Ale
- 1 splash of Orange Juice
- 2 shots Triple Sec (optional)
- 1 Orange cut into wedges
- 1 Apple cut into wedges

Stir ingredients in a pitcher or carafe. Allow fruit to soak in the mixture between 3 and 8 hours. Serve in an ice-filled glass.



Signature Commandaria Cocktail By Tony Abou-Ganim

INGREDIENTS

- 1 oz St. John Commandaria sweet wine
- 1 1/2 oz Bourbon
- 1 oz fresh lemon juice
- 2 oz apple cider or juice
- 1 oz ginger syrup*

Add Commandaria Wine, bourbon, lemon juice, apple juice, and syrup to a mixing glass of a Boston shaker set. Shake with ice until well blended. Strain into an ice-filled Collins glass and garnish with a fan of apples.

*HOMEMADE GINGER SYRUP DIRECTIONS

- 2 cups sugar
- 2 cups water
- 1 cup fresh ginger, peeled and cubed

Bring water and ginger to a boil. Dissolve sugar and return to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 30 minutes. Allow to cool and then strain liquid to remove ginger.



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Your Guide to Greek Cheeses

Continued from page 4

mean composition of Manouri is, moisture: 51.9 percent, fat: 36.7 percent, proteins: 10.9 percent, salt: 0.8 percent and a pH of 5.9.

METSOVONE

Metsovone is traditional Greek cheese with Controlled Denomination of Origin (DOC). It is a hard smoked cheese, of "pasta filata" type, which is produced in the regions of Metsovo (Epirus) from where the name derives. Metsovone is considered as an excellent quality table cheese. It is manufactured from cow's milk but mixtures with small quantities of

ewe's or goat's milk are also used. It is ripened for at least 3 months. The mean composition of Metsovone is, moisture: 41.8 percent, fat: 25.9 percent, protein: 26.8 percent, salt: 2.8 percent and a pH of 5.5.

MIZITHRA

Mizithra is a traditional Greek whey cheese with Controlled Denomination of Origin (DOC). It has been manufactured in Greece for thousands of years and is considered the ancestor of all Greek whey cheeses. Mizithra is manufactured from whey derived from ewe's, goats' or cows' milk or mixtures of milks in the regions of Macedonia, Thrace, Thessalia, Sterea Hellas,

Peloponissos, Ionian islands, Aegean island and Crete island. There are two types of Mizithra: Fresh Mizithra which is unsalted or slightly salted and consumed a few hours or days after its manufacture and Dried Mizithra which is salted, dried and consumed as grated cheese.

Fresh Mizithra contains up to 70 percent moisture and at least 50 percent fat in dry matter, while dried Mizithra contains 40 percent and 50 percent, respectively.

The above article is from Greece.org, "From the Greek Cheese Page."

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Authentic taste of Greece: Feta and Greek yoghurt



Feta is arguably the best-known Greek cheese abroad. In 2004, the European Union granted Greek Feta a PDO (Protected Designation of Origin) status. Feta production abides very specific rules that control the manufacture and the allowed percentage of goat's milk in the cheese.

Feta is the quintessential Greek table cheese, but it is also excellent in all sorts of other dishes.

As a main ingredient, it finds its way into savory pies and it is also a staple on the meze table, and can be grilled or baked in paper and even sautéed.

Other world known high quality Greek cheeses are graviera, kasseri, kefalograviera, kefalotyri, manouri and myzithra.

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