

# GC

GreekCircle®



### George Kyrtatas

"America's Little Greek Chef" is a pioneer of the booming Modern Greek Cuisine movement in the United States and publisher of *My Big Fat Greek Feast* (2004). George is known for his food styling and photography, his easy-to-follow, outstanding recipes and his outgoing personality. See what else he is up to at [www.littlegreekchef.com](http://www.littlegreekchef.com).

CONTRIBUTORS



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# Familiar recipes *with a modern flair*

*The Greek Civilization was the birthplace of many things, including the culinary arts. In fact, Greece has a culinary tradition that spans 4000 years. It was Archestratos in 330 B.C. who wrote the first cookbook in history. Greeks even created the Mediterranean Diet, unquestionably the healthiest way to eat. So let's not let America's rushed lifestyle keep us from preparing the food our families have been enjoying for generations. Here are some traditional Greek dishes that will remind anyone of "home," as well modern twists that showcase the Greek flavors in simple, easy-to-prepare recipes.*

Recipes and photography  
by Chef George Kyrtatas



# Drinks

## Traditional Ouzo

Serves 1

### Ingredients

- 1½ shots of ouzo
- Ice

### Directions

Place two-to-three ice cubes in a rocks glass. Pour ouzo over the ice and serve.

## *Raspberry Ouzo*

Serves 1

### Ingredients

- ½ shot of ouzo
- 1 ½ shots of raspberry vodka
- 5 fresh raspberries
- 3 ounces cranberry juice
- Ice

### Directions

Fill a shaker with ice. Add ouzo, raspberry vodka and cranberry juice. Shake. Pour into a glass and garnish with fresh raspberries.

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# Appetizers

## Traditional melitsanosalata

*an eggplant dip*

Serves 6-8

### Ingredients

- 2 aubergines (eggplants)
- 2 garlic gloves, finely minced
- ¼ cup tahini (sesami paste)
- ½ cup lemon juice
- 3 tablespoons parsely, finely chopped
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- Pita bread

### Directions

In a sauté pan, sauté onion with olive oil until soft and translucent. Set aside. Place eggplants under a broiler and turn often. Do this until outside is charred and eggplant is soft. (This takes about 20-to-30 minutes.) Scoop out meat from the eggplants and place in a food processor. Discard the skins. Purée eggplants and onions until a smooth purée is formed. Add remaining ingredients and mix.

Serve cold.

Cut pita bread into triangles and toast. Serve with the melitsanosalata.

## *Fiery melitsanosalata with feta & hot pepper*

Serves 6-8

Add ½ cup crumbled feta cheese, ½ teaspoon Tabasco sauce and 1 chopped Chipotle pepper to the traditional melitsanosalata recipe above. Add these ingredients at the end and don't over mix—just incorporate.

## *Pistachio-encrusted feta saganaki with watermelon*

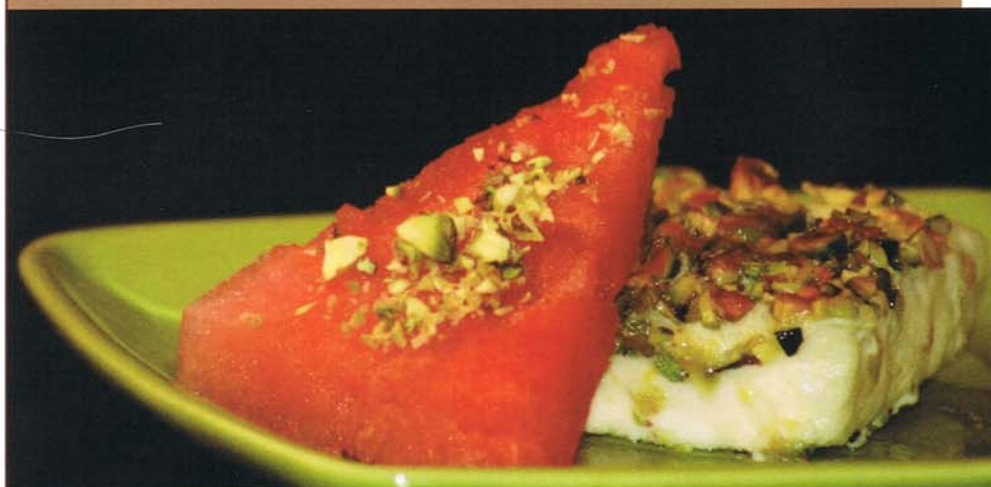
Serves 1-2

### Ingredients

- 1 slice hard feta, cut ¼ inch thick
- 1 egg
- 1 tablespoon water
- ½ cup chopped pistachios
- Olive oil for frying
- 1 watermelon ball, approx. 1 oz.

### Directions

Heat oil in a shallow frying pan. Break egg in a mixing bowl, add water and beat together. Dip feta cheese into the egg wash and then into the chopped pistachios. Cook for about one minute on each side or until golden brown. Make sure not to overcook the cheese because the coating will come off as it melts. Remove fried cheese and put on plate topped with watermelon ball. Serve immediately.



## Traditional saganaki

Serves: 1-2

### Ingredients

- 1 slice kasseri cheese cut ¼ inch thick
- 1 egg
- 1 tablespoon water
- ½ cup flour
- Olive oil for frying
- 1 oz. Metaxa (Greek Cognac)
- 1 lemon

### Directions

Heat oil in a shallow frying pan. Break egg in a mixing bowl, add water and beat together. Dip kasseri cheese into the egg wash, then into the flour. Lightly shake off extra flour and place into heated oil. Cook for about one minute on each side or until golden brown. Make sure not to overcook the cheese because the coating will come off as it melts. Remove fried cheese and add to plate. Pour Metaxa over the fried cheese and ignite. Extinguish flames with a squeeze of lemon over the cheese. Serve immediately.

# Entrees



## Traditional grilled lamb chops with oregano & lemon

Serves 4

### Ingredients

- 1 rack lamb chops (8 chops)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons dried oregano
- 2 tablespoons salt and pepper
- 2 lemons

### Directions

Brush lamb chops with olive oil and sprinkle with salt, pepper and oregano. Place lamb chops on grill and baste with olive oil. Cook the lamb to desired temperature. Squeeze lemons over the lamb chops and serve.

## *Grilled baby lamb chops topped with grilled halloumi, diced tomatoes, red onions & dill*

Serves 1-2

### Ingredients

- 1 lb. baby lamb chops (8 lamb chops)
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 8 slices halloumi cheese cut ¼ inch thick
- ¼ cup finely diced tomato
- 1 tablespoon finely diced red onion
- 1 teaspoon fresh chopped dill
- 1 lemon
- 1 teaspoon extra virgin olive oil

### Directions

Heat grill. Add salt and pepper (to taste) to lamb chops and place on grill. Cook for about two to two-and-a-half minutes on each side. Add salt and pepper (to taste) onto halloumi and place on grill. Cook for about one minute on each side. In a small bowl, mix tomatoes, red onions, dill, lemon juice, extra virgin olive oil and salt and pepper (to taste).

Place lamb chops on a serving plate. Top lamb with halloumi cheese and top cheese with tomato mixture, then serve.

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# Traditional *yemista*

*Greek stuffed tomatoes and peppers*

Serves 10-12

## Ingredients

- 4 large tomatoes, scooped out (save insides)
- 4 bell peppers, scooped out
- 2 eggplants, scooped out
- ½ cup olive oil
- 1 pound ground lamb (or other meat)
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 2 teaspoons tomato paste
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1 teaspoon each, salt and pepper
- 1 cup short-grain rice, washed
- ¼ cup parsley, finely chopped

## Directions

Chop up scooped out tomatoes. Sauté onion, ground lamb and garlic until onions are transparent and meat is browned. Add tomato paste, chopped tomatoes, sugar, salt, pepper, parsley and rice to meat mixture and cook for two-to-three minutes. Stuff vegetables and place in a casserole. Fill casserole half-way up with water and cover. Bake in a 350 degree oven until the rice is fully cooked.

## *Yemista with tofu*

Remove the ground lamb from the traditional recipe and replace with eight ounces of firm tofu chopped small. Before sautéing the tofu, coat with a little flour. Shake off extra flour and then sauté.



# Dessert

## Traditional baklava

Makes approx. 24 pieces

### Ingredients

- 2 packages phyllo dough
- 3 lbs. walnuts, chopped
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 lb. unsalted butter, melted
- 2 cups sweet Greek dessert syrup (see recipe below)

### Directions

In a bowl, mix walnuts, cinnamon, sugar and ¼ lb. melted butter and stir together. In a baking pan, layer eight sheets of phyllo dough, brushing each sheet with melted butter. Put a thin layer of mixture on top of the phyllo. Layer five sheets of phyllo over the nut mixture, brushing each sheet with melted butter. Repeat this step until nut mixture is used up and the top layer is phyllo dough. Brush the top with melted butter and cut the top into diamond shaped pieces. Bake at 350 degrees for about 90 minutes, or until phyllo is golden brown. Pour the cold dessert syrup over hot baklava until baklava is saturated. Allow to cool before serving.

## Sweet dessert syrup

### Ingredients

- 1 cup fine sugar
- ½ cup honey
- 1 ¾ cup water
- 2 cloves
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 1 orange rind
- 1 lemon rind

Simmer all ingredients over medium heat until mixture has been reduced to a syrup state. Let cool and strain.

## *Baklava parfait*

Serves 2

### Ingredients

- 1 piece baklava
- 1 cup Greek yogurt
- ¼ cup honey
- ½ cup fresh raspberries

### Directions

Chop baklava. Divide all ingredients into two sections. In a fluted glass add ⅓ of the baklava. Then add ⅓ of the fresh raspberries. Top with ⅓ of the Greek yogurt and ⅓ of the honey. Layer again until fluted glass is full. Repeat for second glass. Garnish with fresh raspberries. You can serve immediately or this can be made ahead and placed in the refrigerator until ready to serve.



## Traditional kourambiedes

Serves 30

### Ingredients

- ½ cup almonds, blanched and ground
- 1 cup unsalted butter, room temperature
- 1 egg
- 2 tablespoons powdered sugar
- 2 tablespoons vanilla extract
- ¼ teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- 2 cups flour
- ½ cup rose water
- 2 cups powdered sugar

### Directions

In an electric mixer, cream together butter and sugar. After they are creamed, slowly add egg and vanilla while continually mixing. Slowly add baking soda, baking powder, ground almonds and flour and blend just until the dough comes together. Remove from bowl and knead with your hands. Form cookies into desired shapes or into traditional crescent moon shapes. Bake in a 350 degree oven until cookies are a golden color. (Approximately 30 minutes.) Allow cookies to cool for ten minutes. Then sprinkle with rose water and dust with powdered sugar.

## *Spicy Greek holiday cookies*

For a modern twist to kourambiedes, add one teaspoon cayenne pepper and one large jalapeno pepper, finely chopped, into the recipe.