



THE  Mediterranean
DIET

30-DAY CHALLENGE

PLATINUM
Cookbook

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For years, the Mediterranean way of life has been looked to for health and inspiration, and it's easy to see why.

Diets rich in fruits, vegetables, fish, and healthy fats are good for us, particularly our hearts.

Eating like they do in countries such as Greece, Italy, and Turkey has been shown to reduce the risk of heart disease. According to the Mayo Clinic, it's also associated with a reduced risk of cancer, Parkinson's disease, and Alzheimer's disease.



What the Mediterranean Diet Is All About

The Mediterranean diet draws upon the culinary practices of southern Europe, North Africa, and the Mediterranean Middle East, all areas where food is prepared to be savored and enjoyed, not rushed.

Fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, nuts, and herbs make up the foundation of this diet's "pyramid," and every meal is centered around them. Fish is eaten at least twice a week, while poultry, eggs, and dairy are eaten less often, perhaps just a few days a week. Meats and sweets, meanwhile, are served in moderation.

Healthy fats, like olive oil, should be used in place of others, like butter and vegetable oil. And even red wine can be enjoyed in moderate amounts.

Need some examples? We've compiled some of the best, authentic recipes for Mediterranean-style eating. Bon appetit!

Legal Disclaimer

The information in this manual is not intended to replace medical advice. No action or inaction should be taken based solely on the contents of this book. Before beginning this or any other nutritional or exercise regimen, consult your physician to ensure it is appropriate for you.

The information and opinions expressed here are believed to be accurate, based on the best judgment of the author. Readers who fail to consult with appropriate health authorities assume the risk of any injuries.

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The Mediterranean Diet 30-Day Challenge

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Fattoush Salad

.....

Pita chips in a salad?

The crunchy bite means the fattoush always goes fast in a Middle Eastern meze. The salad features all of the fresh summer ingredients you'd find in a traditional garden, along with a lime vinaigrette that has allspice and cinnamon.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 loaves pita bread
- Early Harvest Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- 1/2 tsp sumac, more for later
- Salt and pepper
- 1 heart of Romaine lettuce, chopped
- 1 English cucumber, chopped
- 5 Roma tomatoes, chopped
- 5 green onions (both white and green parts), chopped
- 5 radishes, stems removed, thinly sliced
- 2 cups chopped fresh parsley leaves, stems removed
- 1 cup chopped fresh mint leaves (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Toast the pita bread in your toaster oven until it is crisp but not browned. Heat 3 tbsp of olive oil in a large pan. Break the pita bread into pieces, and place in the heated oil. Fry briefly until browned, tossing frequently. Add salt, pepper and 1/2 tsp of sumac. Remove the pita chips from the heat and place on paper towels to drain.
2. In a large mixing bowl, combine the chopped lettuce, cucumber, tomatoes, and green onions with the sliced radish and parsley.
3. To make the lime vinaigrette, whisk together the lime juice, olive oil and spices in a small bowl.
4. Dress the salad with the vinaigrette and toss lightly. Finally, add the pita chips, and more sumac if you like, and toss one more time. Transfer to small serving bowls or plates. Enjoy!



Bourtheto Fish Stew

.....

One of the best things about **Mediterranean cooking** is its simplicity, and this fish stew nails it. From the Greek cooking blog *Lemon & Olives*, this recipe is low on ingredients and high on flavor.

INGREDIENTS

- 4 cod fillets
- 1¼ cups onion, sliced (or diced if you like)
- 1 cup water
- ¼ cup olive oil
- ½ teaspoon paprika
- ⅓ teaspoon cayenne
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper

INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a pan add: water, olive oil, onions, paprika, cayenne, salt and pepper.
2. Bring to boil, reduce heat and simmer for 10-15 minutes, until onions soften.
3. Add cod and continue simmering for another 10-15 minutes or until fish is done.
4. Place the desired number of fish in each dish, top with onion mixture.
5. Serve!

Tip:

Feel free to add a bit more water if needed. Just taste to keep flavors consistent.



Lemon Shrimp Pasta

.....

No, pasta doesn't have to be off-limits when you're eating healthfully. Choose whole-grain pasta and keep your portion sizes under control, and you'll have no problem fitting recipes like this one into your daily **Mediterranean diet**.

INGREDIENTS

- Red Onion
- Garlic
- Shrimp
- Red hot chili pepper
- Lemon
- Penne pasta
- Parsley

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Slice a red onion and some garlic, and sauté them for a few minutes with a pinch of salt and pepper.
2. Add the shrimp in for a couple of minutes with about a half cup of white wine and a cup of chicken broth and let this simmer just a little.
3. Add in a large pinch of red hot chili pepper, and the zest and juice of one lemon and let that simmer, covered, for a couple of minutes until the shrimp are just poached.
4. Meanwhile, boil the penne pasta. When that is almost done, take the pasta out and add it to the skillet with the shrimp and sauce.
5. The last touch: add a handful of chopped parsley and a few gratings of parmesan cheese.



Cicoria e Fagioli

.....

Six ingredients and 20 minutes is all you need to prepare a warm, satisfying, and healthy meal for your family.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 large or 3 medium heads of chicory
- 1 small can (425g/15 oz) of cannellini or borlotti beans (or equivalent boiled beans)
- 2-3 cloves of garlic
- 1 peperoncino or a pinch of dried pepper flakes (optional)
- Olive oil
- Salt

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Most chicory these days is sold pre-washed, but if you have any doubts, soak it in several changes of water to remove any grit. Drain well, reserving the light-colored heart if you like for salad (see Notes), and cut off the roots.
2. Boil the chicory in salted water until fully tender, about 5-10 minutes. Drain, reserving the cooking water. You can let the chicory cool if you have the time, or rinse it under cold water if you don't. Squeeze the chicory dry and chop it roughly.
3. In a large braised or sauté pan, lightly brown the garlic in abundant olive oil, adding the peperoncino or red pepper flakes for a few moments at the end. Remove both garlic and peperoncino. (The pepper flakes can stay in the pan, but proceed to the next step right away to avoid them burning and becoming bitter.)
4. Add the chopped chicory to the seasoned oil and let it simmer for about 5 minutes so it has a chance to absorb the flavorings. Then add the canned or boiled beans, along with a ladleful (or more) of the cooking water. Mix well but gingerly to avoid breaking up the beans. Let the mixture simmer for another few minutes.
5. Taste and adjust for seasoning, and serve hot or warm. A drizzle of good-quality olive oil doesn't hurt.



Halloumi, Mushroom, and Chorizo Tacos

.....

Tacos aren't exactly Mediterranean, but halloumi is. The salty goat cheese originates from Cyprus, and pairs well with anything savory or sweet. You don't have to fry the halloumi in this recipe, but if you do, use just a dribble of olive oil.

INGREDIENTS

- 500g button mushrooms, wiped clean, cut into quarters
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp black pepper
- A small pinch of Greek dried oregano
- 1 large cooked chorizo sausage (approx. 125g), sliced into 1cm even chunks
- 200g halloumi cheese, sliced in half
- 8 medium-sized tortillas, warmed in a pan
- freshly chopped chilies
- chopped coriander

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Combine the mushrooms, olive oil, salt, pepper and oregano in a bowl. Place on baking tray and cook in a 200°C oven for 30-35 minutes. Remove and set aside and allow to cool slightly.
2. Pre-heat a little oil in a pan and cook the chorizo on medium-high heat for a few minutes until crispy. Remove and set aside.
3. In the same pan, fry the halloumi for 2 minutes on each side until browned and soft. Once cooked, cut the halloumi into small even slices.
4. Combine the mushrooms, chorizo and halloumi in a separate bowl.
5. To make a taco, place 2-3 tbsp of the mushroom mixture into a warmed tortilla. Garnish with fresh chilies and coriander and serve immediately.



Cabbage Stuffed with Marinated Cod

.....

This is a Spanish recipe that's heavy on flavor, but it's pretty time-intensive. You'll need to plan ahead because the cod needs to be soaked for 36 hours, but it's definitely **worth the wait**.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 head Savoy cabbage
- 1½ lb. (600 g) cod fillets
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) canola oil
- 1 yellow onion, chopped
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 cup (250 ml) fine dried bread crumbs
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- 2 tbsp (15 ml) finely chopped fresh curly-leaf parsley
- 2 tbsp (15 ml) finely chopped fresh dill
- salt and freshly ground white pepper
- 4 tbsp (60 ml) mild German mustard
- 2 cups (500 ml) dry white wine
- 1 cup (250 ml) heavy cream

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Fill a large pot half full with water and bring to a boil over high heat. Immerse the cabbage in the boiling water and cook until the outer leaves have loosened and can be peeled off, about 5 minutes. To test, using a wire skimmer, carefully lift out the cabbage head and try to peel away the outer leaves; if they do not come away, return the head to the water for a couple minutes more, then test again. Peel off as many whole leaves as you can easily remove without tearing them. Return the cabbage head to the boiling water and repeat the process until you have six whole leaves. Arrange the leaves, interior-side up, in a single layer on a work surface and let them cool completely.
2. Preheat the oven to 350°F (180°C).
3. Finely chop the cod fillets, discarding any errant bones. Put the fish in a medium bowl, then cover and refrigerate until ready to use.
4. In a medium sauté pan, heat the canola oil over medium-high heat. Add the onion and garlic and cook, stirring occasionally, until the onion is translucent, about 4 minutes. Remove from the heat and let cool completely.
5. Add the cooled onion mixture, bread crumbs, egg, parsley, dill, 1 teaspoon (5 ml) salt, ½ teaspoon (2.5 ml) white pepper and 2 tablespoons (30 ml) of the mustard to the cod and mix well.
6. Divide the cod mixture into six equal portions and shape each into a rough log shape. Put a portion about 1 inch (2.5 cm) from the bottom edge of a cabbage leaf, where the stem is the thickest. Lift the edge of the leaf over the filling and then roll up the filling in the leaf, folding in the sides as you roll. Place the roll, seam-side down, in a baking dish just large enough to accommodate all the rolls. Repeat with the remaining cabbage leaves and filling portions. Pour the wine into the dish.
7. Bake the rolls until a thermometer inserted into the centre of a roll registers 145°F (63°C). Remove the dish from the oven, pour off the liquid into a medium saucepan and cover the rolls in the dish to keep them warm.
8. Place the saucepan over medium-high heat and bring the liquid to a boil. Whisk in the cream until heated through and lightly thickened, then whisk in the remaining 2 tablespoons (30 ml) of mustard. Season with salt and white pepper.
9. Arrange the cabbage rolls on a platter and pour the sauce over the top. Serve immediately.



Zucchini Blossoms with Bulgur

Have you ever eaten flowers? **These zucchini blossoms** will make you wonder why you didn't start sooner. Stuffed with herbs and bulgur wheat, the pretty flowers are just as satisfying to eat as they are to look at.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup olive oil
- 1 cup onion, chopped
- 1 cup chives, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 cup zucchini, grated
- 1 cup bulgur (cracked wheat)
- 2/3 cup raisins (optional)
- 1/2-1 tsp chili pepper
- 1 1/2 cups water
- 1/2 cup pine nuts (optional)
- 3 tbsp fresh mint leaves, chopped
- 1/2-2/3 cup dill, chopped
- Pepper
- Salt
- 20 -25 zucchini blossoms
- 3 cups yogurt

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F.
2. In a deep skillet, heat half the oil over medium heat and sauté the onion, chives, and garlic until soft, about 5 minutes.
3. Add the zucchini, bulgur, raisins, chili pepper, and 1 cup water. Reduce the heat and simmer for 10 minutes. Add a little more water if all is absorbed.
4. Turn off the heat and add the pine nuts, mint, and dill to the stuffing. Season with salt, stir, and taste. Add more salt and pepper if needed.
5. Using a spoon, carefully stuff each blossom.
6. Fold the top over and place on their sides, very closely together, in an earthenware casserole.
7. Pour the remaining olive oil and 1/2 cup water.
8. Cover the dish and place in the oven.
9. Bake for about 1 hour, checking periodically to see if a little more water is needed, until most of the liquid has been absorbed.
10. Serve hot or cold, accompanied by yogurt.



Chickpea and Eggplant Warm Salad

.....

Fresh, satisfying ingredients that won't put you in a post-meal coma — another benefit of eating **Mediterranean-style foods**. This salad from *Silvia's Cucina* tastes indulgent, but is very healthy.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 large aubergine (eggplant), cut into 2cm cubes
- 1 garlic clove, skin on and bashed with the back of a knife
- 4 tablespoons of extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 teaspoon of paprika
- 1 tin of chickpeas, well drained
- salt and pepper for seasoning
- parsley leaves and nasturtium to scatter on top

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Heat up the oil in a large, non-stick frying pan. Add the garlic and cook in the oil to infuse its scent for 1 minute. Add the aubergine, stir well until fully coated with the oil, then turn the heat to medium-low, cover with a lid and allow the hot oil and the steam to cook the vegetables gently for 15 minutes. Stir from time to time.
2. When the aubergines look soft and slightly caramelized, add the chickpeas and paprika, stir well and cook, uncovered, over medium heat for 4-5 minutes. Taste for salt and adjust accordingly.
3. Serve warm, topped with parsley and nasturtium leaves and some ground black pepper.



Tabbouleh

.....

Tabbouleh traces its roots to Syria, but you'll find it in many other Mediterranean restaurants, too. With herbs and fresh lemon juice, it's refreshing and filling, making it popular as a side dish to falafel or fish, or even as a meal on its own.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 teaspoon lemon zest
- 1/4 cup lemon juice
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper (coarsely ground)
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 cup cracked bulgur
- 1/2 red onion (finely diced)
- 140 grams flat-leaf parsley
- 140 grams Lebanese cucumbers (~2 cucumbers, cubed)
- 225 grams tomatoes (~2 tomatoes, cubed)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Whisk the lemon zest, lemon juice, olive oil, black pepper and salt together in a small bowl, then add the bulgur wheat. Let this soak for 1 to 2 hours, depending on the coarseness of your bulgur and how soft you want it.
2. If the raw onion is too strong for your tastes, soak the minced onion in cold water for an hour or two to tame it. You may need to change the water a few times. Drain and dry thoroughly with paper towels before using them in the salad.
3. Wash the parsley then use a salad spinner or paper towels to thoroughly dry it. Remove all the stems, then grab a handful, roll it up and slice the roll as thinly as possible. Now chop the parsley across, perpendicular to the direction you sliced in, to get it pretty evenly chopped.
4. Add the parsley to a large bowl along with the cucumbers, tomatoes and onions. Add the soaked bulgur along with the dressing and toss everything together. Tabbouleh tastes fresh the day it's made, but if you let it sit overnight, the flavors have a chance to meld and it tastes even better.



Louvi

.....

You can eat this one warm in winter, or cold in summer — perfect for a home-prepared work lunch. “**Louvi**” is what they call black-eyed beans in Cyprus. There are many traditional ways to prepare them — paired with green beans, or zucchini, for example, but this recipe calls for chard.

INGREDIENTS

- 250 grams black-eyed beans
- 1 bunch of silverbeet or chard (about 3 cups)
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 1 spring onion, finely chopped
- 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 2 – 3 tablespoons parsley, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon dill or fennel fronds
- Salt (in moderation) and freshly ground black pepper
- 1/3 cup lemon juice*
- 4 cups water

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Put black-eyed beans in a pot with water and boil for 15 minutes and drain.
2. In the meantime, wash and cut silverbeet into smaller pieces.
3. Sauté the onion and garlic with olive oil and then add silverbeet and stir.
4. Add the beans and season with salt and pepper. Add lemon juice and water to cover all ingredients.
5. Bring to boil, reduce heat and cook on low heat until the beans are soft.
6. Turn off the heat and mix in the parsley and dill.
7. Serve with a drizzle of olive oil and lemon juice (optional).



Bamies

.....

Okra — you either love or hate the slimy pods. If you love them, you'll definitely enjoy this recipe that pairs small, fresh okra with stewed tomatoes. It's a simple dish that's a staple in any Greek or Arabic kitchen. Eat it by itself, with bread or rice, or as a side dish (it pairs well with fish).

INGREDIENTS

- 500 grams of fresh okra
- 2 tablespoons of red wine vinegar
- 1/2 cup of olive oil
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 500 grams of fresh pureed tomatoes or a can of pureed tomatoes
- a handful of fresh, flat leaf parsley, chopped
- salt and pepper to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Wash the okra and trim the pointy ends off.
2. Sprinkle with red wine vinegar and let them stand for one hour in a bowl. Once the hour has passed, rinse them in cold water and drain.
3. Heat the oil in a heavy-bottomed sauce pan and sauté the onion over low heat until it softens.
4. Add the okra and toss the olive oil/onion mixture for about 5 minutes.
5. Add the tomatoes and parsley. Season to taste.
6. Bring the mixture to a boil on medium-high heat, then allow to simmer for approximately 20-30 minutes on low-medium heat.
7. Once the okra is tender, serve immediately with crusty bread.



Hummus

.....

A classic Mediterranean dish, **hummus** is made with chickpeas, tahini, lemon, and more. It's great as a sandwich filling, salad dressing, or for dipping vegetables in.

INGREDIENTS

- 400g boiled or canned chickpeas (14 oz.)
- 3 tablespoons tahini
- juice of 1 large lemon
- 4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 2 cloves of garlic, minced
- 1/2-1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- 2 tablespoons water
- a pinch of paprika for garnish

INSTRUCTIONS

1. When making a homemade hummus recipe, what really makes a difference is the order in which you add the ingredients.
2. For this hummus recipe, start by adding the tahini and lemon juice in a food processor or blender and pulse for about 1 minute, until thick and light in color. Then add chickpeas. Process the mixture until the chickpeas are minced.
3. Lots of hummus recipes require removing the skins of the chickpeas. Although this is not difficult, it will certainly take some more time, but the truth is, having tested both ways, I am not sure that it is worth the trouble. If you have the time, try it for yourself by gently pinching the chickpeas until the skin comes off.
4. Add the minced garlic and pour in the olive oil a little bit at a time, while pulsing, like making mayonnaise. Blend until the oil is incorporated and the hummus mixture is smooth or coarsely pureed, depending on your preference.
5. Season with salt and cumin and pour in 1-2 tablespoons of water if the hummus is too thick. Pulse for 1 more minute. Done!



Swordfish with Capers

With a mild flavor, **swordfish** lends itself to whatever you add to it. In this case, those additions are simple yet flavorful. Think garlic, capers, and herbs. You'll enjoy this no matter what the weather, but we're thinking dinner in the summertime.

INGREDIENTS

- One swordfish steak per person
- Olive oil
- Salt to taste
- 1-2 garlic cloves, peeled and slightly crushed (optional)

For the sauce:

- The juice of one freshly squeezed lemon
- A handful of capers
- A few sprigs of parsley, finely minced
- A pinch of oregano
- A pinch of red pepper flakes (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Sauté the swordfish steaks in olive oil over moderate heat for about 3 minutes or so per side, until they are just lightly browned, seasoning them to taste as they cook. Remove the steaks from the skillet and keep warm. If using garlic, add it to the skillet along with the swordfish and discard it when the steaks are done.
2. Add the sauce ingredients to the skillet, bring them to a simmer and let them reduce for just a minute or two.
3. Nap the swordfish steaks with the sauce and serve right away.



Chicken Tagine with Apricots and Almonds

.....

Tagines, or tajines, are clay pots used for cooking in North African countries. But if you don't happen to have one, your Dutch oven will work fine. This authentic Moroccan recipe is fairly intensive, but your family will thank you as your home fills with the smells of ginger, cumin, coriander, and cinnamon.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 600 g chicken breast, cut into four pieces each
- 1 onion
- 1 tbsp Ras el Hanout spice mix
- 2 tsp fresh ginger, grated
- 1/4 tsp turmeric (or saffron)
- 100 g apricots, dried and roughly chopped
- 400 g carrots, sliced
- 600 ml chicken stock
- 4 tbsp fresh parsley, roughly chopped
- 20 g almonds, flaked

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Heat a large flameproof casserole dish and add the oil. Add the chicken pieces, cooking them for 2 to 3 minutes over medium heat without moving them, then turn them over to cook for a further 2 minutes until nicely browned.
2. Add the onions, Ras el Hanout seasoning, ginger, turmeric or saffron, apricots, carrots and stock. Stir in half the parsley.
3. Cover and simmer over low heat for 30 to 40 minutes.
4. Check the seasoning, then serve, sprinkled with the almonds and remaining parsley.



Lentil Soup with Kale

.....

This hearty recipe calls for **kale**, but could just as easily be made with **Swiss chard or spinach**. Just make sure it's fresh! Real Mediterranean cooking rarely calls for convenience foods like frozen or canned vegetables.

INGREDIENTS

- 1/3 cup Extra virgin Greek olive oil plus more for drizzling
- 1 large red onion, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 pound small brown or green lentils, rinsed and drained
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 dried chili pepper (optional)
- 1 1/2 cups canned chopped tomatoes
- 3 cups water or vegetable stock
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 3 cups trimmed chopped fresh kale
- 2–3 tablespoons Vrisi 36 Greek balsamic vinegar

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Heat the olive oil in a large pot over medium flame and wilt the onions, stirring occasionally, for about 7–8 minutes. Add the garlic and stir for a minute until soft. Add the lentils and stir to coat in the olive oil.
2. Add the tomatoes, bay leaf and chili pepper (if using). Pour in the water or stock. Bring to a boil over medium heat and reduce to a simmer. Add additional water or stock if necessary for there to be enough liquid to cover the lentils by 2 inches. Simmer, covered, for 45–50 minutes, or until the lentils are softened but al dente.
3. Stir in the chopped kale and season to taste with salt and pepper. Add more water if necessary. Simmer the soup for another 10 minutes or so, until the kale is tender. Stir in the balsamic and adjust seasoning with salt and pepper to taste.
4. Serve in individual bowls and drizzle at least a tablespoon of Vrisi 36 Bold olive oil into each serving.



Grilled Fish in Saffron Sauce

.....

Grilled fish is a great summer dish that is deceptively simple to make. This Lebanese recipe calls for whole fish, but if fish faces are not your cup of tea, you can swap in larger fillets, like **swordfish**.

INGREDIENTS

- 4 fishes of any type, whole can be substituted for fillets of catfish or swordfish
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil (walnut oil recommended)
- 1 pinch saffron filaments soaked in 1/4 cup hot water for 10 minutes prior
- 1 teaspoon sea-salt to taste
- 1/2 teaspoon white pepper (can substitute other spices like cumin or sumac)
- 1/2 cup tomato sauce or 1 tablespoon tomato paste or ketchup
- 1 large lemon or lime, quartered

INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a small bowl, mix all the sauce ingredients (tomato ketchup/paste, salt, pepper, saffron, and other spices), adding more tomato sauce or spices to taste. Keep a brush nearby to use when coating the fish with the sauce.
2. Heat the grill till very hot. Season the fish (already cleaned and gutted) and brush with oil. Brush the grill with oil prior to grilling the fish on it to keep it from sticking.
3. Grill the fish 3 minutes on each side, brushing with the sauce every 15 seconds. Serve hot with lemon or lime quarters.



Barbunya Pilaki

.....

A typical **Turkish dish, barbunya pilaki** can be served hot as a main dish, or cold as a side dish. Boil your borlotti beans and let them cool, before mixing in tomato, parsley, and the rest of the ingredients.

INGREDIENTS

- 350 gr/12 oz./2 cups dried borlotti beans (or cranberry beans), soaked in warm water overnight
- 1 medium to large onion, finely chopped
- 2 medium carrots, quartered and chopped in small cubes,
- 400 gr/ 1 can of good-quality canned chopped tomatoes
- Handful of flat leaf parsley, finely chopped
- 10 ml/ 2 tsp sugar
- 45ml/ 3 tbsp olive oil
- 16 fl. oz./2 cups water
- 1 lemon, cut in wedges
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Soak the dried borlotti (or cranberry) beans overnight or for at least 8 hours.
2. Then drain the beans, rinse and transfer to a pot filled with plenty of cold water.
3. Bring the pot to the boil, partially cover the pot and simmer for about 30–35 minutes. Make sure the beans become tender, but not soft or mushy. They should still have a bite to them.
4. Drain and rinse the cooked beans under cold water and set them aside.
5. Heat the olive oil in the pot and stir in the onions, sauté for 2–3 minutes until they start to soften.
6. Add the carrots, combine well and sauté for another 2 minutes.
7. Stir in the canned tomatoes and sugar, season with salt and freshly ground black pepper. Combine well.
8. Add the beans to the pot and give it a good mix. Then pour in the water, combine well.
9. Bring the pot to the boil, then turn the heat to low, cover the pan partially.
10. Simmer for 30 to 35 minutes until the beans are cooked (but not mushy). Check the seasoning and add a little more salt or ground black pepper if needed.
11. Serve Barbunya Pilaki at room temperature or cold as part of a mezze spread or appetizer, garnished with chopped parsley and wedges of lemon by the side to squeeze over. If you choose to serve next to main courses, I suggest serving Barbunya Pilaki warm.



Eggplant Frittata

.....

This would make for a great **Sunday brunch with friends**. The cheese used is high in quality, but kept to a minimum. It's loaded with garlic for flavor and can be ready in less than an hour, including prep time.

INGREDIENTS

- 8 eggs
- 1.5 lb (700g) eggplants, peeled and cubed
- 1 onion, chopped
- 6 garlic cloves, crushed
- 2 oz Gruyère cheese, grated
- 1 tbsp chopped parsley
- salt and pepper to taste
- 2 tbsp olive oil

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Sprinkle sea salt over eggplant cubes and let them sit in a colander for half an hour. Rinse the eggplants then pat them dry with paper towels.
2. Heat 2 tbsp of olive oil in a skillet and saute the onion. Add the eggplant cubes and the garlic and let them cook on medium-low heat until golden and cooked. Stir them frequently.
3. In a bowl, whisk the eggs with cheese, salt and pepper. Pour in the egg mixture to the cooked eggplants, lifting edges of eggplant so eggs coat the bottom of skillet. Cook over low heat, covered, until set and cooked through. Sprinkle with chopped parsley and serve!



Calamari Salad

.....

Seafood is a staple in coastal cuisines, and this salad from *Frutto Della Passione* requires the freshest calamari. If you can get it, don't fry it up, but enhance the flavors with simple ingredients like white wine, olive oil, garlic, and salt.

INGREDIENTS

- 75 gr very finely diced carrots, celery and onion
- 1 clove minced garlic
- 15 ml extra virgin olive oil
- 500 gr calamari cut into rings
- 250 ml white wine
- Worcestershire sauce to taste
- Tabasco to taste
- Salt to taste
- Lettuce and tomatoes or rice (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a large pan, heat the oil then add the garlic and diced carrots, celery and onion.
2. When the vegetables start to become tender, add the calamari and cook for a few minutes, then add the white wine, Worcestershire, tabasco and salt. Cover and cook for 5 to 10 minutes. At this point, you need to check the calamari to see that the consistency is correct. Calamari when sliced in rings cooks quickly, so you must make sure you don't overcook it and end up with rubbery rings.
3. When the calamari has cooled to the point that it is just warm, you can serve it over cut lettuce and tomatoes, using the liquid to dress the salad.
4. Another option is to serve the calamari over a bed of rice.



Spanakorizo

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You may have had **spanakopita** at your favorite Greek restaurant. This is similar, but without the buttery phyllo dough. Spanakorizo, or spinach rice, features hints of mint, dill, onions, and lemon. It's a delightful side dish or vegetarian entrée. Try topping it with a spoonful of Greek yogurt.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound fresh spinach, rinsed
- Juice of half lemon
- 1 onion chopped or 2-3 spring onions chopped
- 2 ½ tablespoons olive oil, plus more for drizzling
- 1 teaspoon dry mint
- 1-2 tablespoons chopped dill
- 2/3 cups water
- 1/3 cup medium-grain rice
- Salt/Pepper
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a large pot, wilt the spinach with the lemon juice and 1 teaspoon olive oil. Set aside to drain.
2. In another pot, sauté the onion with the rest of the olive oil until soft.
3. Add the spinach, dry mint, dill and 2/3 cup warm water and bring to a boil.
4. Add the rice, salt (as needed) and pepper and simmer for about 20 minutes until rice is soft. Add additional warm water as needed.
5. Serve warm or at room temperature with a squeeze of lemon juice and a bit of olive oil and feta.



Tsigareli

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Leafy greens are extremely nutritious and provide loads of flavor to any dish. This recipe from Diane Kochilas, a Greek blogger and chef, combines tender greens of your choice with onions, tomatoes, and flavorful spices and herbs. It would be a great dish to warm up to on a cold winter evening.

INGREDIENTS

- 2.5 pounds / 1-1 ¼ kg fresh and preferably mixed tender greens, such as spinach, sorrel and dandelion, trimmed and washed well
- ¼ cup extra virgin Greek olive oil
- 2 large onions, halved and sliced
- 2 leeks, washed well and finely chopped
- 1 ¼ cups snipped fresh wild fennel leaves or mint leaves
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 teaspoons sweet paprika powder
- 1 cup plum tomatoes, peeled and finely chopped
- 1 ¼ cups snipped fresh dill
- Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
- 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1-2 tablespoons tomato paste

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Blanch the greens until wilted, and then drain completely.
2. Heat the olive oil in a large skillet and cook the onions and leek, stirring over medium heat until soft, 5 to 7 minutes. Add the garlic, tomato paste, cayenne and paprika and stir for about 3 minutes. Add the wilted greens, dill, wild fennel leaves or mint leaves, and tomatoes. Simmer over low heat, uncovered, for about 20 minutes, until the greens are soft and all the pan liquids have cooked off. The dish should be fairly dry.
3. Adjust the seasoning with salt and cayenne, and serve either hot or warm with fresh country bread. Pour a little fresh olive oil over the greens once they are cooked, if desired.