



GREECE

Greece is a South Eastern European nation with thousands of islands scattered between the Aegean and Ionian seas. Given its extreme importance in antiquity, it is considered the cradle of Western civilization. In Athens, the capital, there are monuments dating back to the 5th century BC, including the Acropolis, the citadel that includes the Parthenon temple. Greece owes its fame also to the beaches, from those of black sand of Santorini to the fashionable villages of Mykonos



SANTORINI



MYKONOS

GREEK CUISINE

Greek cuisine boasts a centuries-old gastronomic tradition. Characterized for being a Mediterranean cuisine, with main ingredients such as cereals, olive oil, fish, fruit and vegetables (especially legumes), it does not lack food rich in saturated fats, given the dairy tradition and use of lamb, mutton and pork.



POPULAR DISHES

In Greek cuisine there are mainly fresh products cooked in various ways. The most popular dishes also to international tourism are the mousákas, the stifado, the Greek salad (based on tomato, onion, black olives, feta cheese and oregano), the spanakópita (based on spinach), the tirópita, the yemistá (tomatoes and peppers stuffed with rice, minced meat and various spices), suvláki (a barbecued pork skewer) and yíros (gyros).



Other fairly popular dishes are skordhália (a mashed potato with walnuts, almonds, garlic and olive oil), tzatziki (yogurt, cucumber, anise, garlic and olive oil), grilled octopus, feta cheese (often served with a pinch of oregano and olive oil), dholmades (rice leaf rolls), various legumes, olives and various regional cheeses.



Olive oil, of which *Greece* is the third world producer and the largest consumer in the world, is present almost in every dish.



Some dishes probably date back to *Ancient Greece*, such as lentil soup and *pastéli*, greek honey and sesame.



Very popular are the sausages, the *kokorétsi* (based on lamb offal on a spit), and various grilled meats.



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Very famous desserts are the bugátza (often filled with custard), galaktoboureko (based on milk, eggs, sugar and fílló pasta), yogurt with honey and nuts, vassilopita (eaten at New Year according to tradition), baklavá and the kadaífi.



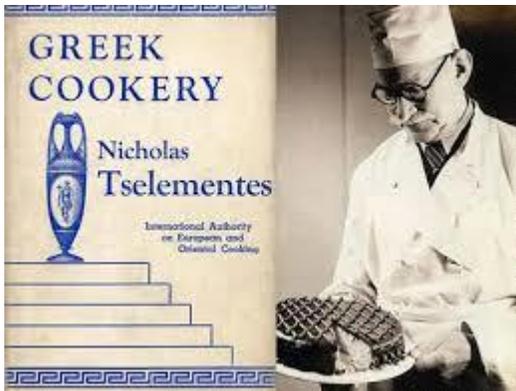
The most used spices and aromas are oregano, mint, garlic, anise, bay leaves, thyme, basil and cinnamon.

Among the drinks, wine is certainly among the most important, there are many varieties of both red and white or rosé, although the most famous is certainly the retsína, a white wine flavored with pine resin and produced mainly in region of Attica.

TIPICAL DISHES

The moussaka was born from the inspiration of a famous Greek chef, Nicholas Tselementes. The chef wanted to give a touch of internationality to the national cuisine, too influenced by the Turkish tradition. Not by chance, the name moussaka itself derives from the Turkish moussaka which, in turn, has Arabic and Persian origins. Driven by his desire for internationality, Tselementes decided to add a typically French ingredient to the traditional recipe: béchamel.

Today, this sort of eggplant pie, meat and béchamel is one of the most popular recipes of Greek cuisine. It is a very caloric dish as both potatoes and aubergines are fried.



MOUSSAKA RECIPE

preparation: 40 minutes

cooking: 80 minutes

INGREDIENTS:

- Aubergine 1 kg
- Ground beef 500 gr
- Peeled tomatoes 750 gr
- Salt q.b.
- Extra virgin olive oil q.b.
- Pepper q.b.
- Onion 1
- Glass of white wine 1
- Potatoes 450 gr
- Seed oil q.b.
- Butter 30 gr
- Flour 30 gr
- Milk 1/2 l

-Walnut moscata q.b.

-Parmigiano reggiano 50 gr

METHOD:

1-Finely chop the onion with a mandolin and fry it in the pan with oil. When the onion has browned well, add the minced meat and mix with a wooden spoon. Pour the wine, add salt and pepper and let it evaporate for a few minutes. Add the peeled tomatoes to the meat and cook over medium heat for about 30 minutes.

2-Slice the aubergines into thin slices, place them in a colander with coarse salt and let them rest for 15 minutes. In this way, the aubergines lose the classic bitter aftertaste that characterizes them.

3-Peel the potatoes and cut them into thin slices that you will fry in a pan with the boiling oil. Use a large skillet and high heat. Transfer the potatoes to a plate covered with absorbent paper to dry the excess oil. Fry the aubergines using the same process as the potatoes.

4-Melt the butter in a saucepan, pour in the milk and add salt and pepper. Pour the flour flush, stirring constantly with a spoon. It is important never to stop stirring to prevent lumps from forming. In the unfortunate event that the béchamel is lumpy, use an immersion blender to make it more fluid. Remove the béchamel from the stove and flavor it with a pinch of nutmeg.

5-Grease an ovenproof dish and start composing the moussaka. Form a first layer of potatoes, cover it with one of aubergines, add the meat and finish with the béchamel. The last layer must be of béchamel.

6-Dust the moussaka with a shower of parmesan cheese and bake for 45/50 minutes at 180 degrees. Let it cool for five minutes and serve on the table.

