



# Greek Food

For Greek people, sharing food with others is important to their culture. Eating is not just a means of satisfying hunger but also a social experience. Meal times are often an event where family and friends are brought together.

The preparation of food and meals is an activity and a responsibility usually undertaken by the women of the household. Some recipes have been handed down from generation to generation within the family and most take great pride in their cooking. The quality of food and a meal can be an important topic of conversation where also recipes for meals are also exchanged.

The Greek diet is largely made up of the following:



- Bread: crusty and pita bread are most common
- Legumes and lentils
- Cheese: fetta made from goat's or sheep's milk and haloumi-grilled cheese
- Yoghurt: Made from goat's or sheep's milk and used as a base for dips
- Meat: poultry and fish-lamb chicken, pork fish and seafood (beef is still eaten but less often)
- Common vegetables and fruits: vine leave, eggplant, fennel, grapes, watermelon, figs, onions, olives, cucumber, spinach, potato, zucchini, and broad beans
- Common herbs and spices: oregano, celery, bay leaves, mint and parsley

Lunch and dinner are the main meals of the day and often contain three courses. Appetizers or *mezethes* are usually served before the main meal with a glass of wine and fresh bread or pita bread.

*Mezethes* include

- *Dolmades*: vine leaves stuffed with rice/vegetables and sometimes meat
- *Saganaki/Haloumi*: fried cheese
- *Tzaziki*: Dip made of Greek yoghurt, cucumber and garlic
- *Skordalia*: thick potato and garlic puree served with bread
- *Taramasalata (tarama)*: Made with fish roe- a sort of caviar that is light pink in colour
- *Fried Vegetables*: these include zucchini, eggplant, red capsicum and mushrooms
- *Spanikopita*: A popular spinach and fetta pie, usually made with freshly made pastry



Some common main meals include:

- *Souvlakia*: pieces of lamb or chicken marinated in olive oil and herbs grilled on a skewer usually served with Greek salad and lemon marinated potatoes
- *Gyros or Souvla*: Usually lamb which roasted on a spit and served with Greek Salad, pita bread and Tzaziki. This is a common dish that might be served at large family gatherings or special occasions.
- *Keftedes*: Fried or baked meatballs that are served with Greek salad and pita bread



- **Moussaka:** an eggplant and meat dish cooked in a casserole dish that resembles close to an Italian lasagne
- **Pastisio:** Like the moussaka, this dish is a variation of an Italian lasagne made with pasta and meat and cooked in a casserole dish

#### Desserts and Sweets

- **Baklava:** One of the more popular of Greek desserts, is made from fresh filo pastry layered with ground nuts—usually almonds, is baked then drizzled with honey syrup
- **Galatoboureko:** Another favourite amongst Greek people is a baked custard pie finely layers with filo pastry and drizzled with honey syrup
- **Loukoumades:** A Greek version of doughnut commonly referred to by non-greek people as honey puffs as they resemble small little balls and dipped in honey
- **Loukoumi:** A Greek version of Turkish delight made with Rose water and dusted with icing sugar. Almonds can also be added
- **Kourabiethes:** A popular Greek short bread biscuit which is dusted with icing sugar, traditionally made at Christmas but is eaten all year round
- **Vasilopita:** Traditionally a cake that is made for New Year's celebration. A coin is usually baked in the cake and whoever finds the coin is said to have good-luck for the year
- **Rizogolo:** A sweet rice custard pudding that is sometimes dusted with cinnamon powder.



#### How to give foods a Greek flavour:

As service providers, we understand that it is difficult to cater to individual dietary health requirements whilst observing cultural food requirements as well.

Which is why, we have developed these easy and simple steps to give each meal a little Greek flavour to satisfy the cultural needs of your Greek speaking clients.

- serve dips with warm and cold pita bread slices
- use pita bread for sandwiches instead of sliced bread and serve with salads, cold meats, tzaziki or tarama
- put fetta, red onion and olives into a salad to make it a 'Greek salad'
- serve meals with extra virgin olive oil and or lemon juice on the side for extra flavour to vegetables and salads.

#### Sources:

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