KALI OREXI

sharing our Greek culinary heritage

Melpomeni Matthews shares her Yiayia Perdikoula's Kreatopita (Meat Pie)

A recipe from Kefalonia, Greece

"I am so excited to share my Yiayia Perdikoula's Kreatopita with you as part of the Meri Month of May! This is a meat-based pita made from my meri (my region of Greece) and is a much-loved meal in my family. Kreatopita is made all over Kefalonia and each region has its own unique version. Yiayia Perdikoula's Kreatopita is made with homemade fillo and uses a diced lamb and vegetable filling. The ingredients are prepared and then cooked inside the fillo using the additional flavour of lamb stock made from the lamb bones. Please make it and enjoy it!" *Melpomeni*

For the dough you will need...

300ml lukewarm water
¼ cup extra virgin olive oil (EVOO)
1 tablespoon vinegar
1 pinch salt
Plain flour
¼ cup melted butter (to be used to assemble the pie)

For the filling you will need...

2kg leg lamb diced into 1cm cubes (fat and sinew removed)
1 cup red wine
¼ cup olive oil
1 large carrot, diced
2 medium onions, diced
3 medium potatoes, diced
1 cup pumpkin, diced
4 cloves garlic, finely diced
1 whole red chilli (optional)
500ml tomato passata
1 small bunch parsley, finely chopped
1 cup medium grain rice
1 cup stock (preferably stock made using the lamb leg bone, optional)
1 cup EVOO
2 eggs, beaten
Salt and pepper to season

Preparing the dough

- Prepare your fillo dough by beginning with the wet ingredients. Stir and slowly add enough flour until you have a soft, pliable dough, knead for 10 minutes and set aside to rest at room temperature around 30 minutes

Preparing the filling

- If you have time to prepare your own stock, use the lamb bones removed from the lamb leg with a chopped onion, a carrot and the stalks from a bunch of parsley. Season with salt and pepper and simmer for a couple of hours.
- Trim off any lamb fat and remove any sinew, dice the lamb into 1-2cm cubes. In a large bowl add the lamb, wine and ¼ cup of EVOO, mix and set aside
- Prepare your vegetables and add them to the lamb
- Add passata, parsley, rice, oil, eggs and stock
- Season the mixture well with salt and pepper and mix to combine

Preparing the Kreatopita

- Baste a large, deep, round, metal baking pan with EVOO
- Roll out 2/3 of the dough so that it is bigger than the base of the pan; the fillo should overhang the pan and it must not have any holes
- Prepare you pie top by rolling out the remaining dough into a thin round fillo, the thinner the better
- Brush the entire piece with melted butter
- Using a knife cute fillo sheet to resemble a sun; beginning with a circle in the centre and then straight lines from this circle to the outer edge of your fillo.
- Fold over the "sunrays" onto the centre circle, to create the fillo layers, then set aside
- Carefully place the pie filling into the pan
- Roll out your top-fillo again into a circle big enough to just overhang over the pan
- Place it on top of the pan
- Trim both the upper and lower fillo sheets, leaving enough to press the two fillo layers together and twist them to form a braid
- Brush with any remaining butter
- Bake at 180°C fan-forced for approximately 1.5 hours – loosely cover with foil if the top of the pita browns too quickly

Serving the Kreatopita

- Allow the kreatopita to cool for 20-30 minutes before serving with a nice garden salad
- Kali Orexi!

Key points

- Use one large rectangular pan – approximately 34L x 38W x 7.5D – or divide all the quantities and processes and make two round pites in baking pans 25cm in diameter and 5cm in depth
- You can freeze the pites uncooked and then defrost them overnight in the fridge before popping them in the oven to bake