



## INTO THE SECRET PATHWAYS OF HEALTHY –TRADITIONAL COOKING

### THE PIE AFFAIR IN GREECE !

Undoubtedly the pie has been one of the most important features of the Greek "cuisine". The Greek pie usually consists of very thin leaves of dough. The leaves are covered with butter or oil, and are spread, half above and half under the filling. The filling is mainly comprised of vegetable, herbs, cheese and occasionally meat, mince or chicken. Vegetable and meat are mixed with cheese - "feta" mainly -, and eggs and at times onions, fresh herbs, spice, milk or milk-cream. The nutritive value of the pies is great. Therefore they not only complete "simple" food such as pulses, herbs, potatoes, rice etc, but they can also be "main" dishes by themselves.

The pie quite often, is the main course of the Greek menu, particularly in the country, where making of a certain pie is considered a kind of "ritual" in which the whole family takes part. It is the most skillful job-either mother's or grandmother's-to spread the leaves of pastry over which requires a lot of experience and skill, so as the leaves become quite thin and without any "holes".

While this is being done, the other, is working on the making of the filling, and the children help in the lay-out of the pie putting butter on the pastry. It takes a long time for the pie to be ready. «Opening" of the leaves is achieved, by means of a thin stick, called "the shaper" or by hand, provided quite of a skill and experience.



## TASTY EXPERIMENTS OF THE COMENIUS TEAM

Since we don't have the ability to practice cooking at school, we decided –six students and two teachers of the Comenius team- to gather in a house to make a cheese pie and a spinach pie.

We had asked our grandmothers and mothers how to prepare the pastry. We wanted the pies to be made as traditionally as possible. What we- the students- had to share, was very little knowledge but at the same time a lot of willingness and fun.

The process was adventurous and amusing, we did things that we didn't believe we could do and it was a great chance to leave the everyday routine. At the same time it was an original experience, because it is very unusual for us to cook together with our teachers.

The outcome was “tasty” and we will never forget our anxiety over what would be the result of our group effort and later our satisfaction when we tasted the pies. ....and some of us who had hastily declared that they didn't like spinach or cheese pie, finally changed their minds when they tasted the pies which they had made with their own hands!!!!



## SPINACH PIE

### **Ingredients**

**Filling** :1 kilo of fresh spinach or ½ kilo of frozen spinach

1/3 cup of oil

¾ cup of grated onion

8 fresh onions very thinly grated

2 eggs

½ cup of thinly cut dill

½ cup of thinly cut parsley

Salt and pepper

**Pastry** ½ kilo of pastry leaves (ready made or hand made\*)

1 cup of olive oil or corn oil

### **The making**

Clean, wash and sink spinach in hot water and drain afterwards. If it is frozen just squeeze and drain well. Put oil in a pot on very hot fire and add the onions in hot oil to get slightly fried. Then, add spinach, dill, parsley, salt and pepper, mix and remove the mixture from the very hot fire.

Spread in a backing tin half the pastry leaves, oiling them one by one. Put the mixture inside and spread over the other half of the pastry leaves, oiling them as well.

Cut the pie into pieces, smear with the remaining oil and put it in the oven at 200°C. Bake it for 1 hour. You can serve it either cold or warm. It will be tasty anyway!

THE "MASTERPIECE"



## \* HOW TO MAKE DOUGH INTO PASTRY LEAVES

### **Ingredients**

½ kilo of flour  
2 spoonfuls of oil  
1 spoonful of vinegar  
2 small spoonfuls of salt  
1 cup of warm water

**The making:** Put flour in a small basin and make a small “crater” in the middle. Pour oil, vinegar, salt and water, in. Mix the whole stuff. Give it the shape of a ball and knead the dough adding the necessary water till it gets smooth and soft. Divide it into smaller balls - depending on how many leaves of pastry you have in mind to use. Put them on a baking tin covered with flour, one next to the other and cover them with a wet towel for 15 minutes. Using the “shaper”, “open” the small balls, one by one, into very thin leaves on a floured surface, adding more flour quiet often, so that the “shaper” rolls smoothly.



## CHEESE PIE FROM MANI\*\*

**Ingredients:** ( For a medium sized baking tin).

**Filling :** ½ kilo of cheese: feta and anthotyro (fresh, soft, low fat cheese)

1 cup of milk

2 eggs

1 (soup) spoonful of olive oil  
dill, pepper and nutmeg

**Sheet (filo) of pastry :** 5 g of dry yeast  
1 cup of flour, salt  
1(soup) spoonful of olive oil

**The making :** Dissolve the yeast in a small quantity of warm water and add flour, previously salted. We pour oil and water for as long as it takes, till the yeast becomes rather tight. Wait for some minutes for the yeast “to rest”.

Then, we grate feta and anthotyro into small pieces. Milk is added afterwards, along with oil, finely cut dill, pepper, nut-meg, beaten eggs and mix.

-Spread open the thin sheet of pastry on the oily baking bin, pour the mixture inside and turn the four edges within, so as to cover part of the mixture.

-Bake in medium heated oven for 45 ‘ (approximately).

This cheese pie is traditionally made at Easter time, when milk production has been increased, therefore large quantities of fresh cheese are being produced.

**\*\*Mani** is a mostly mountainous, rather barren region in the south of Peloponnese (South Greece). Its economy has for lots of centuries been based in cultivating olive trees, and stock farming. Actually its oil is considered as top quality in the Mediterranean. Thus, its people’s nutrition is based on simply made (cooked) food, with quite simple ingredients, highly nutritious (olives, oil, bread, cheese, milk, eggs and small quantities (portions) of meat), strictly following the rules of Mediterranean diet.

ANOTHER WORK OF COOKING 'ART'





## THE COOKING TEAM.



Wonder, who will try first !!  
The first 'brave' ones proceed in tasting.



Finally everyone tasted it. The outcome was delicious.



Being proud afterwards.



