

Gastronomy



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Mouthwatering Greek Cuisine

Welcome to the country that gave birth to symposia

Salty like the Greek Seas; mellow like a Santorini sunset; warm like the morning Cycladic sun; fresh like the ice-cool rivers in Epirus; velvety like the clouds of the morning Attica sky; impressive like the gorges in Macedonia; crisp like the autumn weather in the Ionian Islands; invigorating like a spring breeze in Crete; the Greek cuisine creates a lingering impression like the sight of waves crashing on Samothrace Island shores.



Greek cuisine has four secrets: good quality fresh ingredients, correct use of flavourings (herbs) and spices, the famous Greek olive oil and simplicity.

Greek diet is famous worldwide for contributing to good health. Dozens of scientific studies have shown the positive effect of a balanced Greek diet on a person's health, beauty and longevity.

Most of the Greek culinary creations are made with time-honoured tasty recipes, good quality ingredients and original preparation techniques. Greek appetizing flavours and combinations are temptations that are well worth succumbing to!

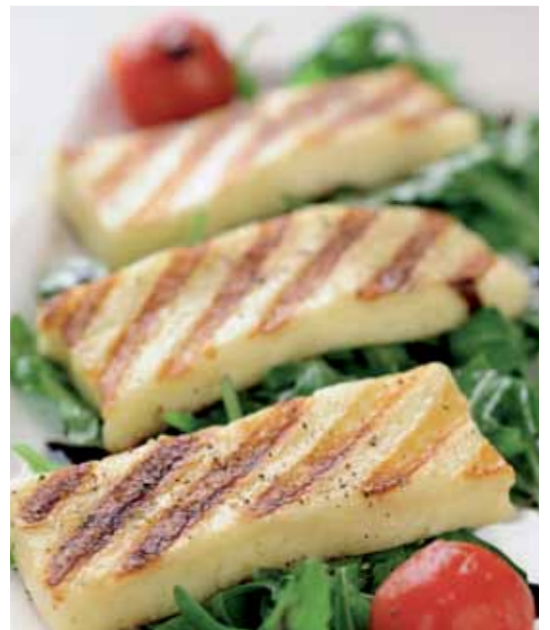


Delicious cheeses

Taste them on their own or in savoury and sweet combinations

Discover the long list of delicious Greek cheeses and pick the ones that suit your taste. The world renowned feta cheese needs no introduction. The queen of Greek cheeses accompanies most meals.

Taste it in savoury pies, or cooked in casserole dishes, fried, or baked in numerous combinations.



Try the soft and creamy white cheeses such as anthotyro, manouri, galotyri (from Epirus), xinomyzithra (from Crete) & katiki (from Domokos).

Thrill your palate with yellow hard cheeses; enjoy the piquant flavour of kaseri (from Macedonia and Thessaly), kefalograviera (from Dodoni), metsovone (from Metsovo), graviera (from Crete, Tinos or Naxos Islands), formaella (from Arachova) kalathaki (from Lemnos Island), San Michali (from Syros Island), ladotyri (from Lesvos Island), kefalotyri and many more.



Olive oil

The fruit of ancient Athens' sacred tree

The olive tree was the gift of goddess Athena to Athens - the city named after her. Its product – olive oil – has ever since been present in the Greek diet. Across the centuries it has been used in medicine and cosmetics, with great results.



Try it in various combinations, raw (as in a Choriatici salad) or cooked in almost every Greek dish. It is the basic oily substance used in cooking, and a healthier substitute for butter. You will find top quality olive oil in the Peloponnese, Crete, Lesvos Island, Halkidiki, Central Greece and many other areas.



Pulses

Traditional Greek food

Legume cultivation is an age-old Greek farming practice. You will find pulse dishes everywhere in Greece – vegetarians will feel at home here! Try the soup made with small light brown lentils from Eglouvi, Lefkada Island.



Taste fava, made with delicious yellow split peas on Santorini Island. Savour the mouthwatering chickpea soup on Sifnos Island. Relish the mellow taste of broad bean dishes on Crete, Alexandroupoli, Ioannina and Halkidiki. Enjoy a black-eyed bean salad, a popular dish in the Peloponnese. Try the giant beans from Prespes lakes, Kastoria and Nevrokopi, oven-baked with tomato. There is no end to these savoury nutritious combinations!



Fresh fish & meat

A paradise for fish or meat lovers

Greece is mainly a mariners' land. The endless stretches of coastline are proof of the contact and dependence that Greeks have always had on the sea. Fresh seafood may be eaten raw, or is cooked and served in many ways. A typical island dish is tasty kakavia, a fish soup which was originally prepared by fishermen with small fish from their catch.



Seafood is usually served as appetizer (meze), prepared on charcoal or grilled, fried or boiled. Try oysters, mussels, urchins, shrimps, octopus, squid, crayfish and many more in a seaside taverna. Large fish are best enjoyed grilled or cooked in the oven. Savour the goodness that comes off the Greek seas!

The Greek mainland and the mountainous areas on islands is where you'll find great tasting meat, mainly lamb, pork or goat. Try traditional dishes cooked with home-made pasta, fragrant meat-pies in Epirus, kokoretsi made from lamb offal and cooked on the spit, mellow kid meat slowly cooked in the casserole, or a rabbit stew cooked with onions. Souvlaki and gyros on pita bread is the top Greek street food that needs no introduction. Enjoy your pita rolled with meat, tomato slices and onions with tzatziki and fries on the side. There is no end to great-tasting culinary combinations you can try everywhere in the country.



Wine

A delightful accompaniment to food in ancient Greek symposia

Greek wine holds a significant place on the world map of alcoholic drinks. Age-old vinification traditions are married with modern techniques of wine-making and the outcome is great tasting wines of international acclaim, as they have over time received many an award.



Famous white varieties include assyrtiko, moschofilero, athiri, zitsa from Epirus, roditis, white moschato, robola from Kefalonia, savatiano from Attica, vilana from Crete, and red ones such as agiorgitiko from Nemea, xinomavro, mantilaria, and kotsifali from Crete, among others. All you have to do is choose the right wine to enhance the flavour of your meal. And if you're looking for a dessert wine, try mavrodaphne a popular sweet wine from Patras and Kefalonia, famous Vinsanto from Santorini Island, the sweet white wine varietal from Samos Island, sweet muscat wine from Lemnos Island and Liatiko & Romeiko two wine varietals from Crete.



Pasta

A versatile traditional Greek food

Chyloptes, fides (angel hair), kofto makaronaki, kouskousaki, kritharaki, trachanas, chondros, makarounes, flomaria: here is a limited list of traditional Greek pasta that goes by various names across the country and may be cooked as a main or side dish in numerous combinations. The main pasta ingredients are semolina, eggs and milk. You can try it with a tomato sauce topping and grated myzithra (a type of hard cheese) or enjoy it next to your meat or seafood, as a tasty cold dish with legumes or in colourful salads and in soups (especially fides, trachanas and chondros).



A very popular traditional casserole dish is giouvetsi which is red meat or chicken with kritharaki, tomato sauce and spices, considered to be the typical Sunday family main meal. Trachanas (called chondros in Crete) is actually pasta with a granular texture that is cooked as a soup with either a thin or a thick consistency and is topped with lots of grated myzithra or diced chunks of feta cheese in the Peloponnese and other areas. Taste delicious trachanopita from Epirus (pie made with trachanas). Enjoy pastitsada from Corfu Island, a mouthwatering recipe that is prepared with meat (veal or chicken) and thick local spaghetti and topped with grated kefalotyri cheese. Relish a dish of flomaria (local ribbon-like pasta from Lemnos island) cooked with partridge meat or chicken. Savour octopus with kofto makaronaki (resembling ditalini) on your next island trip. Travel to Greece and discover many more delicious combinations. Enjoy local products against the perfect natural backdrop!



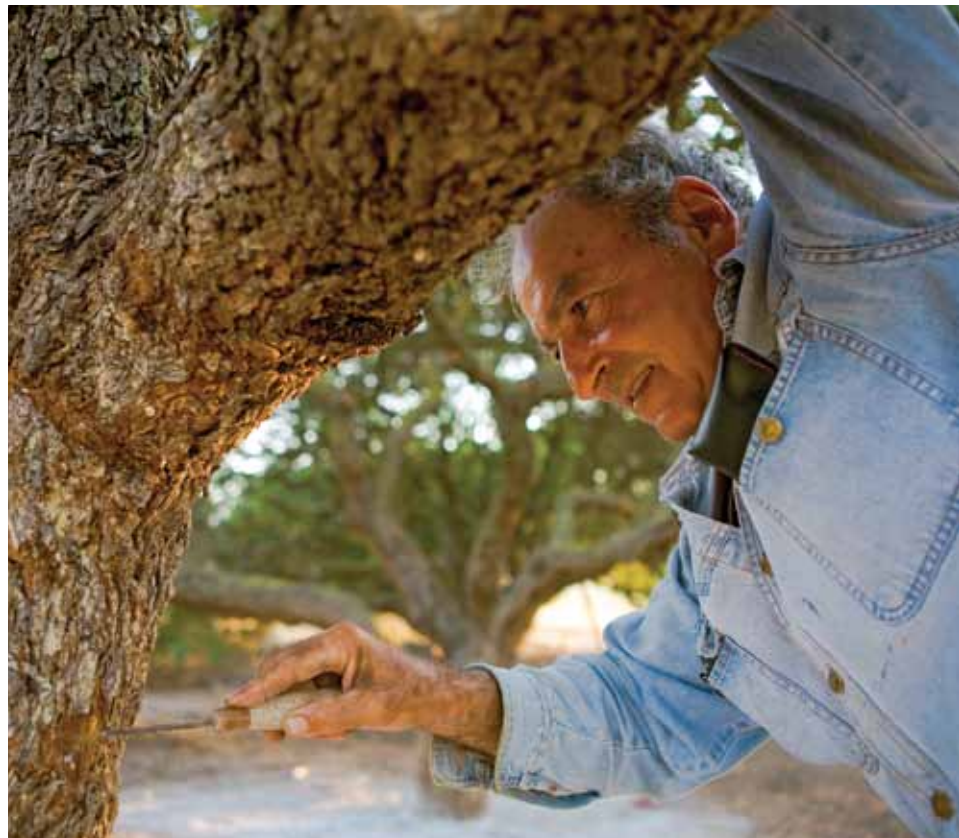
Mastic & Crocus

A small quantity - an explosion of taste

Mastic and Crocus are two Greek superfoods. Mastic trees are native to the southern part of Chios Island and their resin is an exclusive product of the area. Mastic's healing anti-inflammatory properties were known in ancient Greece. It has officially been recognised as a herbal medicine by the European Medicines Agency. This powerful anti-oxidant has also been used in cooking and in confectionery. Taste mastiha ypovrichio [meaning submarine], a sweet treat enjoyed especially in the summer as it is a spoonful of mastic that is placed in a glass of icy cold water.



Crocus is produced in Kozani, the biggest city in Western Macedonia. The filaments of the crocus flower are used as a spice that adds flavour and colour to a variety of dishes enhancing their nutritional value. Crocus threads are also called the 'red gold' on account of their scarlet colour and the saffron produced is of top quality. It is known to have anti-inflammatory properties, and its intake improves brain function, it lowers cholesterol, prevents nausea and helps digestion. Try it in cooking, pastry dishes, cheese-making – even in liquors.



Fish roe & ouzo

A Greek delicacy best enjoyed with the country's national spirit

Fish roe (avgotaracho in Greek) comes from the eggs of the striped grey mullet in Messolongi lagoon. This strong tasting delicacy is a Protected Designation of Origin product, and a rich source of omega 3 fatty acids. Have it as an appetizer on toasted bread or add it grated on your pasta. Accompany it with a spirit such as ouzo, tsipouro or tsikoudia.



Let ouzo drink, an anise-flavoured spirit, accompany your seafood or savoury titbits (mezedes) by the seaside! Make sure it's either on the rocks or with added chilled water that will cloud its colour and intensify its flavour. You will find the best ouzo distilleries in Northern Greece, Thessaly, Chios & Lesvos Islands.

Tsikoudia and tsipouro (anise-flavoured or not) are similar distilled strong spirits. Try tsikoudia from the local distilleries in Crete, and tsipouro from Thessaly and Epirus.



Honey and spoon sweets

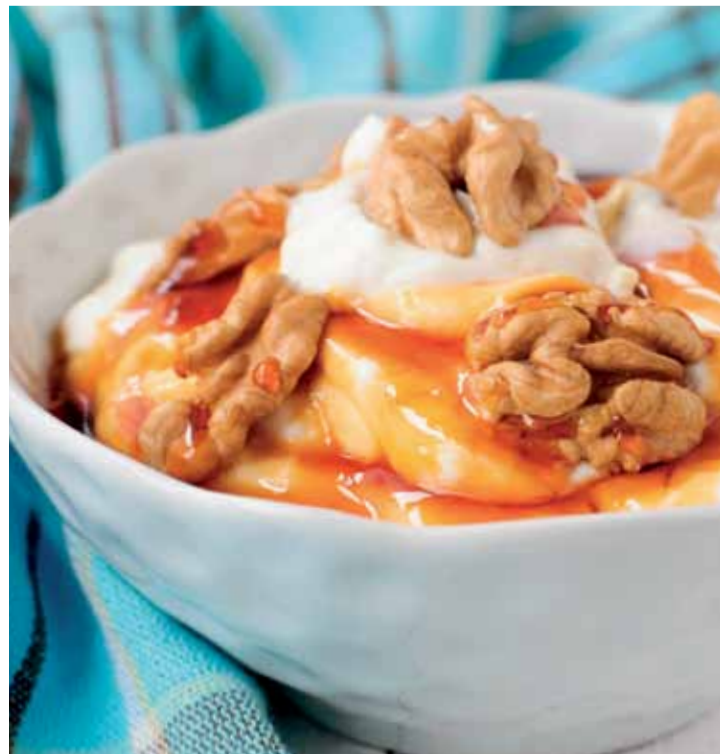
A heaven for those with a sweet tooth

Honey has been the basic sweetener in ancient Greek dishes; it was added in their cooking and used in sweet preparations. Its nutritional value and medicinal properties were very much appreciated then, as they are today. In Greek weddings it is customary to feed a spoonful of honey to newlyweds for good luck in their new common life.



Honey acquires a special flavour depending on the region it is harvested. Taste thyme honey from the country's mountainous areas, pine honey from Evvia, Halkidiki, Zakynthos, fir honey from Mt Olympus, Eurytania, Arcadia, Parnitha, flavourful citrus honey from Epirus, the Peloponnese and Crete, chestnut honey from Mt Athos, as well as oak honey and heather honey from various mountainous regions.

Spoon sweets are prepared across the country and they are made with fruits, flowers and vegetables. Taste flavourful orange, shaddock and rose in the Peloponnese, firiki apple variety and walnut on Mt Pelion, citrus and bitter orange in Epirus, small tomatoes on Santorini and Kos Islands, pistachio on Aigina Island, green olives, raisin and grape on Crete, kumquat on Corfu Island and aubergine in Leonidion, Peloponnese. Spoon sweets are served with a glass of cold water and as they have no fat, they are a healthier alternative to pastry and many other sweet confections. So, go on and thrill your taste buds ... with less remorse.



Recipes

DAKOS

1 LARGE ROUND BARLEY OR WHOLEMEAL RUSK (PAXIMADI)
2 TBSPs VIRGIN OLIVE OIL
1 LARGE TOMATO CUT INTO DICES
1 TBSP FETA CHEESE IN CRUMBLES
1 TEASPOON OREGANO OR THYME
GREEN OR BLACK OLIVES IN THIN SLICES OR CAPER BUDS

Moisten the rusk with four tbsps of water. Drizzle a tablespoon of oil on the rusk. Add the diced tomato and the second tbsp of olive oil, the cheese crumbles, the herbs, olives (or capers) and season with salt and pepper. Serve.



TZATZIKI

1 CUCUMBER
500gr GREEK YOGURT
2 GARLIC CLOVES
½ CUP OLIVE OIL
SALT TO TASTE
1 TBSP VINEGAR

Peel and deseed the cucumber. Grate it and squeeze the excess water out of it. Mash the garlic cloves and mix them well with some salt by hand. Add one or two spoonfuls of yogurt and mix well again before adding the rest of the ingredients. Make sure that the garlic paste has spread in the mixture evenly. Garnish with a spoonful of dill. Keep it refrigerated.



SAGANAKI

200gr GRAVIERA OR KEFALOGRAVIERA OR
KEFALOTYRI CHEESE CUT IN SLICES - 1cm THICK
10 TBSPs FLOUR
OLIVE OIL
1 LEMON

Add olive oil in a frying pan and heat well.
Pour cold water over the cheese slices, then
flour them on both sides. Fry them for a few
minutes on each side until their colour has
turned golden. Squeeze a lemon over them
while still hot. Serve.



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