

# Greek, quite simply

Chef from Cinnaminson eatery publishes cookbook that celebrates easy Grecian fare



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What can you get to eat at Hathaway's in Cinnaminson?

This is a Jersey diner. The better question is what *can't* you order.

Scan the long menu and see: shrimp salad, chicken salad, fruit salad. Burgers topped with traditional bacon, Canadian bacon, oregano and feta cheese. Broiled flounder, broiled swordfish, broiled lamb chops.

George Kyrtatas offers a simple description of the cuisine.

"Diner food is large portions, good quality food," says Kyrtatas, who, with his brother and his parents, own Hathaway's Diner/Restaurant on Route 130. "You can basically find anything on the menu, and if it's not on the menu, we can make it for you."

Now, in a new cookbook, the 25-year-old Kyrtatas is encouraging readers to whip up a few things for themselves.

*My Big Fat Greek Feast* features Greek diner staples, as well as specialties you might enjoy if you sat around the dining room table with your relatives, all of them Greek.

There are recipes for:

■ Fried smelts, a dish Kyrtatas refused to sample as a boy, and then adored when he finally tried the small fish.

■ Baklava, the it-hurts-your-teeth-sweet pastry.

■ Roasted vegetables, deliciously caramelized.

■ Baked orzo with lamb, a Greek favorite.

■ Baked chicken with oregano, a dish the chef promises will render your kitchen smelling "like heaven."

■ Avgolemono or lemon soup, an old country, traditional wedding soup.

The cookbook showcases most-



George Kyrtatas, author of 'My Big Fat Greek Feast,' holds a platter of assorted Greek foods at Hathaway's. Mussels in wine (top) is another dish available at the diner/restaurant.

Photos by MICHAEL SCHWARTZ/Courier-Post

ly simple recipes, emphasizing the ingredients familiar to Grecian cuisine — olives and olive oil, grape leaves, feta, lamb, yogurt, lemon, phyllo dough.

Kyrtatas learned to cook professionally at the Academy of Culinary Arts at Atlantic Cape Community College, but he began

mixing and stirring in the kitchen years earlier.

How early? He may have been 8 or 10; he's not sure. Anyway, it was sometime before his voice changed.

When he told his parents he

## IF YOU GO

■ Hathaway's Diner/Restaurant is at 10 N. Route 130, Cinnaminson. Call (856) 829-7458.

■ The cookbook 'My Big Fat Greek Feast' is available via [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) and [www.barnesandnoble.com](http://www.barnesandnoble.com)

# Kyrtatas/Local chef writes cookbook

Continued from Page 1

wanted to be a chef, they were initially unenthusiastic, knowing how hard the restaurant business can be on family life.

"They looked at me and shook their heads and said, 'If that's what you want . . .'" Kyrtatas recalls. "They wanted my brother and me to have an easier life than they did."

Now, Kyrtatas is at the restaurant six days a week, 10 to 14 hours a day. He tends to focus on the kitchen, with his brother, John, targeting the front of the house.

Kyrtatas seems to take the job in stride. His brown eyes sparkle. He smiles widely and often as he talks about the business that has been feeding hungry travelers on the Route 130 corridor for about two decades.

"Cooking is a passion to me," he says. "It's not a chore. It's not a job."

At home in Hainesport, he is a young father with a baby daughter. He met his wife years ago at the Greek Agora at St. Thomas Greek Orthodox

Church in Cherry Hill.

Fans of Agora may want to attend Hathaway's weekly Thursday Greek Night.

Greek Night — the regular menu is also available — offers such staples as moussaka, sautéed mussels, lamb chops in lemon and oregano, spanakopita and baklava.

Barbara Knoblauch of Delran and her husband have been participating in Greek Night weekly for months, and worked their way through the entire menu.

"I like Greek food, and his is just good, excellent," says Knoblauch, 62. "The spanakopita's got a lot of feta cheese in it, and it's not dry." Her favorite? The "Greek lasagna" — pastitsio.

Michael Kane of Delran has not attended Greek Night, but he's what you'd call a regular at the diner, visiting the restaurant several times a week.

He likes the omelettes and the lunch specials — like the chicken Caesar and Greek salads — and the soups, singling out the split pea for special mention.

"Their soups are phenomenal," he says. "Delicious."

Kane also offers praise for the panini sandwiches. As for the Reuben, that he says is "awesome."



These recipes are from the book.

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## Fried Mussels

1 pound mussels meat (mussels

removed from shells)  
2 cups seasoned breadcrumbs  
Vegetable oil for frying  
Greek salad dressing (recipe follows)

Dredge mussels in breadcrumbs.

Heat oil in a medium-size frying pan over high heat. Fry mussels until golden brown. Top with Greek salad dressing.

Serves 4 to 8 as an appetizer.  
Serves 1 to 2 as an entree.

Tip: Look for tightly closed shells that snap shut when tapped. Smaller mussels are more tender than larger ones.

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## Greek Salad Dressing

1 cup lemon juice  
1/4 cup Dijon mustard  
2 tablespoons minced garlic  
1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh dill  
1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh parsley  
1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh oregano  
2 tablespoons sugar  
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt  
2 1/2 cups olive oil

In a mixing bowl whisk together all ingredients except olive oil. After all ingredients are well mixed and there are no lumps, slowly whisk in the oil until emulsified. You can use an electric mixer for easier emulsification. An emulsion is the mixture of two or more incompatible liquids. Refrigerate and use as needed. Yield: About 4 cups.

Serves 4 to 8 as an appetizer.  
Serves 1 to 2 as an entree.

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