



EATING WHILE ABROAD

by Catarina and Patricija

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Avocado Salsa

I like to think of this salad as a giacchino. The avocado is creamy, the salsa is the perfect mix of tangy, salty, and spicy. This salad would do well next to a steak, or, if you like heat, a thick slice of jalapeño.

SERVES 2

- 1 large avocado
- 2 cups chopped assorted fresh herbs (cilantro, mint, dill, save the cilantro stalks)
- ½ small red onion, finely diced (on page 11)
- ½ teaspoon cumin seeds, toasted (on page 11)
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- ½ teaspoon flake salt or fleur de sel
- 2 tablespoons toasted pepitas
- ½ a lime

Halve, pit, and peel the avocado. Place it down on a cutting board and slice thinly. Place 1 cup fresh herbs on a serving platter. Then top with half of the sliced avocado, the red onion, ½ teaspoon cumin seeds, a bit of olive oil, a sprinkle of salt, half of the pepitas, and a squeeze of lime. Add another layer of the avocado. Serve immediately.

Shopping

One of the biggest problems that we face when we move to a new country is to choose where to shop, where to find cheap options but also with quality. And because we don't know what we are going to find, the first days are really interesting, because you are discovering everything (of course!) and that includes finding the local supermarkets.

From our perspective, when it comes to shopping we suggest you to go to The Local Market or markets if you are a volunteer in a big city. If you want fresh food, you should definitely visit the Local Market, there you can find good vegetables, fruit, fish and meat. This way you can always support the locals and the prices are usually cheaper when we compare with the supermarkets.



If you look for another cheap option then LIDL is the place you should go to, there you can find products that you know and some local ones as well. If you can't find everything there then you can always go to other Greek supermarkets, like AB and Sklavenitis or some local store in your neighbourhood.



Money management

As volunteers we receive monthly around 300 euros and we try to use only this money to buy what we need, not only for food (food money), but also for other needs, such as health or clothes (pocket money). Giving as example our own experience, related with food money, we need to choose wisely what we want to buy, not only because we have this budget and we don't want to use more money than we should, but also because if we buy a lot of food, we will end up wasting food and that is the last thing we want to do. We have some basic tips that we can share with you:

1. As we mentioned above, choose to buy mainly vegetables and fruit in the market, they are way cheaper (majority of them) and they are fresh. Also, if you can find what you need in Lidl, buy it there, normally is cheaper than Sklavenitis or AB, but of course check the weekly paper with the promotions, you might find cheap options in Sklavenitis or AB.
2. Have a list. Check what you actually need and make a list so when you are in the market or supermarket you know exactly what you want. This way you will not buy random things that you do not need and you do not know what do it with after.
3. You can always share some food with the other volunteers/flatmates. If you only want let's imagine some spinach, but you bought a full bag of spinach you can always share with someone else, this way you share the bill and you will not waste food.
4. As happens in some volunteer houses, you might have common food, this means that you share with other volunteers some ingredients: olive oil, salt, sugar, flour, spices... this way you can always spare some money as you buy it together.

5. To help you track what you buy you can always have an app. Personally, I (Catarina), use 1money, you can find it on playstore and has a lot of options: you can set your budget let's say 290 euros and then track your expenses by categories, such as groceries, transport, health, restaurant or leisure. This way you can control your money and how you use it, in a easy way, because after shopping you only need to add the total amount of money that you spent to one of the categories.
6. Even though this is a recipe e-book and it should be only about cooking, I think this tip will be useful (and maybe you already know it): Here in Greece if you go to a restaurant / taverna you have a lot of options, so where in Kalamata what we do is: we choose some appetizers and then a main dish (like a big portion of gyros) and we share, this way you can try new things and pay around 5 or 6 euros for a really good meal and you will definitely full.



Local food



Appetisers

Tzatziki

Difficulty: Easy

Preparation time: 15 minutes

Servings: 1 bowl

Cost level: €

Ingredients

1 cup whole fat Greek yogurt

¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil

Juice ½ a lemon

½ cup finely chopped cucumber

2 cloves garlic, minced

1 tbsp freshly chopped dill

Kosher salt

Freshly ground black pepper

Pinch crushed red pepper flakes

Directions

1. In a medium bowl, combine yogurt, oil, and lemon juice.
2. Add cucumber, garlic, and dill.
3. Season with salt, pepper, and a pinch of red pepper flakes.



Greek salad

Difficulty: Easy

Preparation time: 15 minutes

Servings: 4

Cost level: €

Ingredients

- 1 twig cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1 cucumber, thinly sliced into half-moons
- 1 cup black olives, halved
- ½ red onion, thinly sliced
- ¾ cup feta, crumbled
- 2 tbsp red wine vinegar
- Juice of ½ a lemon
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil

Tip: If you're sensitive to raw red onion, soak the slices in cold water for 10 to 15 minutes, then drain and pat dry. This helps tame the spice.

Directions

1. In a large bowl, stir together tomatoes, cucumber, olives, and red onion. Gently fold in feta.
2. In a small bowl, make the dressing. Combine vinegar, lemon juice, and oregano and season with salt and pepper
3. Slowly add olive oil, whisking to combine. Drizzle dressing over salad.



Zucchini balls

Difficulty: Easy

Preparation time: 25 minutes

Servings: 20

Cost level: €

Ingredients

700 g zucchini, washed not peeled

2 eggs

100 g feta, crumbled

1 large onion, chopped

2 tbsp fresh parsley, chopped

2 tbsp fresh mint, chopped

1 tbsp fresh dill, chopped

1 tbsp dry oregano

1 tsp salt

½ cup bread crumbs

½ cup flour

½ tsp baking powder

ground pepper

Olive oil, for frying

Directions

1. Grate the zucchini, place in a colander and lightly salt. Let it sit for 10 minutes. After squeeze (with your hands) the zucchini's water.

2. In a bowl, mix the zucchini, feta, onion, parsley, mint, dill, oregano and the 2 lightly beaten eggs.

3. Sprinkle over the bread crumbs and mix.

4. Mix the flour and baking powder in a small bowl and sprinkle about half the amount over the zucchini mixture and mix. Keep adding until you have a thicker batter.

5. In a medium pan add enough olive oil. Heat the oil high heat. Scoop 1 tablespoon of dough and dip it in flour and place it in the pan. Flatten with a spatula. Fry about 2 minutes, then flip and fry for 1-2 minutes more (notice: it might take a bit longer, depending on the stove).

6. Place on paper towels to absorb the oil, serve it with tzatziki.



Grilled Halloumi Bruschetta

Difficulty: Easy

Preparation time: 25 minutes

Servings: 8

Cost level: €

Ingredients

- 1 twig cherry tomatoes, quartered
- 3 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tbsp red wine vinegar
- ¼ cup thinly sliced basil
- 2 cloves of garlic, minced
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- ½ tsp kosher salt
- Pinch crushed red pepper flakes
- 225 g halloumi cheese

Directions

1. In a large bowl, toss together tomatoes, oil, vinegar, basil, garlic, oregano, salt, and red pepper flakes.
2. Preheat grill or grill pan over medium-high heat. Brush halloumi slices on both sides lightly with oil and place on grill. Cook until golden, about 5 minutes per side.
3. Place grilled halloumi on a platter and top with tomatoes.



Saganaki

Difficulty: Easy

Preparation time: 15 minutes

Servings: 4

Cost level: €

Ingredients

400g Graviera cheese (Alternatively you can use kasseri, kefalograviera, kefalotyri)

flour, for dredging

oil for frying

½ lemon

Directions

1. Take the slice of cheese and dip it in cold water, then in white flour, shaking to remove the excess and smoothing it with your fingers.

2. Heat the olive oil in a small pan under medium heat.

3. Place the cheese in the pan and fry it for about 2 minutes that flip it and fry it for another 2 minutes. The crust must be golden.

4. Remove from the pan and place it on a plate, pour some lemon juice over it and serve it while it's hot.



Feta Cheese Flatbread

Difficulty: Easy

Preparation time: 1h 30m

Servings: 8

Cost level: €

Ingredients

200 ml milk

100 g butter

1 tbsp sugar

7 g dry yeast

400 g flour

1 tbsp salt

250 g feta cheese

oregano

Directions

1. Start by mixing all the dough ingredients until it creates the dough, knead well, then let the dough (big ball) rest for 1 hour.
2. After it, cut the big ball into 8 pieces and make a 8 smaller balls.
3. Then flatten all the 8 ball and put the feta and oregano in each one of it.
4. Roll the flatten dough again to make sure the feta is well placed. And then make the ball flat again.
5. In a frying pan cook it without oil (or just a bit). Fry it until is roasted in both sides.



Main dishes

Moussaka

Difficulty: Medium

Preparation time: 1 h 45m

Servings: 4

Cost level: €€

Ingredients

6 tbsp cooking oil

1 onion

2 cloves of garlic

500 g ground lamb $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of red wine

1 tbsp tomato paste

$1\frac{1}{2}$ cup canned crushed tomatoes in thick puree (one 30-grams can)

1 bay leaf

1 cinnamon stick

1 tsp ground allspice

1 tsp salt

fresh-ground black pepper

1 eggplant (about 500 grams)

115 g cream cheese

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup milk

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup grated Parmesan

Directions

1. Heat the broiler. In a large stainless-steel frying pan, heat 1 tablespoon of the oil over moderate heat. Add the onion and garlic; cook until starting to soften, about 3 minutes. Add the lamb and cook until the meat loses its pink colour, about 2 minutes. Stir in the wine, tomato paste, tomatoes,

bay leaf, cinnamon, allspice, 3/4 teaspoon salt, and 1/4 teaspoon pepper. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat. Simmer, covered, for 10 minutes.

2. Brush both sides of the eggplant slices with the remaining 5 tablespoons oil and season with 1/8 teaspoon each salt and pepper. Put the eggplant slices on a large baking sheet and broil, 6 inches from the heat, until browned, about 5 minutes. Turn and broil until browned on the other side, about 5 minutes longer.

3. In a small saucepan, combine the cream cheese, milk, 1/8 tps salt, and a pinch of pepper. Warm over low heat until just melted.

4. Oil an 8-by-8-inch baking dish. Layer half the eggplant in the dish, then half the meat sauce. Sprinkle with half the Parmesan. Repeat with the remaining eggplant, meat sauce, and Parmesan. Spoon the cream-cheese sauce on top; broil until just starting to brown, 1 to 2 minutes.



Pastitsio

Difficulty: Medium

Preparation time: 1h 30m

Servings: 8

Cost level: €

Ingredients

450 g penne

900 g ground lamb

2 medium onions

½ cup red wine

1 can tomato paste

½ tsp ground cinnamon

salt

pepper

6 tbsp butter

½ cup all-purpose flour

3 cup milk

¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese

Directions

1.Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Cook pasta, and drain; reserve. Meanwhile, in a large saucepan, over medium heat, cook lamb, breaking apart pieces with a wooden spoon, until no longer pink, 6 to 8 minutes. Add onions; cook, stirring occasionally, until translucent, about 5 minutes.

2.Transfer to a colander; drain fat, and discard. Return lamb to pan; add wine. Cook over medium heat until almost all liquid has evaporated, about 5 minutes.

3.Stir in tomato paste, cinnamon, and 2 cups water; simmer, stirring occasionally, until thickened, 15 to 20 minutes. Season with salt and pepper.

4. Make Parmesan cheese sauce while mixture is simmering: In a medium saucepan, melt butter over medium heat; whisk in flour until incorporated, about 30 seconds. In a slow steady stream, whisk in milk until there are no lumps.

5. Cook, whisking often, until mixture is thick and bubbly and coats the back of a wooden spoon, 6 to 8 minutes. Stir in cayenne, if desired, and Parmesan.

6. Add pasta to lamb mixture; transfer to a 9-by-13-inch baking dish. Pour sauce over the top, smoothing with the back of a spoon until level. Bake until browned in spots, 35 to 40 minutes. Remove from oven; let cool 15 minutes before serving.



Chicken Souvlaki

Difficulty: Easy

Preparation time:

Servings: 10 - 12 screws

Cost level: €€

Ingredients

10 garlic cloves, peeled

2 tbsp dried oregano

1 tsp dried rosemary

1 tsp sweet paprika

1 tsp each Kosher salt and black pepper

¼ cup extra virgin olive oil

¼ cup dry white wine

Juice of 1 lemon

2 bay leaves

1135 g boneless skinless chicken breast, fat removed, cut into 4 cm pieces

Greek pita bread

Tzatziki Sauce

Sliced tomato, cucumber, onions, and Kalamata olives

Directions

1.Prepare the marinade. In the bowl of a small food processor, add garlic, oregano, rosemary, paprika, salt, pepper, olive oil, white wine, and lemon juice (do NOT add the dried bay leaves yet). Pulse until well combined.

2.Place chicken in a large bowl and add bay leaves. Top with marinade. Toss to combine, making sure chicken is well-coated with marinade. cover tightly and refrigerate for 2 hours or overnight (see note for quicker marinating option.)

3.Soak 10 to 12 wooden skewers in water for 30 to 45 minutes or so. Prepare Tzatziki sauce and other fixings, and

if you're adding Greek salad or other sides, prepare those as well. (some sides like roasted garlic hummus may take longer, you can prepare those in advance).

4. When ready, thread marinated chicken pieces through the prepared skewers.

5. Prepare outdoor grill (or griddle). Brush grates with a little oil and heat over medium-high heat. Place chicken skewers on grill (or cook in batches on griddle) until well browned and internal temperature registers 155° on instant read thermometer. Be sure to turn skewers evenly to cook on all sides, about 5 minutes total. (Adjust temperature of grill if necessary). While grilling, brush lightly with the marinade (then discard any left marinade).

6. Transfer chicken to serving platter and let rest for 3 minutes. Meanwhile, briefly grill pitas and keep warm.

7. Assemble grilled chicken souvlaki pitas. First, spread Tzatziki sauce on pita, add chicken pieces (take them off skewers first, of course) then add veggies and olives.



Greek-black eyed Peas and Spinach

Difficulty: Easy

Preparation time: 1h 5min

Servings: 4

Cost level: €

Ingredients

225 g dry black-eyed beans

1 bay leaf / laurel

¼ cup olive oil

½ onion chopped

1 carrot sliced

½ red pepper chopped

450 g fresh spinach

2 small tomatoes crushed in a food processor
½ teaspoon fine salt

2 teaspoons breadcrumbs

Lemon for serving

Black Pepper

1 tablespoon fresh parsley, chopped

Feta cheese

Directions

1. In a pot cook the black eyed beans with the bay leaf for around 30/35 minutes, until they are almost done. Drain and set aside.

2. In another pot, heat the olive oil, onion, carrot and pepper for about 5 minutes. Add the spinach and continue heating for another 2-3 minutes until spinach wilts.

3. Add the beans, the tomatoes and ¾ cup hot water and ½ teaspoon salt and mix. Bring to a boil and then lower the heat and simmer for 25 minutes until the sauce is thick. Make sure to check the water levels while simmering,

adding more hot water as needed. Before removing from the heat add 2 teaspoons breadcrumbs and mix well, to thicken the sauce.

4. Let it cool for 5 minutes and serve with a squeeze of lemon, parsley, black pepper (ground) and feta cheese.



Desserts

Vasilopita

Difficulty: Easy

Preparation time: 1h 10m

Servings: 8 - 10

Cost level: €

Ingredients

300 g butter, at room temperature

250 g icing sugar

1 tbsp granulated sugar

7 g mahlab

2 g mastic

1/2 tsp nutmeg

2 tbsp all-purpose flour

orange zest, of 1-2 oranges

1 tsp vanilla powder

4 eggs, at room temperature

75 g milk, 3.5%

400 g all-purpose flour

1 tbsp baking powder

icing sugar

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 180* C (350*F) Fan.

2. In a mixer, beat the butter and icing sugar, with the paddle attachment until light and fluffy. Stop beating and scrape down the sides of the bowl. Beat for another 5 minutes. (It is important that the butter is at room temperature. The softer it is the fluffier your mixture will be.)

3. While you are waiting, add the remaining ingredients from

the 1st mixture (apart from the orange zest) and beat them in a blender along with a tablespoon of sugar, until they become powdery. When ready, add the orange zest and mix.

4. Add this powdery mixture to the mixer and beat on low speed.

5. Add all the ingredients from the 2nd mixture, in batches. Release the mixing bowl and add the ingredients from the 3rd mixture. Mix with a large spoon.

6. Grease a round 25 cm spring form baking pan and dust with flour. Transfer the batter to the baking pan. Bake for 45-50 minutes.

7. When ready, remove from oven and dust with icing sugar and serve!

If you would like to follow the Greek tradition, wrap a coin and place it somewhere in the cake before you bake it! It will be a Lucky New Year for whichever family member or friend finds it in their slice!



Portokalopita

Difficulty: Easy

Preparation time: 1h 10m

Servings: 10

Cost level: €

Ingredients

FOR THE PORTOKALOPITA

200 g yogurt (2% fat)

300 ml corn oil

300 ml sugar

300 ml orange juice

20 g baking powder

zest of 1 1/2 orange

1 tsp vanilla extract

440–450 g phyllo dough

FOR THE SYRUP

400 ml water

400 ml sugar

zest of 1 orange

1 cinnamon stick (optional)

Directions

1. Unwrap the phyllo dough from the plastic sleeve; place the sheets on a large surface and leave at room temperature for 20 minutes, in order to dry well. Alternatively, spread a few on a large baking tray and bake at 100C, until dry; repeat with the rest.

2. To prepare this Greek orange cake, start first by preparing the syrup. Pour into a pot the water, the sugar, the orange zest and a cinnamon stick and bring to the boil. Simmer for 5-10 minutes, until the sugar is dissolved and the syrup has thickened. Leave aside to cool.

3. In the meantime prepare the mixture for the orange cake. Pour the corn oil into a large bowl, add the sugar and whisk. Add the yogurt, the orange juice, the orange zest and the vanilla extract and whisk well, until the ingredients combine and the mixture is smooth. Add the baking powder, and blend lightly.

4. Tear the sheets of the phyllo dough into small pieces, using your hands and add into the mixture; whisk well.

5. Using a cooking brush, oil the bottom and the sides of a baking tray (approx. 20x30 cm) and pour in the mixture. Bake in preheated oven at 170-180 C for 40-50 minutes until, nicely coloured and cooked through. Check if it is ready, by making a hole with a knife. If the knife comes out clean, then the cake is ready.

6. To finish the orange cake, ladle slowly the cold syrup over the hot cake. Allow each ladle of syrup to be absorbed, before ladling again.

7. Allow time for the syrup to be absorbed and put in the refrigerator. Greek orange cake is ideally served cold, not hot, so that it does not crumble.



Coffee



If you are a coffee lover you will think that Greece is a paradise, simply because you have so many options to choose. Here you can find... let's say international coffee or coffee drinks like cappuccino or just the normal espresso, but I will risk and guess that you will prefer the famous Freddo espresso (that basically every Greek love) or the Greek Coffee. We decided to include this chapter in our recipes ebook because coffee is part of the Greek Culture and from our experience is actually part of their daily life and easily becomes part of your once you feel well connected with the city you live and the country.

