

Gemista or yemista (Greek Stuffed Tomatoes and Peppers) (makes 8 servings)



Ingredients:

8 peppers and/or tomatoes (you can also use eggplant or zucchini)
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 large onion (diced)
2 cloves garlic (chopped)
1 cup tomato sauce
1/2 cup herbs such as parsley, dill and mint (chopped)
1/4 cup long grain rice
1 pound ground beef
salt and pepper to taste
1 cup water
2 tablespoons olive oil

Directions:

1. Cut the tops off of the peppers and tomatoes and remove the seeds from the peppers and the insides of the tomatoes reserving them.
2. Heat the oil in a pan.
3. Add the onions and saute until tender, about 10-15 minutes.
4. Add the garlic and saute until fragrant, about a minute.
5. Add the ground beef and sauté for five minutes.
6. Add the reserved tomato guts, tomato sauce and simmer until it thickens and remove from the heat.
7. Mix the tomato sauce, herbs, rice, ground salt and pepper.
8. Stuff the mixture into the peppers and tomatoes and place them in a baking dish.
9. Pour the water and olive oil into the baking dish.
10. Bake in a preheated 375F or 180C oven until the liquid has evaporated and the peppers and tomatoes are roasted until slightly caramelized, about 1 hour.

Greek Tomato Salad with Feta Cheese & Olives



εκτύπωση

INGREDIENTS

6 tbs extra virgin olive oil

1 tbs chopped parsley or fresh chopped mint (or a pinch of oregano)

1/4 tsp sea salt

1/2 cucumber, cut into bite sized chunks or in slices

4 ripe tomatoes, cut into bite sized chunks

1 green bell pepper, seeded and roughly chopped

1 small red onion, thinly sliced

4 ounces feta cheese

6-8 Kalamata olives

DIRECTIONS

In a large bowl, add cucumbers, tomatoes, bell pepper, onion, parsley, cheese and olives; toss gently to combine. Add olive oil, sprinkle with salt. Serve immediately.

Greek cheese pie (Tyropita)



Tyri means "cheese" in Greek and this cheese pie is typical of a wide range of dishes that cover cheese with pastry. There are many recipes for this dish, the ingredients depending on the region or even the island. In Greece they are all generally called *pittes* or pies.

These pastries contain a mixture of feta cheese and *mezithra* (also transliterated *mizithra* and *myzithra*), a kind of Greek ricotta cheese, or *kefalotyri*, a hard grating cheese (you can replace kefalotyri with an Italian pecorino Romano).

Preparation Time: 45 minutes-1 hour

6 tablespoons (3/4 stick) unsalted butter

3 large eggs

6 ounces *mizithra* or *kefalotyri* cheese, crumbled or grated

14 ounces Greek feta cheese, crumbled

Pinch of freshly grated nutmeg

1/4 teaspoon black pepper

3/4 pound phyllo pastry, defrosted, if necessary

1. Melt the butter in a small saucepan and keep warm. In a large mixing bowl, beat the eggs, then stir in the *mezithra* cheese, feta, and nutmeg.

2. Unravel the phyllo pastry following the directions on the package. Keep the phyllo pastry sheets humidified with a wet kitchen towel draped over them as you work. With a pastry brush, butter the bottom of a 9 x 12-inch baking pan and layer in seven or eight sheets of phyllo pastry, brushing butter on each layer. Let the phyllo edges droop over the sides of the pan. Pour in the cheese mixture, making sure it is spread evenly over the pastry. Fold the edges of the phyllo over into the pan and butter them, too.

3. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F or 180 degrees C.

4. With the remaining 5 to 6 phyllo sheets, cover the pan, buttering each sheet and tucking the edges over and into the pan.

5. Brush top generously with remaining butter.

6. Score top of phyllo carefully with the point of a sharp knife, just cutting through pastry (only cut

Through the top layers of pastry, do not cut all the way to the bottom layer), into the size of pieces you will want to serve. Make sure you don't cut through pie.

7. Bake for 45 minutes to one hour or until golden brown. Make sure the bottom crust is nice and golden, if it isn't put it directly on floor of oven for about 10 minutes to brown faster. You don't want a soggy, uncooked bottom pastry. Remove from the oven, let it rest for 15 minutes, then cut into squares. Serve warm.

Variation:

You can make about 50 individual cheese pies by cutting the phyllo into 3 x 14-inch strips. Place a heaping teaspoon of the cheese mixture at one end and fold one corner over to the opposite edge of the phyllo to form a triangle. Continue in this way up the strip until you end up with a triangular pie. Continue the remaining filling and phyllo. Brush their top with melted butter. Bake them in a single layer on a buttered baking sheet until golden, about 25 minutes at 350 degrees F or 180 degrees C. These individual cheese triangles freeze well unbaked and make very nice appetizers for surprise guests.

By Marianthi Kleidara