

Stuffed Tomatoes with Feta Cheese/ *Domates me Feta*

For this recipe, it is important to use the reddest, ripest tomatoes available. If your tomatoes aren't quite ripe (pinkish-orange instead of bright red), place them in a brown paper bag and keep in a cupboard or other dark place for a day or two to ripen.

- 4 medium-sized ripe tomatoes
- 2 tbsp. finely chopped scallions
- 2 tbsp. finely chopped fresh parsley
- $\frac{1}{2}$ c. (about 3 oz.) finely crumbled feta cheese
- $\frac{1}{4}$ c. bread crumbs
- 3 tbsp. olive oil

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Carefully cut tops off tomatoes. Using a spoon, carefully scoop out pulp and seeds. Save pulp and discard seeds.
3. Coarsely chop the tomato pulp.
4. In a small bowl, combine tomato pulp with scallions, parsley, feta cheese, bread crumbs, and olive oil.
5. Spoon mixture into the hollowed-out tomatoes. Place tomatoes right side up in an 8×8-inch baking pan and bake 15 minutes.
6. Serve stuffed tomatoes steaming hot.

Preparation time: 30 minutes
Cooking time: 15 minutes
Serves 4

Chicken Souvlaki With Tzatziki Sauce and Greek Salad Recipe

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MAKES: 6 servings PREP TIME: 20 mins COOK TIME: 10 mins

For the Chicken:

5 tablespoons fresh juice from about 3 lemons
4 tablespoons red wine vinegar
4 tablespoons olive oil
2 tablespoons fresh oregano leaves, chopped
2 teaspoons kosher salt
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
2 pounds skinless boneless chicken breast, trimmed of excess fat and cut into 1-inch pieces
4 medium cloves garlic, grated (about 4 teaspoons)

For the Tzatziki Sauce:

1 medium cucumber, peeled, seeded, cut into 1/4-inch cubes (see note)
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 medium clove garlic, grated (about 1 teaspoon)
1 cup greek yogurt (see note)
1 tablespoon fresh dill, chopped

For the Salad:

2 tablespoons olive oil
6 small tomatoes, cut into wedges
2 small red onions, sliced thin
1 medium cucumber, seeded and sliced into thin half moons
3/4 cups pitted kalamata olives
6 ounces crumbled feta
1/4 cup parsley, chopped
6 pitas

DIRECTIONS

1. In a medium bowl, whisk lemon juice, vinegar, olive oil, oregano, salt, and black pepper. Place chicken cubes in a separate medium bowl. Mix in grated garlic and 7 tablespoons of dressing. Toss chicken to coat evenly, cover, and refrigerate to marinate for about 2 hours, tossing occasionally. Set remaining dressing aside for salad.

2. While the chicken marinates, make the tzatziki sauce: Place cubed cucumbers in a strainer set over a bowl. Toss with 1/2 teaspoon salt and let sit to drain, about 30 minutes. Gently pat cucumbers dry with paper towel, place in small bowl, and mix with garlic, yogurt, and dill. Season to taste with salt. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

3. Skewer chicken pieces on 8 to 12 skewers. Discard used marinade. Heat grill or grill pan over medium-high heat. Place chicken skewers on grill (or cook in batches on grill pan) until well browned and internal temperature registers 155°F (68°C) on an instant-read thermometer, turning evenly to cook on all sides, about 5 minutes total. (Adjust temperature of grill if necessary.) Remove chicken to a serving platter and let rest 3 minutes. Meanwhile, briefly grill pitas and keep warm.

4. Just before serving, prepare the salad: Whisk olive oil into reserved chicken marinade. Add tomatoes, onions, cucumber, olives, feta, and parsley. Season with salt and pepper.

5. Serve skewers with salad, pita, and tzatziki sauce. Remove chicken from skewers to stuff into pitas with sauce and salad.

Pastitsio (Greek beef pasta bake)

By **Nagi Maehashi**

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Ingredients

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MEAT SAUCE:

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 3 garlic cloves , *finely minced*
- 2 red onions , *finely chopped (sub yellow or brown onions)*
- 1 kg / 2 lb beef mince (ground beef)
- 3/4 cup red wine , *dry (Note 1)*
- 800g / 28 oz canned crushed tomato
- 2 beef bouillon cubes , *crumbled (stock cubes)*
- 2 tbsp tomato paste
- 1 tsp white sugar
- 1 bay leaf
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon powder
- 1 cinnamon stick *(or extra 1/2 tsp cinnamon powder)*
- 1/4 tsp ground cloves
- 3/4 tsp salt
- 1 tsp black pepper

GREEK BECHAMEL:

- 100g / 7 tbsp butter , *unsalted*
- 3/4 cup flour , *plain/all purpose*
- 1 litre / 4 cups milk , *whole/full fat best but low fat ok*
- 1/8 tsp nutmeg , *preferably freshly grated*
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 100g / 3 oz Kefalotyri Greek cheese (sub Parmesan or Romano) , *finely shredded (Note 2)*
- 2 egg yolks *(egg whites are used in the pasta)*

PASTA:

- 400g / 14 oz Pastitsio No. 2 pasta / Greek bucatini *(sub small ziti, penne or normal bucatini, Note 3)*
- 120g / 4 oz feta , *crumbled*
- 2 egg whites *(yolks used in Béchamel)*

TOPPING:

- 75g / 3 oz Kefalotyri Greek cheese (sub parmesan or Romano) , *finely grated (Note 2)*

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Instructions

MEAT SAUCE:

1. Heat in a large pot over high heat. Add garlic and onion, cook for 2 – 3 minutes until onion is softened. Add beef and cook, breaking it up as you go, until it changes from red to brown.
2. Add wine and cook until the wine has mostly evaporated – about 3 minutes.
3. Add remaining Meat Sauce ingredients. Stir well, bring to simmer, then reduce heat to medium / medium low so it's simmering gently. Cook for 45 min to 1 hour until liquid is mostly gone, stirring every now and then. It should be a thick mixture with little liquid, not saucy like Spaghetti Bolognese (Note 4).
4. Remove from stove and cool. Preferably to room temperature, otherwise for at least 30 minutes before assembling (lid off).

GREEK BÉCHAMEL (NOTE 5):

1. Melt butter in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add flour and stir for 1 minute.
2. While stirring, slowly pour half the milk in. It should turn into a wet paste. Then again, while stirring, pour in remaining milk – the paste should easily dissolve so it's lump-free. If not, just whisk vigorously.
3. Cook, stirring so the base doesn't catch, for 5 minutes or until thick enough so it coats the back of a wooden spoon thickly and you can draw a path across it with your finger.
4. Remove from stove. Stir in nutmeg, cheese and salt.
5. Leave to cool for 5 minutes. Then whisk in egg yolks quickly. Place lid on and set aside. If sauce cools and gets too thick to pour, just reheat on a low stove until pourable.

PASTA (NOTE 6):

1. When you're ready to assemble, cook the pasta per packet instructions, minus 1 minute.
2. Drain, then return to the pot. Leave to cool for 3 minutes, then stir through egg whites. Gently stir through crumbled feta.

ASSEMBLE AND BAKE:

1. Preheat oven to 180°C/350°F (all oven types).
 2. Place pasta in a baking dish (33 x 22 x 7 cm / 9 x 13 x 2.75"), arranging them so they are all going in the same direction as best you can (for visual effect when sliced). Make the surface as level as you can.
 3. Top with Meat Sauce, then smooth the surface.
 4. Pour over Béchamel Sauce, then sprinkle over the cheese.
 5. Bake 30 min or until crust turns golden.
 6. Cool for at least 10 minutes so you can cut neat slices with the layers neatly visible.
- Serve!

Recipe Notes:

1. **Red wine** – any dry red wine is fine here. If you can't consume alcohol, substitute with liquid beef or chicken stock/broth.
2. **Kefalotyri Greek cheese** – a Greek sheep or goat's milk cheese, similar to Parmesan but not as salty. Substitute with Parmesan or Romano cheese.
3. **Pasta for Pastitsio** – the traditional pasta is a thick tubular pasta called "Pastitsio No 2 pasta", sometimes also referred to as Greek bucatini. It is thicker than Italian bucatini (tubular

pasta). See in post for close-up photos. Find it at European/Greek delis. Substitute with small penne or ziti, or normal Italian bucatini for a similar look. Otherwise, any pasta is fine!

4. Thickness of meat sauce – you want it very thick with barely any sauce in order to achieve the neat layers that you see pictured in post. If it's too loose, it will run down into the pasta and discolour it, as well as making the pasta slippery so it doesn't hold together when you slice it. But even if your slices don't cut as neatly as pictured, it doesn't affect flavour!

5. Greek Béchamel – thicker than the cheese sauce used to top Italian lasagna both in consistency and thickness of the layer. The egg yolks help it set more when baked so it doesn't ooze when you cut a slice.

6. Tossing pasta with egg whites – the purpose of the egg whites is to help the pasta set better so you can cut neat slices with distinct layers. Do this just before assembling so the egg whites don't dry out before baking.

7. Storage and make ahead – cooked Pastitsio keeps perfectly in the fridge for 4 to 5 days, or freezer for 3 months (thaw then reheat covered in oven).

8. Nutrition per serving, assuming 8 (big!) servings.

NUTRITION INFORMATION:

Calories:597cal (30%)**Carbohydrates:**48g (16%)**Protein:**35g (70%)**Fat:**28g (43%)**Saturated**

Fat:13g (81%)**Trans**

Fat:1g**Cholesterol:**137mg (46%)**Sodium:**1062mg (46%)**Potassium:**786mg (22%)**Fiber:**4g (17

%)Sugar:7g (8%)**Vitamin A:**651IU (13%)**Vitamin**

C:10mg (12%)**Calcium:**250mg (25%)**Iron:**5mg (28%)

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Baklava by Natasha Kravchuk

16 oz phyllo dough, thawed by package instructions
1 1/4 cups unsalted butter, 10 oz or 2 1/2 sticks, melted
1 lb walnuts, finely chopped, about 4 1/4 cups unprocessed
1 tsp ground cinnamon
1 cup granulated sugar
2 Tbsp lemon juice, juice of 1/2 lemon
3/4 cup water
1/2 cup honey

Thaw phyllo dough by package instructions (this is best done overnight in the fridge, then place it on the counter for 1 hr before starting your recipe to bring it to room temperature).

Trim phyllo dough to fit your baking dish. My phyllo package had 2 rolls with a total of 40 sheets that measured 9x14, so I had to trim them slightly. You can trim one stack at a time, then cover with a damp towel to keep from drying out.

Grease – Butter the bottom and sides of a 13x9 non-stick baking pan. Line the bottom with parchment if desired to protect the pan when cutting later.

Make the honey syrup – In a medium saucepan, combine 1 cup sugar, 1/2 cup honey, 2 Tbsp lemon juice, and 3/4 cup water. Bring to a boil over medium/high heat, stirring until sugar is dissolved, then reduce the heat to medium/low and boil an additional 4 min without stirring. Remove from heat and let the syrup cool while preparing baklava.

Chop walnuts – Pulse walnuts 10 times in a food processor until coarsely ground/ finely chopped. In a medium bowl, stir together: 4 cups finely chopped walnuts and 1 tsp cinnamon.

Assemble the Baklava

10 layers – Preheat the oven to 325°F. Place 10 phyllo sheets into a baking pan one at a time, brushing each sheet with butter once it's in the pan before adding the next (i.e., place phyllo sheet into pan, brush the top with butter, place next phyllo sheet in pan, butter the top, etc.). Keep the remaining phyllo covered with a damp towel at all times. Spread about 1/5 of the nut mixture (about 3/4 cup) over the phyllo dough.

5 layers – Add 5 buttered sheets of phyllo, then another layer of nuts. Repeat four times with the remaining layers of phyllo, butter and nuts. Finish off with 10 layers of buttered phyllo sheets. Brush the very top with butter.

Cut pastry into 1 1/2" wide strips, then cut diagonally to form diamond shapes. **Bake** at 325°F for 1 hour and 15 min or until tops are golden brown.

Add syrup – Remove from oven and immediately spoon cooled syrup evenly over the hot baklava (you'll hear it sizzle). This will ensure that it stays crisp rather than soggy. Let baklava cool and rest uncovered at room temperature 4-6 hours or overnight for the syrup to penetrate and soften the layers. Garnish with chocolate and nuts if desired.