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IN THE LOOP



Monthly newsletter for TRACEUS, co-funded by Erasmus+ programme of the EU



Food and history in Cyprus

Over the years, several conquerors have passed by Cyprus, significantly influencing Cypriot cuisine. This is reflected in the diversity of its dishes, as each conqueror left their mark. Today Cypriot cooking involves an astonishing combination of dishes originating from the Middle East, the Mediterranean, and Southern Europe. These dishes have influenced and shape Cyprus' cuisine.....

"Halloumi" is considered the national cheese of Cyprus. The way it is made is probably unique in the World.

Halloumi originated from the Byzantine era and since then it has been spread throughout the Middle East.



OVERVIEW

- Christmas Countdown
- Project update
- Spotlight on Cypriot food

The Christmas season approaches and this signals the revival of many happy traditions, from Christmas markets to tree decorating to family dinners. Of course, Christmas wouldn't be the same without delicious food!!!

In Traceus, we are in the final stage of developing the platform that will host the videos with the excellent and tasty recipes from our co-creators. We hope to start training our co-creators by the end of February as there has been a slight delay due to the change of plans.

The biggest day of the year is ahead and the countdown has begun. Stay tuned on our social media for the Christmas special!!!!!!

Looking back in history the production of "Halloumi" cheese in rural homes was significant to the residents not only to cover their nutritional needs, but as a way of practicing social solidarity and mutual assistance among families and an opportunity for socialization and connection.

In the past, different cooking methods were used to preserve the meat until the introduction of refrigerators. For example, for the production of "tsamarella", the goat meat used was salted and exposed to the sun for several days to dry. Then, it was placed in specially manufactured wooden cabinets, covered with a net, to be protected from various insects and ventilated.

There is an interesting story behind the origin of the famous food "often kleftiko". "Often" originates from an ancient Greek word, which means baked, and "Kleftiko" signifies that something is stolen. The origins of "often kleftiko" can be traced back 500 years ago (during the Ottoman Empire Period) when poor farmers fled the government because they could not pay their taxes or debts. Having been hunted in the mountains, they had to find ways to survive such as sneaking down at night and stealing goats from the herds. They were digging a pit in the ground, building a fire and then covering the hole with earth and branches.



Mrs. Emilia Vrasida is a retired 76 years old woman who lives in a rural area. Due to the pandemic was enforced to stay home and be deprived of her social life. Having grown up in a family farm in Cyprus Mrs. Emilia has a personal interest in agricultural products. Lot of her stories about food are connected with joyful memories of family life. She started cooking when she was 15 years old in neighborhood gatherings organized by the only professional cook in the village where she was living. Her passion for cooking was undiminished and continued throughout her life even though the circumstances of her life were sometimes very difficult and demanding. By the age of 41 she attended more than 34 cooking classes to improve her skills. In the past Mrs. Emilia was cooking for big family gatherings, involving 20-25 people. However, since her husband passed away, she somehow lost her interest. She mainly enjoys cooking traditional Cyprus dishes with her favorite ones being "Pastitsio", "koupepia", "souvlakia", "often kleftiko" and "traditional sausages".

"OFTON KLEFTIKO"

Method

Ingredients

- 1 leg of lamb or steaks
- 4 tablespoons of olive oil
- 1 tablespoon of fresh rosemary, chopped
- 2 teaspoons of salt
- ½ teaspoon of black pepper
- 5-6 large potatoes
- 3 bay leaves
- 500ml vegetable stock
- 3 cloves of garlic-crushed
- 3 big onions - optionally

- Create a mixture using the olive oil, rosemary, garlic, salt, and black pepper.
- Rub the mixture into the leg of lamb and allow to rest covered in the refrigerator overnight.
- Dice the potatoes and onion and place along with the lamb and the marinade into a large slow cooker. Add the bay leaves and the stock.
- Cook on low-medium heat for at least 8 hours.
- Remove bay leaves. Serve with feta or plain yogurt.

