

Classic Greek Dishes Made Simple

Spanakopita - Spinach Pie

Serves: 8

Preparation Time: 15 minutes with overnight thawing

Cooking Time: 45 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 8-ounce sheet puff pastry, thawed in refrigerator overnight
- 2 tablespoons flour for dusting, or as needed
- 1 large egg, optional

For filling

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 small yellow onion, diced
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 cup cottage cheese
- ¼ cup Parmesan cheese
- 2 large eggs
- ½ teaspoon salt
- Freshly ground pepper
- ⅛ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 2 cups frozen cut spinach, thawed in refrigerator overnight

Directions

For the filling

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F.
2. Sauté the onion and garlic in a skillet with olive oil over medium heat until soft (about 5 minutes).
3. Meanwhile, in a bowl, mix the cheeses, eggs, salt, pepper, and nutmeg together well.
4. Place thawed spinach in a colander or strainer and press out as much moisture as possible. Add it to cheese mixture.
5. Add the sautéed, softened garlic and onion. Mix well.

For the crust

1. Spread out the puff pastry over a dusted work surface, and roll into a 12-inch by 12-inch square.
2. Drape the rolled dough over a 9-inch pie pan.

For baking

1. Fill the pastry-lined pan evenly with the filling.
2. Fold the corners of the pastry back over top of the filling.
3. Brush a whisked egg over the top (optional).
4. Bake for 45 minutes.
5. Let set for 5 minutes before cutting.

Santorini Salad

Serves: 2

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Ingredients

- ½ cucumber, peeled, halved and sliced
- ½ red onion, thinly sliced
- ¾ green bell pepper, thinly sliced
- ½ cup Greek olives
- ½ cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon oregano
- 1 tablespoon dill, chopped
- Salt and pepper
- 1 slice of feta cheese
- 1 tablespoon capers

Directions

1. Toss all the ingredients together in a bowl EXCEPT the feta and capers.
2. Lay the feta cheese on top, sprinkle with capers and serve.

Pork Souvlaki Pita Sandwich

Serves: 6

Preparation Time: 10 minutes

Cooking Time: 12 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 recipe pork souvlaki
- 6 pita breads
- 2 cups shredded green leaf lettuce
- 1 small white onion, thinly sliced into half moons
- 3 large round tomatoes, medium dice
- ½ cup olive oil
- 3 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- Tzatziki or feta sauce or crumbled feta cheese (optional)

Directions

1. Preheat the grill to medium-high, and cook the pork until done (remove any skewers after grilling) or fry it in a lightly oiled skillet over medium-high heat.
2. In a medium bowl, toss the lettuce, onion, tomatoes, olive oil, vinegar, oregano, salt, and pepper together.
3. Spoon the meat into a piece of pita (grilled, if desired) and top with lettuce mixture and tzatziki, feta sauce, or crumbled feta cheese (optional). Serve.

Pork Souvlaki

Serves: 6

Preparation Time: 20 minutes plus 3 hours marinating time

Cooking Time: 12 minutes

Ingredients

- 2 pounds pork shoulder, cut into 1 ¼-inch cubes
- For marinade
- ½ cup lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 2 tablespoons fresh oregano, chopped
- 1 tablespoon fresh thyme, chopped
- 1 bay leaf, finely crumbled
- 6 cloves garlic, minced
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- Salt, to taste
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- Lemon wedges, for serving (optional)

Directions

1. Prepare at least 6 skewers. If they are made of wood, soak for 1 hour in water before use.
2. Combine the ingredients for the marinade (do not include lemon wedges) in a bowl or resealable bag. Add the pork cubes and seal, and marinate for at least 3 hours to overnight.
3. Skewer the meat and grill over medium-high heat, brushing occasionally with marinade until done (about 10 minutes). Be sure to allow the last application of marinade to cook before removing from the heat.
4. May be served with lemon wedges to be squeezed on the meat before eating.

Basic Greek Pita Bread

Serves: 8-16

Preparation Time: 25 minutes plus 1 hour proofing time

Cooking Time: 20 minutes

Ingredients

- 4 cups all-purpose flour + more, if needed
- 2 teaspoons fresh thyme, chopped (optional)
- 1 tablespoon olive oil + more for brushing

For yeast

- 1 envelope (7 g or 2 ¼ teaspoons) dry yeast
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- ½ cup warm (not hot) water

For salt

- 1 cup warm water
- 2 teaspoons salt

Directions

1. In a small bowl, stir together the yeast, sugar, and warm water. Let it stand for 10 minutes. Froth on the surface indicates that the yeast is activated.
2. In another small bowl or cup, dissolve the salt in the water.
3. In a third large bowl, add the flour and thyme, if using. Make a large well in the center and pour in the yeast mixture.
4. Mix in about 3 strokes with a wooden spoon or with the hook attachment of your mixer before adding the salt and water solution.
5. Mix for a minute or two until everything is combined. Add more flour, gradually, if the dough is too sticky, or gradually add water if it is too dry.
6. Knead into a smooth dough (about 15 minutes). The dough should retract when pinched.
7. Gradually knead the oil into the dough until well incorporated.
8. Brush a clean, dry bowl with oil and place the dough inside.
9. Brush the surface of the dough with a little more oil and cover the bowl with a towel or aluminum foil.
10. Let it sit in a warm place. Allow the dough to expand to double its size (about 40 minutes to 2 hours, depending on ambient or room temperature).
11. Punch the dough down, and knead quickly or press down (about 2 minutes) to deflate the dough.
12. Form the dough into a flat rectangle and divide it into 8-16 pieces (or more), depending on the desired size. Shape the pieces into balls.
13. Cover the balls and let them rest for 30 minutes.
14. Flatten the balls and use a rolling pin to shape them into circles about ¼-inch thick. Rest the rounds for about 5 minutes before cooking. You may also place them in a sealed container and refrigerate for later use.
15. While cooking, cover uncooked rounds of dough with towels to prevent them from drying out.
16. To cook the pitas, brush them with oil, and fry them in a pan over medium heat. When they puff up, flip them over (about 2 minutes on each side). Alternatively, you can bake them on oiled baking sheets at 350°F, for about 2-3 minutes.
17. May be eaten as is or with tzatziki, used to make wraps, or slit to make a pocket and filled with meat and/or vegetables.

Tzatziki - Yogurt and Cucumber Sauce

Yields about 2 cups

Preparation Time: 10 minutes

Ingredients

- ½ cucumber, peeled and seeded
- ¼-½ teaspoon kosher salt
- Zest of 1 lemon
- Juice of ½ a lemon
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed to a paste
- 1 ½ cups Greek yogurt
- ¼ cup fresh dill
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin

Directions

1. Grate the cucumber. Salt it and let it drain in a strainer for about 5 minutes.
2. Squeeze or press out as much water from the cucumber as possible (this important to get a good consistency).
3. Put all the sauce ingredients in a food processor or blender, and process until smooth.

Greek-Style Grilled Chicken

Serves: 4

Preparation Time: 10 minutes plus overnight marinating time

Cooking Time: 45 minutes

Ingredients

- ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 bunch fresh oregano, leaves picked
- 4 cloves garlic, finely minced
- Juice of 1 lemon
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 whole chicken, cut in pieces

Directions

1. Pat the chicken dry and place it in a resealable bag or shallow container for marinating.
2. Whisk together the rest of the ingredients and pour them over the chicken.
3. Seal and turn the bag over several times to distribute the marinade over the chicken pieces.
4. Refrigerate and let marinate overnight.
5. After marinating, preheat the oven to 350°F.
6. Heat a skillet over medium-high heat and place the chicken skin-side down.
7. Brown the chicken (about 10 minutes on each side).
8. Place the chicken on a baking tray and bake in oven until golden brown (about 25 minutes).
9. Remove from the oven and let rest for 10 minutes.
10. Serve.

Grilled Salmon

Serves: 4

Preparation Time: 20 minutes

Cooking Time: 20 minutes

Ingredients

- 4 salmon fillets (about 1 pound)

For marinade

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 tablespoon fresh dill, chopped
- 1 teaspoon grated lemon peel
- 3 tablespoons lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 2 cloves garlic, minced

Lemon-Dill Sauce

- 1 6-ounce container Greek yogurt, plain
- 1 tablespoon fresh dill, chopped
- ½ teaspoon grated lemon peel
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- ⅛ teaspoon pepper

Directions

1. Whisk the marinade ingredients together. Set aside.
2. In a baking dish, arrange the salmon skin-side up.
3. Pour the marinade over the salmon. Turn the fillets over, and then cover with plastic wrap.
4. Let the fish marinate in the refrigerator for 20 minutes.
5. Preheat the grill to medium heat.
6. Brush the grill rack with oil and place the salmon skin-side down on grill.
7. Cover and grill until the fish flakes easily (about 10-15 minutes).
8. While grilling the salmon, whisk together the lemon-dill sauce ingredients.
9. Serve grilled salmon with sauce.

Baked Lemon Potatoes

Serves: 2

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Cooking Time: 45-50 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 pound potatoes, cleaned, peeled, and sliced
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon Greek oregano
- 2 tablespoons yellow mustard
- Juice of 1 lemon
- ¼ cup chicken or vegetable broth

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. In a bowl, combine the olive oil, garlic, oregano, mustard, and lemon juice.
3. Add the potatoes and toss well to coat. Transfer the potatoes to a baking dish.
4. Very carefully, add the broth. Do not pour over the potatoes as this will wash off the seasonings.
5. Bake the potatoes for 20-25 minutes and then stir. The potatoes should start to soften by this point.
6. Continue baking for another 20-25 minutes or until potatoes are cooked through.
7. Serve with beefteki and tzatziki.

Galaktoboureko - Creamy Custard Pastry

Serves: 15

Preparation Time: 45 minutes

Cooking Time: 1 hour

Ingredients

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup butter, softened
- 12 sheets phyllo dough

For thickener

- 1 cup semolina flour
- 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons cornstarch
- 1 cup white sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt

For custard

- 6 cups whole milk
- 6 eggs
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup white sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

For syrup

- 1 cup water
- 1 cup white sugar

Directions

1. In a bowl, combine the thickener ingredients. Sift or use a whisk or wooden spoon to break up any lumps. Set aside.
2. In a saucepan, bring the milk to a low boil over medium heat.
3. Gradually add the thickener ingredients to the boiling milk, stirring continuously.
4. Continue stirring with a wooden spoon until thickened and bubbling.
5. Remove from heat and set aside.
6. Using an electric mixer, beat the eggs at high speed.
7. Add the $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of sugar and continue mixing until the mixture turns pale yellow (about 10 minutes)
8. Stir in the vanilla.
9. Fold the egg mixture into the hot milk mixture to make a custard. Cover partially and set it aside to cool.
10. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
11. Butter a 9x13 baking dish, and layer 7 sheets of phyllo into the pan, brushing each one with butter as you lay it in.
12. Pour the custard into the pan over the phyllo, and cover with the remaining 5 sheets of phyllo, brushing each sheet with butter as you lay it down.
13. Bake until the top crust is crisp and the custard filling has set (40 to 45 minutes).
14. To make a syrup, stir together 1 cup of sugar and 1 cup of water in a small saucepan. Bring it to a boil.
15. After taking the Galaktoboureko out of the oven, spoon the hot sugar syrup over the top, particularly the edges.
16. Allow it to cool completely before cutting. Keep refrigerated.

***These recipes and more are found in Lina Chang's *Greek Takeout Cookbook: Favorite Greek Takeout Recipes to Make at Home*. To get your own copy, click on the cover below or click [here](#).

