

Gastronomic Calendar

Sweets and Pies



Cyprus, as a crossroad of three continents, has been affected culturally and linguistically by neighboring countries but also by the different civilisations that passed from the island through the centuries. This cultural alloy also includes sweet gastronomic indulgence, the traditional sweets of Cyprus, otherwise known as "glitzista" that are rooted back to ancient times and Byzantium. Adding a modern touch to this delicious feast you get a result that will amaze even the most refined palate. The Deputy Ministry of Tourism invites you to a sweet journey through this gastronomic calendar.

Enjoy!



DEPUTY MINISTRY OF TOURISM



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JANUARY - TSIPOPITA



Ingredients for the dough:

- 1 kg village flour
- ½ teaspoon yeast
- ½ a cup of olive oil
- ½ teaspoon salt
- Lukewarm water

Ingredients for the filling:

- 250 gr. 'tsipa' (milk skin) or flavoured animal butter
- 2 cups fresh whipped cream but not too thick
- 200 gr. ground almonds
- 1 tablespoon ground cinnamon

Ingredients for the syrup:

- 1 kg of granulated sugar
- 700 ml water
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 5-6 cloves
- A few drops of lemon juice
- A small piece of orange peel
- 2 tablespoons of rosewater for cooking
- Instructions for the syrup

1. Put all the ingredients in a pot and simmer (on low heat) until the syrup thickens lightly.
2. Remove from the stove and let cool.
3. This syrup may be used for lots of different recipes.

Instructions

1. Knead the dough, cover and let rest for 30 minutes.
2. Roll out a large thin rectangular shaped dough sheet by hand.
3. Grease each dough sheet with a brush and add some of the milk skin, which you have mixed already with the fresh whipped cream.
With a spatula spread the mixture on the rectangular surface of each sheet you have rolled out.
4. Add the cinnamon and the ground almond to the dough sheet, by hand.
5. Carefully wrap the dough sheet in an oblong tube and then twist it.
6. Wrap it around and place it in a greased pan.
7. Repeat until you fill the pan.
8. If you do not have a round pan, you can create cylindrical, oblong, twisted 'Tsipopitas' until the square or rectangular pan is filled.
9. Bake in a preheated oven at 180 °C for about an hour.
10. Add the syrup as soon as you take it out of the oven and let it absorb it a bit before you serve.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

In some areas of Cyprus, 'Tsipopita' is also called 'Wrapped Kattimeri'. The 'Tsipopitas' are named after 'tsipa' which is used as the main material included in the dough's filling or as a spread. We collect it from the froth formed by boiling fresh milk. This is also the greasiest part. It is also called 'Kaimaki' (clotted cream) just like the layer created on the top of Cypriot coffee. The difference here is that the layer is created by the milk's fat. There are also other variations, such as Tsipopita with anari filling (anthotyro with cinnamon and sugar), as well as without almonds and anari filling. As a traditional dessert, it is considered very popular among Cypriots, who consume it in small quantities, as it is quite 'heavy' to digest.

A favourite dessert for many dairy producers. Tsipopita was a special delicacy for both children and adults, since 'tsipa' (Milk Kaimaki/Clotted Cream) with which this pie is made, was a very special ingredient, that was accessible only to families who produced dairy products.

TSIPOPITA

JANUARY

This sweet pie is made all year round, although its consumption is preferred more during the winter months up until the carnival period.



February – Burekia Anaris (Anari Patties)



Ingredients (for 2 kilograms):

Dough

- 1 kg village flour
- 1 cup oil
- ½ lt. water
- 1 pinch of salt

Filling

- 1 kg unsalted 'anari' cheese
(traditional fresh cheese)
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 4 tablespoons sugar
- 1/3 cup rose water

Instructions

1. You pour the oil into the flour bowl. Use your fingers to rub the flour with the oil to help the two ingredients mix. Next add the water in room temperature and knead very well.
2. The dough should not be too soft.
3. Allow the dough to rest for 20 minutes and then roll out the dough.
4. Fill with the 'anari' filling (anthotyro) and cut the small patties into rectangular or round shapes.
5. Fry in hot vegetable oil until golden.
6. Let them cool and sprinkle with powdered sugar.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The word 'Bureki' comes from the Arabic word 'Buraq' or the Turkish 'börek', which means 'turned'. It is a dough sheet filled with various ingredients, such as cream, unsalted anari (anthotyro/traditional fresh cheese) sprinkled with sugar, cinnamon and rosewater, minced meat, halloumi or mushrooms.

In the past, women used to gather in a house and make their patties together especially before 'Sikoses'. That way they made more patties faster and enjoyed each other's company as they used to sing and amuse themselves. They also used to discuss their daily routine and their plans for the Easter holidays.

BUREKIA ANARIS

FEBRUARY

'Burekia' is a delicacy consumed throughout the year. They are offered as a treat at buffets, birthday parties, but also traditionally before fasting, during the week of 'Tyrimi' (the week before Green Monday, when people are allowed to eat dairy products but not meat) and at 'Sikoses'.



MARCH – COOKIES WITH CAROB HONEY (TZIERTZIELOUTHKIA)



Ingredients (for 8-10 people):

- ½ kg village flour
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- Salt
- Lukewarm water
- Carob honey

Instructions

1. Sift the flour through a fine sieve (tatsia).
2. Add salt and stir.
3. Add the olive oil.
4. Next , gradually add the lukewarm water slowly, kneading all the ingredients together, making a soft dough.
5. Let the dough rest.
6. Roll out the dough and make small round cookies less than ½ cm thick.
7. Heat water in a saucepan and simmer the cookies for 10 minutes.
8. Drain the water and add the carob honey (to cover the cookies). Continue boiling them in the carob honey for 5 more minutes.
9. Serve them hot.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The carob honey cookies are also called 'Tziertzielouthkia' or 'Gritzielia'. In Pontus they are called 'Kerkelia' deriving from the word 'Krikelos', in ancient Greek 'kyrkos-krikos' (round/ring shaped object), hence the round shape of the cookies.

The distinct taste of carob honey or 'black gold', as was and still called in Medical Science, has a lot of medical properties.

Carobs were used as emollients for chest infections and were recommended for patients with chronic bronchitis. They are also suitable for the prevention and treatment of dysentery in humans, as they are rich in fibres. Thus, it helps the proper functioning of the intestines, since it does not contain any stimulants, like coffee does. It is digestible and does not cause any allergies. Carob honey soothes the stomach.

COOKIES WITH CAROB HONEY

MARCH

The Carob Honey Cookies are made during fasting periods and especially on Green Monday.



APRIL – TAHINOPITES (TAHINI PIES)



Ingredients (for 8-10 people):

Dough

- 1 kg village flour
- ¼ teaspoon Baking Powder
- ¾ tablespoon baking soda
- 11gr. yeast
- Some oil (optional)
- Lukewarm water
- Salt

Filling

- 6 cups tahini (special tahini made of crushed roasted sesame seeds)
- 4 cups of sugar
- Some cinnamon
- Some oil (optional)

Syrup

- 1 glass of water
- 1 glass of sugar
- 1 tablespoon of honey
- Cinnamon

Instructions

1. Prepare the dough by mixing the dry ingredients and by adding the liquid ones slowly kneading them together.
2. For the filling, put the tahini in a bowl and add the sugar, the cinnamon and the oil.
3. Allow the dough to rise enough and start making the tahinopites using a special technique. Give the dough a rod shape and twist to create an 's' shape, so that one goes on top of the other.
4. Roll out the dough.
5. Let them rise once more and bake them in a preheated oven, in 180 °C.
6. As soon as you take them out of the oven, pour syrup over them or coat them with honey.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Tahinopites are made from our traditional tahini with the only difference being that the tahini used is made of roasted sesame. Tahini Pie is found in different forms in Cyprus, in South Caucasus, in Greece and in Turkey.

Cypriot Tahinopita is considered a favourite dish during Lent.

It is one of the most popular pastries a visitor can enjoy in a bakery or a confectionery.

The nutritional value of 'Tahini Pie' is very important, as tahini is considered one of the most nutritious foods. It contains 'good' fats such as ω -6 and ω -3.

Moreover, tahini offers additional important trace elements such as copper, manganese, calcium, magnesium, iron, phosphorus, zinc, and fibre.



TAHINOPITES

APRIL

Although we find 'Tahinopita' all year round, it is consumed more during Lent.

MAY – FLAOUNES



Ingredients for the dough:

- 1 kg village flour
- 320 gr. vegetable butter
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon sugar
- 2 eggs
- ¼ lt. lukewarm milk
- ¼ lt. lukewarm water

For a fast leaven:

- 4 cups village flour
- ½ lt. lukewarm milk
- 40 gr. yeast

Instructions for the filling:

1. Grate the cheeses, add the herbs and then the leaven or the baking powder.
2. Add ¼ of the eggs.
3. This process is best done in the evening and continue the following morning just before baking.
4. Add the remaining eggs, the raisins and the fresh, finely chopped mint.
5. Let the filling rest out of the fridge (that was left overnight), for about an hour so that it gets to room temperature again, shape the filling into medium sized balls, roll out the dough in thin round sheets and place a ball of filling in each sheet.

Instructions for the dough:

1. In a bowl, put the flour, the vegetable butter, the salt, and the sugar.
2. Mix them very well and add the milk, the water and the eggs.
3. Knead all the ingredients together to make a soft dough.
4. Leave it covered to rest for 30 minutes.
5. Then you roll out the dough in round thin sheets and then you place them one-by-one on wet sesame seeds. Glaze with egg after placing the filling and closing the four sides. You can also make them triangular.
6. You can also add the sesame by hand if you do not want a lot of it on the flaounes but make sure you have glazed your flaounes with egg before.
7. Bake them in a well preheated oven at 200 °C for about 30 minutes, depending on the size of the flaounes.

Ingredients for the filing:

- 1 kg of grated cheese (village type kefalotyri, special for flaounes, available only during the fasting period just before Easter)
- ½ kg of grated hard halloumi cheese
- 150 gr. leaven or 1 ½ teaspoon Baking Powder
- 8-10 eggs (depending on the size)
- ½ bundle of fresh mint (just the leaves), finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon mahleb
- 1 teaspoon mastic
- 1 sachet of vanilla
- ¼ teaspoon cinnamon powder
- 1 cup raisins

FLAOUNES

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

According to various versions, the word Flaouna comes from the ancient Greek word 'palathi' (preparation with dried fruits) or from the synonymous Latin word 'fladonis'. According to another version, flaouna comes from the ancient Greek verb 'flao' which means 'grief'. In the Karavas area, flaounes were called 'fesoudkia' while in Karpasia they were known as 'aflaounes'.

Flaounes first appeared in the 19th century and according to tradition they were made in the morning of the Holy Saturday before the night of the resurrection (Kalos Logos).

In the past, women either made their flaounes together, in friends' or relatives' houses or made them at home and baked them in a friend's or a relative's house, who had a traditional oven.

Although today we can easily find ready-made flaounes in local bakeries, many people prefer to make their own, with all the family gathered together, like they used to do in the past.

MAY

Flaounes is a staple delicacy of the Greek Orthodox Easter period, making it a spring treat for the Cypriots.



JUNE – SPOON SWEETS (WALNUT)



Ingredients (for 25 sweets):

25 green tender walnuts

BASIC RECIPE OF SYRUP FOR SPOON SWEETS

- 1 kg of sugar
- 1 glass of water
- 1 small cinnamon stick
- 8-10 cloves
- A few drops of fresh lemon juice

1. Pick a spoonful of syrup and let it drip back in the pan.
2. If the syrup is watery, then it is not ready. Continue boiling until the syrup thickens.
3. When the drops of syrup thicken and fall slowly back to the pan, it means that the density is right, and the syrup is ready.

Instructions

1. Peel the green walnuts with a special knife or a peeler.
2. Put them in a bowl and cover them with water. Change the water twice a day for 8 days.
3. Then pierce through the middle vertically with a thin skewer and put them back in clean water with a teaspoon of pickling lime dissolved in the existing water.
4. Leave them in the pickling lime mix for about 8 hours.
5. Then, wash the walnuts thoroughly and boil them gradually until relatively soft. Be careful not to overcook them, because the appropriate boiling and the pickling lime will keep the walnuts crispy.
6. Put them in water again with some lemon juice. When the syrup is ready*, drain them, place them in sterilized jars and pour the syrup over them.

*Pick a spoonful of syrup and let it drip back in the pan. If the syrup is watery, then it is not ready. Continue boiling until the syrup thickens. When the drops of syrup thicken and fall slowly back to the pan, it means that the density is right, and the syrup is ready.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Spoon sweets, such as walnuts, watermelon and zucchini need pickling lime to make them crispy. Attention should also be paid to their storage as the jars should be sterilized and closed airtight, so as not to go bad easily. Also, never use your hands to get the sweet from the jar, both for hygiene reasons and to not spoil all the sweets in the jar.

Spoon sweets are one of the healthiest and lightest options to fight our appetite for sweets, because they do not contain any butter and generally animal fats but only sugar. Also, spoon sweets, since they are made from fruits, they are rich in vitamins and antioxidants (vitamin C, carotenoids), which protect the heart, improve the body's defenses, and help in digestion.

SPOON SWEETS (WALNUT)

JUNE

Spoon sweets are served all year round, but their preparation is made during the season just before the fruits are fully ripen.

The walnut spoon sweet is prepared from the beginning until mid-June.



JULY - POMPES



Ingredients (for 8-10 people):

- 660 gr. well boiled potatoes, peeled and drained
- ½ kg coarse semolina
- Freshly ground dried gum
(or mastic, which is the dried gum of the Pistacia Lentiscus tree)
- 3 gr. yeast
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon sugar
- Some water

For the syrup

- 1 kg granulated sugar
- 700 ml water
- lemon juice of 1/2 lemon
- 1 stick cinnamon

Instructions

1. Mash the boiled potatoes, while they are still hot.
2. After letting the mashed potatoes cool down for a while, add the semolina mix, in which you have already added the yeast, the salt and the sugar.
3. Add the freshly ground dried gum and mix well.
4. If necessary, add some warm water to your mixture, keeping the batter created quite thick, meaning just able to come out from a pastry bag with a decorative cone.
5. It does not take long for the mixture to rise.
6. Using small scissors, cut the dough in small 4-5 cm or bigger 8-10 cm 'Pompes' while pressing the bag over a deep pan on medium heat with plenty of hot oil.
7. Fry by constantly mixing with a slotted spoon. Then transfer them to the syrup (that you have already prepared and is now cool) right away, for 15-20 seconds, and then to a strainer.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

'Pompes' is a sweet syrupy dessert, based on semolina and mastic aroma. A version claims that it has got its name because of its shape (looks like dynamite stick). A second version says that it was named as such due to its taste (in Cyprus when something is 'explosively' delicious, we use the expression 'en pompa' the equivalent of the expression 'it is a bomb').

POMPES

JULY

'Pompes' is a traditional dessert, that is consumed throughout the year. Several years ago 'Pompes' were sold by certain street vendors (peddlers), especially in football fields, during football matches and during the summer on the beach. If you are lucky when you visit us you may run into them while sunbathing.



AUGUST – SAMALI



Ingredients (for 8-10 people):

- 1 kg coarse semolina
- 6-7 eggs
- 400gr. strained yogurt
- 1 teaspoon melted mastic
- 1 cup of sugar
- 1 cup of oil
- 4 teaspoons Baking Powder
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- 1 cup peeled (blanched) almonds

Basic Syrup Recipe - Ingredients:

- 1 kg sugar
- 700 ml water
- 1 orange slice
- 1 small cinnamon stick
- 3-4 cloves
- A few drops of fresh lemon juice
- Lemon peel

Instructions

1. Mix all the ingredients together in a mixer bowl.
2. Before you pour the mix from the mixer onto a greased pan sprinkle the pan with some bread crumbs so that they stick to the bottom of the pan and on its sides.
3. Pour the mixture onto the pan and spread evenly.
4. Leave it in the pan for a while until the semolina mixture absorbs all the liquids.
5. Score in a crisscross pattern.
6. Place one peeled (blanched) almond on top of each shape.
7. Bake in a preheated oven for about 30 minutes at 180-190 °C.

Important Information

'Samali' or 'Kalon Pragma' (Good Thing) as it is also called in Cyprus, is a sweet originating from Damascus. The word derives from the Arabic 'Sammal', with 'Sam' meaning Damascus, which is the northern Arab capital, and 'Mal' meaning 'property'. It is usually served with vanilla or mastic ice-cream. Traditionally, housewives made it specially whenever they expected guests over.

You can also make a fasting version of 'Samali', by using orange juice, instead of eggs and yogurt.

SAMALI

AUGUST

Although 'Samali' can be enjoyed throughout the year, it is mostly served during the summer and autumn months, accompanied by vanilla or mastic ice-cream.



SEPTEMBER – PALOUZES



Ingredients (for 8-10 persons):

- 1 litre of white grape juice
- 5 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 5 tablespoons flower water
- 2 sprigs of rose geranium (*Pelargonium graveolens* or kiouli in Cypriot)
- A little bit of corn-starch to remove all the impurities from the must

Instructions

1. In a saucepan, boil the grape juice together with the rose geranium and the cornstarch to make it clearer. Skim the foam off (defoam).
2. Set to cool, skim it off once more and sift through a fine strainer.
3. In a bowl, dissolve the flour with a little cold grape juice (grape must) and boil the rest of the juice again.
4. When it comes to boil, add the dissolved flour by stirring it in slowly.
5. Add the flower water.
6. The thickened cream created, is the 'palouze'. Continue to simmer and stir until shiny and cooked.
7. To check if the palouze is ready, put a little bit on a small plate. If the palouze, after it cools down, feels somewhat elastic, then it is ready.
8. Serve in small shallow bowls, and sprinkle with crashed almonds on top.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

'Palouzes' or moustalevria in Greek, (from 'moustos' =grape must and 'alevri'= flour) is a dessert that holds a special place in Cypriots hearts. It is one of the first sweet puddings made by Cypriots, mainly during the period of the grape harvest.

The word 'palouzes' is believed to be derived from the Turkish word 'paluze' which means 'white-eater', perhaps because we used to add white soil in the grape must.

PALOUZES

SEPTEMBER

'Palouzes' is prepared towards the end of summer up until the beginning of autumn. Near the end of summer, the vine harvest begins. At the beginning of September, the well-known traditional wine festival takes place at our island, in Lemesos, during which visitors can enjoy 'palouze' along with sampling a wide variety of Cypriot wines!



OCTOBER – KOLOKOTES



Ingredients:

Dough Ingredients

- 1 kg village flour
- ½ glass of peanut oil
- A few drops of lemon juice or vinegar
- ½ teaspoon salt
- Lukewarm water

Ingredients for the filling

- 1 kg chopped butternut squash
 - 3/4 of a cup bulgur wheat
 - ½ a cup of olive oil
 - 1 chopped onion (optional)
 - 200 gr. raisins
 - a little bit of fresh chopped mint
- 1 teaspoon of crushed anise
 - 1 teaspoon cinnamon
 - 1-2 tablespoons sugar
 - 1/4 teaspoon salt
 - 1/4 teaspoon pepper

Instructions

1. Prepare the filling in the evening before or at least 3-4 hours in advance.
2. Add the spices just before you start assembling them.
3. Mix the ingredients to prepare the dough.
4. Let it rest and roll out the dough to make thin sheets, filling them with the pumpkin stuffing, which should be best prepared the night before, so that the pumpkin wilts and drains all its liquids. This procedure will help the bulgur wheat puff up properly, before the filling for the pastries is ready and complete.
5. Place the pies on greaseproof fitted baking sheet and bake in a traditional or home oven at 190-200 °C for 20-25 minutes.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Kolokotes, Kolokopites (butternut squash pastries) or Skepastes contain butternut squash, bulgur wheat and raisins. They are traditionally baked in a wood oven and stored in a cool place. A special variation of the well-known Cypriot dish are the Kolokotes, which are savoury, omitting the sugar from the filling.

KOLOKOTES

OCTOBER

Butternut squashes ripen late summer to September /October. Traditionally, the preparation for the 'Kolokotes/Kolokopites/Skepastes' starts just before the Christmas fasting period and continues all the way until just before Easter.



NOVEMBER – PITES SATZIS



Ingredients (for 8-10 people):

- ½ kg village flour
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 1 pinch of salt
- 1 cup water
- Cinnamon powder
- A little bit of sugar
- Honey for serving (optional)

Instructions

1. Sift the flour and add the salt.
2. Add the olive oil to the flour and gently rub it in with your fingers, until the oil is absorbed by the flour.
3. Add the water and knead to form a firm dough.
4. Roll out the dough into a thin sheet and cut into 8x8 cm square pieces.
5. Sprinkle each pita with a little bit of olive oil, cinnamon and sugar.
6. Fold the edges (tips) towards the centre of the rolled-out dough sheet to form an envelope.
7. Lightly brush the turnovers with some olive oil. Cook in a non-stick pan until golden and crunchy.
8. Serve them with honey, carob honey or grape syrup. You can even have them as they are hot right out of the pan, careful though to not burn your mouth.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Pites tis Satzis are also called 'Sakopites' or 'Kattimerka'. They were named after the utensil in which they are cooked (a satzi pan).

Satzi or Satzin is a shallow curved metal pan (like a shallow wok). Its hollow part is heated by fire while the pies are baked on the convex part. People used a Satzi pan to make 'Chilopites' (traditional pasta) also known as 'Tripites', as well as 'Laggopites'. Moreover, 'Burekia' with halloumi cheese are also made on the satzi pan.

The filling is usually either with sugar and cinnamon or with honey and cinnamon. There is also a savoury version with grated traditional halloumi, fresh mint, and olive oil.

PITES SATZIS

NOVEMBER

'Burekia' as well as 'pites tis satzis' are offered all year round. However, Cypriots prefer 'Burekia' and 'pites tis satzis' with halloumi filling, during the 'Sikoses' period while the pites with honey or sugar during the fasting period, before Christmas and Easter.



December – Halloumi Pie (Halloumopita)



Ingredients (for 2 Halloumi Pies):

- 1 kg of self-raising flour
- 10 gr. yeast
- 50 ml olive oil
- 30 gr. unsalted butter
- 10 gr. salt
- 1 1/2 glasses of cold water
- 150 gr. halloumi cut in cubes
- 3 finely chopped spring onions
- ¼ of a bunch of fresh mint, finely chopped

Instructions

1. In a small pan lightly sauté the onion, with a spoon of olive oil until soft.
2. Knead the dough with the rest of the ingredients and add the halloumi cubes, the mint and the finely chopped spring onions. Shape as you wish, either round or oblong and leave it in a warm place to rise.
3. Bake in a preheated oven at 190 °C for about 30-35 minutes.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Halloumi is a white Cypriot cheese, hard (when aged in brine for 40 days) or soft (when freshly made and consumed). The name derives from the ancient Greek word alas (salted)-halas-halloumi. Traditional halloumi cheese was hard and was made out of sheep's or goat's milk.

Halloumopita or otherwise halloumoti, is a widely spread pastry in Cypriot tradition, mostly enjoyed as breakfast or afternoon snack. Baking of traditional breads included the preparation of halloumoti (halloumi pie), elioti (olive pie) and kolokoti (butter-nut squash pie).

The homemade traditional dough, with the smell and crust created by the traditional wood oven, remains a high preference for both Cypriots and foreigners.

HALLOUMOPITA

DECEMBER

Halloumopites or Halloumotes are prepared throughout the year. They are more often produced in larger quantities closer to the holiday periods of Christmas and Easter, when the traditional wood ovens are fired up, giving them a nice woody scent.





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