

VOLUME 9 | OCTOBER 2021

IN THE LOOP



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



Food and history in Bulgaria

The traditional Bulgarian cuisine is rich and diverse like the history of the country. It combines traditions of the many peoples who have crossed its lands – Greeks, Thracians, Romans, proto-Bulgarians, Slavs, Turks...

Bread has always been a staple food, as illustrated by proverbs "No one is bigger than bread". Banitsa is very popular. Made from home-made or prefabricated filo pastry, it's stuffed with cheese, eggs and yoghurt, or vegetables, minced meat, mushrooms, pumpkin, fruits. Every family has its own recipe.

From the proto-Bulgarians comes the wide use of meat - pork, chicken, veal, lamb, not so much fish. Cooking is simple and healthy – slow roasting on a skewer, plate, tile, ceramic pot, boiled or stewed.



OVERVIEW

- Halloween
- Project update
- Spotlight Bulgarian food

The end of October will see some old traditions come to life with Halloween, which originated in Ireland as Samhain, a celebration of the end of the harvest season and the beginning of the darker season. It was said that that was the night when the veil between our world and the Otherworld thinned; now, children dress up and everyone eats brack.

In Traceus, our partners from Cyprus are hard at work creating our online platform for training. Training will start in January, but before then, our new participants will take part in 2 meetings to talk about the Traceus and start laying foundations for their own projects.

Keep an eye on your emails, each partner will contact people in their country to take part in our big food and video adventure!

Cheese and yoghurt are widely popular. The great taste and healthy features of local yogurt are due to *Lactobacillus Bulgaricus*, which exists only in Bulgaria. It's believed that regular use of yoghurt is key for a long life. It is used in many forms – ayrian, tarator, with honey, jam or nuts.

Various vegetables are grown throughout the seasons. Shopska salad is made of tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, onion, parsley and grated white cheese.

Spices and herbs hold a special place - savory, thyme, mint, hogweed, laurel-leaves, basil, rosemary and many more. Even a feast is dedicated to their healing properties - Enyovden (Midsummer Day).

During the centuries of Ottoman ruling, the kitchen of the Middle East left its imprint on the national cuisine. Dishes like mousaka, gyuvech, kebab, sarmi, baklava, kadaif, etc. are still widely present today. Wine tradition comes from the ancient Thracians. Beside popular types - Merlot, Cabernet, Sauvignon, Chardonnay etc. there are unique local wines like ruby red Mavrud. Rakia is strong alcohol drink, made of grape, plum or apricot. It is drunk with salad as a starter. Wine - with the main course.



Lilia Ivanova is 60-year-old accountant from Sofia. She has completed an amateur course in travel photography as a hobby. The family loves travel, new tastes. Everyone cooks - she, her husband, daughter and son. They often watch master chefs on television, experiment with new recipes. Lilia is a member of 2 FB groups, where she publishes recipes, tries interesting ideas, gives feedback, exchanges advice on spices, techniques, dishes. In a weekly game, a dish from a favorite movie is *Ratatouille* first, followed by an Italian pizza from "Eat, Pray and Love".

When Covid restricted travel, Zoom helped. The family built an online culinary bridge Sofia-Brussels, where her daughter lives. They cook favorite dishes in front of the screen. In a traditional Flemish dish, the main character is chicory, which is difficult to find in Sofia. They succeed with the help of FB friends. Lilia has a favorite 80s cookbook "*What to cook quickly?*" and a collection of recipes from friends, recorded or cut from magazines. When she cooks something for the first time, she prefers to have precise measures. She loves food that is made quickly and is delicious and spectacular. Lilia joined the project with enthusiasm. She reads the newsletters for partners and participants from other countries, their cuisine and recipes

Lilia's Banitsa with Leek

(typical for late autumn and winter when fresh leek is available)

INGREDIENTS

- 1 package of filo pastry (usually 12-14 sheets)
- 2-3 stalks of leek
- 200 gr. white cheese
- 2 eggs
- 3-4 tbsp. yogurt
- 1 tbsp. flour
- a few tbsp. oil (to stew leeks and spread on the filo)
- butter

METHOD

- Clean and cut the leek into circles.
- Heat some of the oil in a frying pan, add the chopped leeks, a little water, salt to taste. Stew until soft – no need to be completely ready, because baking is coming. Allow the mixture to cool.
- Add the shredded cheese, the beaten eggs, the yogurt and the flour and stir.
- Prepare the pan - put baking paper so that it is raised on the side.
- Sprinkle a filo lightly with oil and at one narrow end put 2-3 spoons of the filling, on top put a 2nd filo, then roll it up. Arrange them in the pan in a circle or next to each other and repeat the same with the rest of the filo. If there is stuffing left - add a little water and melted butter and spread on top. If there is no stuffing left - spread only butter.
- Bake in a preheated 180-degree oven until the banitsa turns golden in color.
- Remove from the oven and cover with a cotton kitchen towel to cool.

