

THE FEARLESS OLIVE
BY REEMA ISLAM



The Exotic Cretan Menu on Eid



As I sit writing this article on the Greek island of Crete, the song of the cicadas serenades me and I think of Dhaka and the festival of sacrifice just around the corner. Goat meat is high on every Cretan menu so I take this opportunity to share some Greek meat dishes and one from across the border in Turkey. Eat healthy and may your bellies be filled with good food and your hearts with the best wishes of loves ones.

Eid Mubarak!

LAMB WITH YOGHURT (ARNÁKI ME YIAÚRTI)

The idea is to cook meat with a simplicity that lets the flavours of the meat come through.

Ingredients

1 kg leg of lamb (boned)
1 cup olive oil, 2 medium sized red onions
1/2 tsp oregano, 1/2 tsp thyme
1/2 cup chopped mint
3-4 cloves large garlic
Salt and pepper to taste
About 1kg Greek yoghurt (or buy any good quality yoghurt and strain it in a sieving cloth overnight)

3 eggs

Method

Cut the lamb into bite sized pieces and place them in a roasting dish. Mix this with the olive oil, thyme, oregano, finely chopped garlic and chopped onion. Place this mix in the fridge to marinate for about 1.5 hours. Take it out and make sure it is not too cold while placing in oven (160 C) for 35-40 min. Keep checking the meat, and once cooked, remove to cool and prepare yoghurt mix. In a bowl, mix the yoghurt, mint, salt, pepper and eggs until well blended. Place the meat in an oven dish that is almost completely covered by the meat and pour the yoghurt mixture over it, ensuring all sides are filled. Bake in pre-heated oven (180 C, for 10 mins) for another 20 min or until the yoghurt mix has browned.

Serving:

Serve with a bean salad or with some bread.

TURKISH FRIED LIVER

The Turks and Greeks share many things, including a mixed cuisine but yet again, this simple dish is consumed more like a meze so go ahead and use it as a side to your main meat dishes.

Ingredients

1/2 kg lamb liver
Flour to dust the liver in
Salt to taste
For the salad -
2 large red onions
Paprika and cumin powder to sprinkle;
Lemons to squeeze on top, or some red vinegar
Some chopped coriander
Olive oil for frying (you may use ghee)
Aubergines -
1 Aubergine whole roast
A pinch of oregano

Method

Remove the thin layer of membrane from the liver carefully. Cut it into bite sized pieces then dip it into the flour and gently place them in batches, to fry in the olive oil/ghee. Place each batch on a napkin to soak up the excess oil. Thinly slice the onions and you may marinate them in red vinegar for 2-3 hours or opt to go for lemon juice. On the other hand prepare the aubergines by peeling and de-seeding them then mash them up with some salt, coriander, pinch of lemon juice and oregano.

Serving

In an oval dish place the liver in the middle, sprinkle it with some salt, then surround it with the aubergine mix. The last surrounding border of the oval dish should be the sliced onions. Sprinkle paprika, salt, and cumin powder on the onions only. The idea is to take a piece of liver, dip it into the aubergine mix and take a mouthful of the sour onions. In case you want to sit close to someone you are trying to impress, remember that lemon/vinegar takes away the onion's strong odour!

Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed

Food styling and preparation: RBR



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