



When Maria Loi chooses ingredients and creates recipes, she considers the ancient grains and flavors that continue to flourish millenniums later. This is an area of expertise; her book on ancient Greek dining was the only official cookbook of the Athens 2004 Olympic Games. These ingredients, as respected as the great Greek minds of Plato, Socrates and Hippocrates, are the pillars of a healthy, tasty Mediterranean diet: olive oil, Greek yogurt, grains, beans and freshly picked greens. Maria Loi's food is about truth in flavor. Hers is a philosophy derived from the warm, scented Greek air and the sounds of loved ones around the table.

### Artichokes Greek Style

#### *What We Need:*

10 artichokes  
1 lemon  
1 onion, finely chopped (in a food processor or by hand)  
2 garlic cloves crushed  
1.5 cup green peas  
8 red bliss potatoes, cut into 1/4's  
8 carrots, cut into 1/2" rounds  
1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil  
2 bay leaves  
2 lemons, juiced  
3 cups of water  
2 tablespoons fresh dill, finely chopped  
Salt and pepper to taste  
1 tablespoon corn starch  
1/2 cup of water

#### *What We Do:*

The first thing that needs to be done is preparing the artichokes – to do so, remove their hard outer leaves by pulling them down towards the stem. When you reach the softer inner leaves, cut the hard top off them and remove the 'hairy' innards with a teaspoon. Cut the stem off, leaving 1/2" at the bottom, and slice the artichokes in half. Place them in a bowl filled with water and squeeze the juice from one lemon in it – this will help avoid discoloration of the artichokes.

In a medium-sized pan over medium heat, sauté the onion and garlic in extra virgin olive oil for approximately 7-9 minutes, until caramelized and golden. Then, add your peas, potatoes, carrots, and 1/4 cup of extra virgin olive oil, and continue cooking for another 6-7 minutes, until the carrots begin to become tender.

Next, add your artichokes stem side up to the pot, and pour in the rest of the extra virgin olive oil, lemon juice, water, bay leaves and season lightly with salt and with pepper to taste. Bring the pot to a simmer, cover with a lid, and continue cooking on the stovetop for approximately 45 minutes, or until all the vegetables have softened. If necessary, feel free to add some more water or a splash of wine.

Once all your vegetables are tender, in a separate bowl combine the corn starch with  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of water to make a slurry.

Add your slurry along with the dill to the pot on the stove, and using the handles of the pot, gently shake it to combine with the ingredients. Continue simmering on the stove top for an additional 4-5 minutes, until the liquid has thickened. Remove from the heat, serve and enjoy!

## Bifteki – Greek Style Burgers

### *What We Need:*

3/4 lb lean ground beef  
3/4 lb ground turkey  
2 small red onions  
1 tomato  
1 garlic clove, grated on a microplaner (or very finely minced)  
1 egg  
1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil  
1/2 cup whole wheat breadcrumbs (unseasoned)  
Extra virgin olive oil, for brushing  
dried oregano, to taste  
salt and pepper to taste

### *What We Do:*

On the large holes of a box grater, grate the onions and tomato into a large mixing bowl. Add your garlic, egg, and extra virgin olive oil, and season to taste with pepper, and oregano and very lightly with salt.

Add the ground beef and half the breadcrumbs, mixing thoroughly to just combine, being careful not to overwork the meat (this will result in a tough and dense burger). If the mixture is too loose, continue to add the rest of the breadcrumbs until the mix solidifies. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 15 minutes to allow the mix to rest and the flavors to marry.

Form the mixture into rounded patties the size of your choice, brush with olive oil, and season lightly with salt and with pepper to taste.

Heat a sauté pan over medium-high heat, add a touch of olive oil just to coat the pan, and cook the burgers for 2 minutes per side to sear and lock in flavor. Remove from the sauté pan to a parchment lined sheet tray, and bake at 375 F for approximately 20 minutes for medium doneness, with an internal temperature of approximately 140 F. (You can continue cooking according to your taste and doneness preference or grill or pan-fry the burgers).

When the burgers are cooked to your liking, remove from the oven and allow them to rest for 5 minutes to allow the juices to redistribute. Season with a touch of dried oregano, and serve with a fresh green salad – enjoy!  
Tzatziki sauce can be eaten with the burgers as a healthy mayo substitute.

## Briam – Greek Roasted Vegetables

### *What We Need:*

2 lbs ripe beefsteak tomatoes, peeled and sliced into rounds  
1/2 lb Idaho potatoes, peeled and cut into rounds  
1.25 lb baby eggplant, cut into rounds  
1.25 lb zucchini, cut into rounds  
½ cup extra virgin olive oil  
2 red onions, sliced  
3 garlic cloves, minced  
3 tablespoons of fresh parsley, chopped  
salt and pepper as needed

Crumbled Greek feta or Greek yogurt, for garnish

### *What We Do:*

To prepare this dish, take a large baking pan (glass or ceramic work very well), and coat the bottom with a later of extra virgin olive oil to prevent sticking. Next, place a slightly overlapping layer of tomato slices on the bottom, until fully covered; season lightly with salt and with pepper to taste, reserving the rest of the tomatoes (if there are any)

Place the rest of the vegetables (except the onions and garlic) on top the tomato layer evenly, season with salt and pepper to taste.

Finally, top off with the onions, garlic, and the rest of the tomatoes, and drizzle with the rest of the olive oil.

Cover the baking dish with some aluminum foil, and bake at 400 F for approximately 1 ½ - 2 hours. Halfway through the cooking time, uncover the baking pan, add the chopped parsley, toss the vegetables to fully combine, and continue baking uncovered until the vegetables achieve a beautiful roasted color and flavor.

Serve with some crumbled feta or a dollop of Greek yogurt and some pita bread, and enjoy!

## Bulgur Wheat Salad

### *What We Need:*

2 cups of water  
2 cups bulgur wheat  
1 pint of cherry or grape tomatoes, halved  
3 scallions, finely chopped  
1 red onion, diced  
1 bunch of parsley, finely chopped  
1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil  
1 lemon, juiced  
salt and pepper to taste

### *What We Do:*

Bring 2 cups of water to a boil over medium heat in a medium saucepan. Once boiling, remove from the heat; add the bulgur while gently stirring, and cover with a lid. Allow the bulgur to fluff for approximately 15 minutes untouched.

In the meanwhile, add the extra virgin olive oil, lemon juice, pepper to taste and a dash of salt into a reseal-able container, and vigorously shake to combine.

When the bulgur is done cooking, gently strain and place on a parchment lined sheet tray to allow it to cool slightly.

Once cool, add the bulgur to a medium sized bowl with the tomatoes, scallions, onion, and parsley. Then, dress with the lemon juice and olive oil mixture, toss gently to thoroughly combine, taste and season accordingly with pepper and a dash of salt; serve and enjoy!

## Greek Salad (Horiatiki Salata)

*Horiatiki salata is the iconic Greek village salad everyone knows and loves made in the traditional Greek way. Perfect for lunch, dinner, or a snack in between, this salad fills you up without weighing you down.*

Serves 3 to 4

2 medium tomatoes, cut into wedges  
1 medium red onion, sliced  
1 green bell pepper, julienned  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  cucumber, sliced  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup pitted kalamata olives  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup crumbled feta cheese  
Salt and freshly ground black pepper  
Dry Greek oregano, to taste  
Dakos (optional; see Cook's note)  
Extra virgin olive Oil generously for dressing  
Red Wine Vinegar for dressing

1. In a large bowl, combine the tomatoes, red onion, bell pepper, cucumber, olives, and feta. Sprinkle lightly with salt and with pepper to taste. Add the dakos (if using). Toss with a generous amount of olive oil and lightly with vinegar until coated. Sprinkle with oregano and serve immediately.

*Cook's note: Dakos are Greek barley rusks that are usually sold dried and are often used in Greek cooking as a textural component; they are a great source of fiber. While you may substitute well-toasted pieces of dense, whole-grain bread in a pinch, the barley rusks are better. If you cannot locate them in a local shop, barley rusks may be ordered online. The rusks can be broken into small pieces that become like croutons. If you like them softer, you can wet them with a bit of olive oil/vinegar dressing before making the salad.*

## “Gemista” – Stuffed Green Peppers and Tomatoes with Rice

### *What We Need:*

5 tomatoes, medium, slightly firm  
5 green bell peppers  
5 potatoes, cut into wedges, held in water  
1 ¼ cup brown rice, bulghur wheat or farro  
2 ½ cups vegetable stock  
1 cup extra virgin olive oil  
2 white onions, finely chopped (by hand or in food processor)  
2 garlic cloves, minced  
½ bunch of parsley, finely chopped  
½ bunch of dill, finely chopped  
salt and pepper as needed, to taste

### *What We Do:*

First, rinse the tomatoes and green peppers and pat them dry using a kitchen towel.

Now, take a paring knife, and slice through the top of the tomato lengthwise, creating a little removable top for the tomato. Using a teaspoon, carefully scoop out the flesh of the inside of the tomato, leaving some flesh on the walls for structure.

Take your ‘tomato guts’ and grate them on the large holes of a box grater, and reserve for later. Then, take your hollowed out tomatoes, and invert them on a sheet tray to drain the excess liquids. Reserve these liquids with the grated tomato flesh.

Next, take your green peppers, and just like with the tomato, slice through the top of the pepper lengthwise, creating a little removable top. Remove the seeds and veins, and rinse thoroughly.

Heat a medium saucepan over medium heat, add your onions and a bit of salt to help leech out the excess moisture, and cook while stirring occasionally until golden. Once your onions are caramelized, add ½ cup of olive oil, stirring to combine with the onions. Once they are fully combined, add the garlic and cook for another minute.

Then, add your reserved tomato flesh and juices, and lower your heat, and allow to simmer until the liquids have reduced to 1/3 their original volume. Next, add the rice, ½ cup of vegetable stock, season lightly with salt and with pepper to taste, stir to combine, and allow the mixture to simmer for an additional 10 minutes. Finally, remove the saucepan from the heat, add the parsley and dill, and stir to combine.

Using a tablespoon, stuff the tomatoes and peppers with the rice filling (which will appear barely cooked), filling them up 2/3 of the way to allow for the rice to expand as the vegetables cook. Using your removable top, cover your vegetables and place them in a baking pan, using your wedged potatoes as separators. Pour the rest of the vegetable stock and olive oil over the tomatoes and peppers, season lightly with pepper, and bake at 350°F for approximately 45 minutes, until potatoes and rice are tender.

Remove from the oven, allow them to cool for 10 minutes, serve and enjoy with a dollop of Greek yogurt Tzatziki sauce!

## Herb Balls with Fennel

### *What We Need:*

1 bunch of scallions, finely chopped  
1 onion, finely chopped (by hand or in the food processor)  
3/4 lb whole wheat bread crumbs  
1 fennel bulb, finely chopped  
½ bunch of dill, finely chopped  
½ bunch of parsley, finely chopped  
½ cup extra virgin olive oil  
1 lemon, juiced  
    salt and pepper as needed, to taste  
    whole wheat flour, as needed, for dredging  
    Extra virgin olive oil, as needed, for pan frying  
Fennel fronds, chopped, for garnish  
Greek yogurt Tzatziki sauce for garnish

### *What We Do:*

Heat a medium sized frying pan over medium heat, add the onions and scallions, and cook for 3-4 minutes to soften and sweat. Remove with a slotted spoon, and reserve for later.

Add the bread crumbs, scallions, onions, fennel, dill, parsley, olive oil, lemon juice, season lightly with salt and with pepper to taste, and knead to combine.

Cover the bowl with plastic wrap, and refrigerate for 1 hour to help the mixture solidify.

Once the mixture has firmed up, remove it from the refrigerator, and using a tablespoon, make 2-tablespoon portions to roll into balls, continuing until all the mixture has been used.

In a separate bowl, lightly dredge the balls in whole wheat flour, shaking off all the excess. Heat enough olive oil in a fry pan to reach 1/3 of the way up the herb balls, and lightly fry them until golden brown all over. Remove the herb balls to a sheet tray with a resting rack, and bake for an additional 10 minutes at 350°F.

To serve, place the herb balls on a plate, sprinkle with chopped fennel fronds, add a dollop of Greek yogurt Tzatziki sauce, and enjoy!



## Fish Filets cooked in White Wine

### *What We Need:*

2 lbs white fish filets (tilapia, cod or other white fish)

1 shallot, minced

½ cup extra virgin olive oil

1 ½ cups white wine

1 lemon, juiced

2 sprigs thyme

Salt and pepper, to taste

Extra virgin olive oil, to coat the pan

Freshly chopped parsley, for garnish

Lemon slices, for garnish

### *What We Do:*

Wash the fish fillets and pat dry, cutting them into 4-6 oz portions, and season lightly with salt and with pepper to taste.

In a bowl, combine the olive oil, wine, and lemon juice.

Place the minced shallots on the bottom of an olive oil coated baking pan, and add the fish fillets in a single layer. Add the wine, olive oil, and lemon mixture to the pan, place the thyme sprigs on top, and bake at 350 F for 20-25 minutes, until the fish is cooked through.

Once the fish is cooked through, carefully remove the fillets onto a plate. Take the excess liquid from the baking pan, add it to a sauté pan, and reduce the volume by half.

To serve, pour the reduced sauce over the fillets, and garnish with lemon wedges and fresh parsley. Enjoy with some olive oil and lemon drizzled on top!

## Kotopita – Greek Chicken Pie

### *What We Need:*

1 box of Phyllo dough, thawed  
1 whole chicken  
1 lb white onion  
Bay leaves  
½ cup milk (2%, 1% or skim)  
½ cup extra virgin olive oil  
4 eggs, lightly beaten  
¾ cup Greek feta cheese, crumbled or grated  
Pinch of ground nutmeg  
Salt and pepper as needed  
Extra virgin olive oil, as needed for brushing  
Corn meal, as needed for the pan  
1 egg, lightly beaten for egg wash

### *What We Do:*

Clean your onions by peeling off the outer layer, and removing the root end, while keeping them whole. Thoroughly rinse your chicken, and add both to a large pot with several bay leaves. Add enough water to cover the contents of the pot by 2 inches, season lightly with salt, and bring the pot to a boil. Once boiling, reduce heat slightly and allow the chicken and onions to cook for approximately 40-45 minutes, until both are tender.

When the chicken and onions are cooked, remove the pot from the heat, drain, and allow both to cool slightly. Finely chopped the onions, and when cool enough to handle, shred the chicken meat into fine strips, being careful to remove the bones along the way.

In a large dry (no olive oil) saucepan over medium heat add the chopped onions, and sauté until caramelized. Reduce the heat to medium-low, add ¼ cup of extra virgin olive oil, milk, and the shredded chicken, and simmer for 5-7 minutes while continually stirring.

Remove the saucepan from the heat, and allow it to cool slightly. Then, slowly stir in the eggs, feta, and nutmeg, and season with salt and pepper to taste, making sure to full combine all the ingredients.

To assemble the pie, coat the bottom of a 9 x 13-inch baking pan with a little extra virgin olive oil and sprinkle it lightly with cornmeal. Carefully arrange 1 sheet of phyllo in the pan and press it into the corners. Brush some olive oil on the phyllo. Arrange a second sheet of phyllo over the first, and brush with some olive oil. Repeat with a third sheet of phyllo.

Pour the chicken mixture over the phyllo sheets and spread it evenly across the pan. Fold the overhanging phyllo over and onto the filling. Arrange another sheet of phyllo on top of the chicken mixture and brush with olive oil. Repeat with 2 more sheets of phyllo. Use a paring knife to remove the overhanging phyllo dough from the sides of the pie. Use the same knife to score the pie into squares or diamonds, just through the top layer of phyllo, then brush with the egg wash.

Bake the chicken pie at 350 F for approximately 30-35 minutes, until golden and delicious.

Remove from the oven, allow the pie to cool slightly, then slice according to your score marks, serve and enjoy!

## Keftedakia (Greek Meatballs)

Serves 6 to 8

### Ingredients:

1 medium white or Spanish onion  
1 large tomato  
2 garlic cloves, minced or mashed  
1 tablespoon of tomato paste  
½ cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley leaves (no stems)  
½ teaspoon dried oregano  
¼ cup of chopped kalamata olives  
¼ cup of chopped green olives  
½ cup of feta, crumbled  
1 lemon, zested  
2 eggs  
1 cup of wholewheat breadcrumbs, as needed  
¼ cup extra virgin olive oil, plus more for drizzling on the meatballs  
Salt and freshly ground black pepper  
2 pounds ground turkey/chicken  
Feta-Yogurt sauce, for serving – Recipe to follow  
Olive-Caper Tapenade, for serving – Recipe to follow

### Method:

1. Purée the onion in a food processor. Transfer the onion to a large bowl. Grate the tomato on the largest holes of a box grater and add it to the bowl.
2. Add the garlic, tomato paste, parsley, oregano, olives, feta, lemon zest, eggs, ¼ cup of olive oil, and salt and pepper to taste. Add ½ cup of breadcrumbs, mixing well; add the rest gradually as needed. Add the ground meat and mix it in with two forks. Be careful not to overwork the meat so your meatballs will be light and fluffy. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 1 hour.
3. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.
4. Using a teaspoon, a tablespoon, or an ice cream scoop, depending on how large you want your meatballs, form meatballs. (Alternatively, you can accurately portion the meatballs by evenly spreading the meat mixture on a 9 x 13-inch rimmed baking sheet. Using a paring knife, slice this into sections—whatever size you'd like the meatballs to be. Remove each uniformly sized portion one at a time, and form into meatballs.) Try not to over-handle the meat mixture, since the less you handle it, the lighter and fluffier the meatballs will be.
5. Transfer the meatballs to the lined baking sheet, drizzle with olive oil, and bake for 15 to 20 minutes, or until browned. Watch them carefully to make sure they don't over-bake. Serve the meatballs with Feta-Yogurt Sauce in a pita pocket, topped with some Olive-Caper Tapenade, and enjoy!

*Variation: If you like, use the mix to make Greek burgers (Biftekia).*

## Tahini-Honey Grilled Chicken

### *What We Need:*

3 lbs boneless chicken breasts or thighs, rinsed and dried  
2 tablespoon tahini paste  
2 tablespoon honey  
2 tablespoon sesame oil  
2 tablespoon Greek yogurt  
salt and pepper to taste

Extra virgin olive oil for grilling

Sesame Seeds, for garnish

Greek Yogurt, for garnish

### *What We Do:*

In a large bowl, whisk together 1 tablespoon of tahini, honey, sesame oil, and Greek yogurt. Season with pepper to taste and lightly with salt, and add the chicken, turning to coat all sides.

Cover the bowl, refrigerate, and marinate the chicken for 3 hours, if possible. (The marinade tenderizes and flavors the chicken. If you don't have time to marinate the chicken for 3 hours, let it marinate for at least 30 minutes.)

With paper towels or a clean kitchen towel, wipe away as much of the marinade as possible.

Preheat a grill pan or grill over high heat for 3 to 4 minutes. Coat the chicken with olive oil, and season liberally with salt and pepper. Grill the chicken for 5 to 6 minutes without turning. Flip the chicken and continue to cook for another 5 to 6 minutes, or until fully cooked and the juices run clear.

Remove the chicken from the grill pan and allow it to rest for 4 to 5 minutes so that the juices can redistribute.

In the meanwhile, take a small saucepan and over low heat combine the remaining 1 tablespoon of tahini, honey, sesame oil and Greek yogurt, stirring until just warm. Taste, season accordingly with pepper, and remove from heat.

Serve the chicken with a spoonful of the sauce on top, garnished with sesame seeds and optionally with a dollop of Greek yogurt on the side. Enjoy!

## **Greek Grilled Chicken Breasts:**

### *What We Need:*

3 lbs            Chicken Breasts or thighs, deboned  
2 cups         Strained Greek Yogurt  
½ tsp          Dry Mustard  
Salt/Pepper/Oregano (try to use less salt)  
Extra virgin olive Oil, as needed  
Sesame Seeds, for garnish  
Parsley sprigs, for garnish

### *What We Do:*

To marinate your chicken breasts, combine the Greek Yogurt and dry mustard in a bowl, add the chicken and mix all together to completely coat the chicken. Let the breasts marinate for three hours to absorb some flavor and aid in tenderizing.

Once your chicken breasts have marinated, take a clean kitchen towel or paper towels and remove as much of the yogurt marinade as possible.

Next, take a grill pan and heat over a high heat. While your pan is heating up, coat your chicken breasts in Greek olive oil, and season them liberally with pepper, and oregano and lightly with salt.

Once your pan is hot, add your chicken breasts, and allow them to cook for approximately 5-6 minutes (depending on thickness) undisturbed, then flip the chicken breasts and allow them to finish cooking for another 5-6 minutes, or until cooked through. Remove from the grill pan and allow the breasts to rest for about 4-5 minutes, so the juices redistribute. Serve and enjoy with “ladolemono” (olive oil-lemon juice) sauce.

## Pasta with Meat Sauce

### Ingredients:

1 package of Barilla Plus pasta  
1 onion, finely chopped/robocouped  
2 tablespoons of tomato paste  
2 garlic cloves, minced  
1 lb ground turkey/chicken  
1 bay leaf  
1 cinnamon stick  
1 cup red wine  
water or vegetable stock, as needed  
salt and pepper, as needed, to taste (try to use less salt)  
extra virgin olive oil, as needed  
grated Graviera cheese, as garnish (can substitute Pecorino Romano)  
fresh basil leaves, as garnish

### Method:

- 1) In a large skillet or Dutch oven over medium heat, cook the onion until golden and softened, 8 to 10 minutes, sprinkling it lightly with salt as it cooks. Add the tomato and garlic and continue to cook until well combined.
- 2) Next, add ground chicken/ turkey, and cook until well browned. Season lightly with salt and with pepper to taste, and add cinnamon stick and bay leaf.
- 3) Add red wine, and allow it to reduce to  $\frac{2}{3}$  the volume. Add stock, and bring to a boil.
- 4) Preheat a small sauté pan over medium heat for 1 minute. Add the *Barilla Plus* pasta and toast it with some olive oil, stirring, until it turns golden brown and develops a nutty aroma, less than 5 minutes.
- 5) Carefully add the *Barilla Plus* pasta to the skillet with the meat mixture and allow it to cook, stirring occasionally, until it softens, about 5 to 10 minutes. If the *pasta* has absorbed all of the liquid but isn't quite done, add another  $\frac{1}{4}$  or  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of stock to the skillet. Taste the sauce, and add salt and pepper as needed.
- 6) Remove the cinnamon stick and bay leaf. To serve, ladle the pasta into large bowls, sprinkle with the grated cheese, and garnish with fresh basil leaves.

## Pasta with Fresh Tomato Sauce

Serves 4 to 6

### *Ingredients:*

3 large tomatoes

Boiling water

1 white or Spanish onion, grated

3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

2 garlic cloves, grated or finely minced

1 cup of red wine

½ teaspoon hot paprika

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 package of *Barilla Plus pasta*

Fresh basil leaves, for garnish

### *Method:*

1. Fill a bowl with ice and water. Using a paring knife, make a small X on the bottom of each tomato and place them in a heatproof bowl. Pour boiling water over the tomatoes. After 1 to 2 minutes, remove the tomatoes from the water and submerge them in the ice water bath. Peel the tomatoes—the skin should pull away easily. Grate the tomatoes on the large holes of a box grater, or blend them in a food processor.
2. Preheat a large skillet over medium heat for about 5 minutes. Add the onion and sauté until it is softened, 7 to 9 minutes. Stir in the olive oil and when it is very hot, add the garlic. Sauté quickly, just until the garlic is golden, being careful not to let it burn.
3. Add the wine to the pan and cook until it is reduced by about one-fifth. Add the tomatoes, paprika, 2 cups water, and salt and pepper to taste. Boil over medium heat for 10 to 15 minutes to thicken the sauce.
4. Meanwhile, in a pot of boiling, salted water, cook the *Barilla Plus pasta* until al dente, approximately 7-8 minutes.
5. Drain the pasta and add it to the pot of tomato sauce, toss to combine, and allow the orzo to finish cooking.
6. Transfer the pasta to serving plates and garnish with the basil.

## Greek-style Roasted Mushrooms

### *What We Need:*

1 lb white button or cremini mushrooms  
1 lb portabellows mushrooms or baby bella mushrooms  
1 lb shitake mushrooms  
1 lb oyster mushrooms  
3 sprigs of fresh thyme, leaves stripped  
Extra virgin olive oil, as needed, for tossing  
Salt and pepper to taste

Freshly chopped parsley, for garnish  
Grated cheese (pecorino romano or parmesan), for garnish

### *What We Do:*

Preheat your oven to 425 F.

To clean your mushrooms, take a damp kitchen towel and rub the caps to remove the dirt. It is important not to wash them because mushrooms are extremely absorbent and will soak up all the water.

Once clean, cut your mushrooms into bite-sized pieces, or slice them, depending on their structure (for example, oyster mushrooms are differently shaped than white button).

Add your mushrooms to a large mixing bowl along with the stripped thyme leaves, toss with olive oil (enough to coat them), and season lightly with salt and with pepper to taste.

Coat the bottom of a sheet tray with a touch of olive oil, and add the mushrooms in a single layer, being careful to avoid crowding. If necessary, split the mushrooms between two trays.

Drizzle the mushrooms with a touch of olive oil, and roast for 20-30 minutes, stirring occasionally, until mushrooms have browned.

Remove mushrooms from oven, dress with freshly chopped parsley and some grated cheese, serve and enjoy!



## Mediterranean Pasta with Chicken, Peppers, and Olives in Fresh Tomato Sauce

### *What We Need:*

2 lbs boneless, skinless chicken breasts or thighs, cut into bite sized pieces  
2 green bell peppers, julienned  
2 yellow bell peppers, julienned  
2 red bell peppers, julienned  
2 medium red onions, diced  
2 garlic cloves, minced  
2-3 beefsteak or heirloom tomatoes, grated or pulsed in food processor (or 1 x 16 oz can of crushed tomatoes)  
½ cup kalamata olives, pitted, roughly chopped  
½ cup extra virgin olive oil  
salt and pepper to taste  
oregano  
1 box Barilla Plus Pasta  
Fresh parsley, chopped, for garnish

### *What We Do:*

To make your fresh tomato sauce, heat a large saucepan over medium heat, and without olive oil, add the onion and a little salt (to help leach the moisture), sautéing until caramelized. Once golden, add ¼ cup of olive oil, the peppers, and the garlic to the saucepan, and continue to sauté for another 5 minutes, until the peppers have softened, stirring occasionally to make sure the garlic doesn't burn.

Then, add the tomatoes and olives, stir to combine, and reduce the heat to medium-low. Allow the sauce to simmer for approximately 10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the sauce thickens. (If the sauce becomes too thick, you can add a bit of water to thin it out.)

While your sauce is simmering, heat a medium sauté pan over medium heat, and season your chicken breasts with oregano, pepper to taste and lightly with salt. When your pan is hot, add a ¼ cup of olive oil, giving it a minute to come up to temperature, then add your chicken pieces, and brown on both sides.

When the chicken is ready, remove pan and add the browned chicken pieces to the pot with the tomato sauce, stirring to coat the chicken and fully combine the ingredients. Cover the saucepan and continue cooking on a low heat for an additional 10 minutes to allow the flavors to marry and the chicken to cook through.

While the sauce is finishing, prepare your pasta by boiling it in some lightly salted water, cooking until al dente.

Finally, taste the sauce, season with pepper to taste, adding some of the pasta water if it has reduced too much (the starch from the pasta helps flavor the sauce and prevents it from breaking).

To serve, plate your pasta, drizzle with extra virgin olive oil, place some of your fresh sauce on top, garnish with some chopped parsley, and enjoy!

## Revithokeftedes – Chickpea Fritters

(Greek falafel!)

*What We Need:*

1 can chickpeas  
1 red onion, minced  
4 cloves of garlic, minced  
1 teaspoon ground cumin  
½ teaspoon ground sumac  
2 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped  
2 tablespoons whole wheat flour  
salt and pepper as needed  
extra virgin olive oil, as needed for brushing

*What We Do:*

Drain the chickpeas, rinse them, and allow them to sit out on a parchment or wax paper lined sheet tray to dry out for an hour.

Heat a medium pot over medium heat until hot. Add the chickpeas and enough water to cover the contents of the pot by 3 inches. Cover the pot and bring to a boil. Drain the chickpeas, and allow them to cool on a parchment paper lined sheet tray.

Heat a medium sized pan over medium heat. When hot, add 2 tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil, and sauté the onions until tender, adding the garlic for the last minute or so. Be careful not to burn the garlic.

Now, add your chickpeas, sautéed onions and garlic, cumin and sumac into a food processor, and pulse until fully combined (approximately 2-3 minutes), scraping down the sides as necessary.

Next add your chickpea mixture, parsley, and flour to a large mixing bowl; season lightly with salt and with pepper to taste, and mix everything together in the bowl with your hands until fully combined.

Line a sheet tray with parchment paper, brush it with olive oil, and using a tablespoon, portion out the mixture onto the tray. Roll the mixture into balls or patties (whatever you prefer), brush with olive oil, and bake at 375 F for approximately 20-25 minutes, flipping your revithokeftedes over half way through, until golden brown and cooked through.

Serve with tzatziki or mint-yogurt sauce and enjoy!

## Rolo Kima – Meat Loaf

### *What We Need:*

1 lb ground turkey  
1 lb ground chicken  
¾ cup whole wheat bread crumbs  
  
4 eggs, hard boiled, peeled  
1 whole egg, uncooked  
2 tomatoes, grated  
1 red onion, medium, finely chopped  
1 garlic clove, minced  
2 tablespoon parsley, finely chopped  
1 tablespoon mint, finely chopped  
½ cup extra virgin olive oil  
salt and pepper to taste  
extra virgin olive oil, for brushing

### *What We Do:*

To the bowl with the bread crumbs add the chopped turkey and chicken, onion, garlic, whole egg, 3 tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil, parsley, mint, pepper to taste and salt lightly, and knead the ingredients together to thoroughly combine.

Next, place a sheet of parchment paper on a cutting board or baking tray, and spread the meat mixture out into a rectangular shape.

In the middle of the rectangle of meat, place the hardboiled eggs one after the other to create a line parallel to the length of the rectangle. Using the parchment paper, roll the meat around the eggs to create a loaf, encasing the eggs. Brush your loaf with olive oil, and securely wrap it in the parchment paper. Tie off the two ends with kitchen twine to secure your loaf, and place in a greased baking pan. Bake for approximately 30-35 minutes at 350° F.

Next, remove the baking pan from the oven, unwrap the meat loaf, and return it to the same pan. Add the tomatoes, water, season lightly with salt and with pepper to taste, and continue baking for another 20-25 minutes, basting/brushing the meat loaf with the pan drippings and juices (to keep it moist).

Finally, remove the baking pan from the oven, and allow the meatloaf to rest and cool slightly, to help with slicing and moisture.

When ready, slice, serve with accompanying side salads and enjoy!

## **Spanakopita Triangles (Mini Spinach & Feta Cheese Pies)**

Makes about 3 dozen triangles

*Favored by the hosts of Good Morning America, these light and flaky triangles are an easy and compact version of the classic Greek recipe. Try cutting them in half after baking for a bite-size hors d'oeuvre sure to delight your guests!*

### *What We Need:*

Four 10-ounce bags fresh spinach, stemmed and chopped  
¼ pound Greek feta cheese, crumbled  
½ cup 2% plain Greek yogurt  
1 large onion, pureed  
1 bunch fresh dill, stemmed and chopped  
1 cup extra virgin olive oil, plus more for brushing  
1 box phyllo dough, thawed

### *What We Do:*

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. In a large bowl, combine the spinach, feta, yogurt, onion puree, dill, and 1 cup extra virgin olive oil. Mix very well with your hands until all the ingredients are well incorporated. Set aside.
3. Unwrap the phyllo dough and cover it with a clean, damp kitchen towel. Remove 1 sheet of the phyllo and place it horizontally in front of you on a work surface. Using a pastry brush, lightly brush it with olive oil. Top this with another sheet of phyllo, and brush that sheet with some olive oil as well. Using a sharp knife, cut the phyllo into 6 strips (about 12 x 2¾ inches).
4. Place 1 heaping teaspoon of filling near one corner of a strip, and then fold the corner of the strip over to enclose the filling, forming a triangle (the way you would fold a flag). Continue folding, keeping the triangle shape intact. If you have a little phyllo overhang, simply brush it with olive oil and fold it onto itself. Place your phyllo triangle on the baking sheet and brush the top with more olive oil. Continue making more triangles until you run out of phyllo dough or spinach filling.
5. Bake the spanakopita triangles for 10 to 15 minutes, or until golden brown. Cool slightly before serving.

## Turkey-Cannellini Bean Chili

Serves 6

### Ingredients:

1 cup red onion, chopped  
1 poblano pepper, deseeded and chopped (or other mild heat pepper of your choice)  
2 garlic cloves, minced  
1 ¼ pounds of lean ground turkey  
2 tablespoons tomato paste  
1 tablespoon of chili powder  
1 teaspoon dried oregano  
1 teaspoon ground cumin  
Salt (use sparingly) and pepper  
1 can of cannellini beans, rinsed and drained  
2 medium tomatoes, diced OR 1 can of diced tomatoes, with liquid  
2 cups of low-sodium chicken or vegetable stock/broth OR water  
½ cup chopped fresh parsley (and/or cilantro)  
6 lime wedges  
Cilantro, optional, for garnish  
Fresh sliced jalapeño pepper, optional, for garnish

### Method:

1. Heat a large saucepan over medium heat; add onion, poblano pepper, garlic, and ground turkey, and cook for 6-8 minutes, stirring frequently to break up turkey into a crumble, and until cooked through.
2. Stir in tomato paste, and caramelize (approximately 2 minutes); add chili powder, oregano, cumin, and season with salt and pepper to taste.
3. Add the beans, diced tomatoes and liquid, and add the stock/broth/water, stirring to fully combine.
4. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat, and simmer 15-20 minutes. Stir in parsley and/or cilantro, taste, and adjust seasoning if necessary. Serve with lime wedges.

## **Red-Wine Vinaigrette:**

Makes about 1 cup

### **Ingredients:**

¼ cup red-wine vinegar (or other wine-vinegar)

¼ teaspoon Greek oregano

Salt (use sparingly) and pepper to taste

⅔ cup extra virgin olive oil

### **Method:**

1. Combine all ingredients in a re-sealable container; shake vigorously until fully combine and emulsified. Serve immediately.

## Tzatziki

Makes 2 to 3 cups

### Ingredients:

3 pieces of cucumber

Salt (use sparingly)

16 ounces of full fat or 2% plain Greek yogurt

3 garlic cloves, peeled

3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

2 tablespoons red wine vinegar

3 to 4 sprigs of fresh dill, stems removed and roughly chopped, or 1 teaspoon dried dill

### Method:

1. Clean the skin of the cucumbers well. Using the large holes of a box grater, grate them into a sieve or colander. Lightly salt the grated cucumber (this helps draw out the moisture), cover the sieve with plastic wrap, and allow the cucumber to drain overnight, if possible. (Note: Placing a heavy plate or glass on top of the covered cucumber will help the draining process.)
2. Take the drained cucumber, place in cheesecloth, and squeeze out remaining liquid as best you can.
3. In a large bowl, combine the drained cucumber and yogurt. Mix very well. Using a Microplane grater or a small, sharp knife, grate or mince the garlic. Stir the garlic into the yogurt mixture. Stir in the olive oil and vinegar and mix well. Cover the bowl with plastic and refrigerate for about 1 hour.
4. Stir in the dill and refrigerate until serving.