

Kalliopi's Kitchen

A FREE RECIPE GUIDE

Taste of Cyprus

Ten island recipes the Greek mainland never had, from koupepia to flaounes to a grape-must candy with no refined sugar at all.



WELCOME

Welcome to the island

Καλώς ήρθατε Kalós írthate, Greek for welcome

Every Greek recipe site treats Cyprus as a footnote, a paragraph at the bottom of a Greek Easter post, maybe one lonely halloumi recipe. That never sat right with me.

Cyprus has its own kitchen. Sheftalia instead of loukaniko, koupepia instead of dolmades, a grape-must candy called soutzoukos that has nothing to do with Greek pastries at all. The island sits where Greek, Middle Eastern and Ottoman cooking actually meet, and you can taste that crossing point in almost everything on this table.

So here are ten of those dishes, properly written up, the same way every recipe on Kalliopi's Kitchen is: real method, real quantities, and the Greek name in Greek script so you know exactly what you are asking for at the butcher's counter or the deli.



Yiayia Kalliopi

Why Cyprus tastes different

Cyprus is the third-largest island in the Mediterranean, closer to Beirut and the Turkish coast than it is to Athens. That geography shows up on the plate. Cypriot cooking shares the Greek pantry, olive oil, lemon, oregano, but leans on cumin, coriander seed and cinnamon in savoury dishes far more than mainland Greek cooking does, and it borrows techniques (caul-fat sausages, bulgur shells stuffed with meat) that barely exist in an Athens kitchen at all.

Two ingredients mark the island out immediately. Halloumi, the protected Cypriot cheese with a melting point high enough to grill, appears at nearly every meal. And mint, not dill, is the herb that runs through Cypriot cooking the way dill runs through Greek.

None of the ten recipes here are lesser-known variants of mainland dishes. They are the island's own repertoire, and several, tavas, flaounes, the brandy sour, do not really have a mainland equivalent at all.



Cyprus, highlighted within the wider Greek world

CONTENTS

The Ten

01	Halloumi	Χαλλούμι	MEZE
02	Kouperia	Κουπέπια	MAIN
03	Sheftalia	Σεφταλιά	MAIN
04	Afelia	Αφέλια	MAIN
05	Koupes	Κούπες	MEZE
06	Flaounes	Φλαούνες	BREAD
07	Tahinopita	Ταχινόπιτα	BREAD
08	Soutzoukos	Σουτζιούκος	DESSERT
09	Anari me meli	Ανάρι με μέλι	DESSERT
10	Makaronia tou fournou	Μακαρόνια του φούρνου	MAIN

Χαλλούμι

Halloumi, hah-LOO-mee

Grilled Halloumi

Halloumi is a Cypriot brined cheese with a high melting point, so it browns and softens without losing its shape.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL
5 min	6 min	4	Beginner



INGREDIENTS

500 g (1 lb 2 oz) halloumi, 2 blocks

1 lemon, cut into wedges

2 tsp dried mint

black pepper

1 tbsp olive oil, to finish, optional

KITCHEN NOTE

Halloumi releases its own fat. Oil just makes it greasy and encourages it to spit.

METHOD

- 1 Cut each block of halloumi across into slices about 1 cm thick.
- 2 If the cheese is very salty, soak the slices in cold water for 20 minutes first.
- 3 Pat every slice thoroughly dry with kitchen paper. Surface moisture will steam instead of browning.
- 4 Heat a non-stick or cast iron frying pan or a ridged griddle over a medium-high heat until properly hot. Add no oil.
- 5 Lay the slices in the pan without crowding them and leave completely undisturbed for 2 minutes, until a deep golden crust has formed underneath.
- 6 Turn once and cook the other side for a further 1 to 2 minutes.
- 7 Move immediately to a warm plate. Squeeze lemon over generously, crush the dried mint between your fingers over the top, and grind over black pepper.
- 8 Serve at once, while it is still soft. It firms up within a few minutes of leaving the pan.

382

CALORIES

26 g

PROTEIN

3 g

CARBS

30 g

FAT

Photo: Elyaqim Mosheh Adam, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

Κουπέπια

Kouperia, koo-PEH-pee-ah

Kouperia

Kouperia are Cypriot vine leaves stuffed with minced meat, rice, onion and mint, simmered under a weighted plate and often finished with an avgolemono sauce.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL
55 min	55 min	6	Intermediate



INGREDIENTS

1 jar vine leaves in brine, about 60 leaves

500 g (1 lb 2 oz) minced pork and beef, mixed

200 g (1 cup) medium grain rice, uncooked

2 onions, grated

1 large bunch fresh mint, finely chopped

2 tbsp tomato paste

80 ml (1/3 cup) olive oil

2 lemons, one juiced, one in wedges

700 ml (3 cups) hot water or light stock

2 eggs, for the avgolemono, optional

salt and black pepper

METHOD

- 1 Rinse the vine leaves thoroughly under cold running water, twice, to remove excess brine. Sort by size, keeping torn or small leaves aside for lining the pot.
- 2 In a large bowl, mix the minced meat, raw rice, grated onion, chopped mint, tomato paste and half the olive oil. Season firmly with salt and pepper.
- 3 Lay a leaf shiny side down, stem towards you, and snip off the stem. Place a well-packed teaspoon of filling near the stem end.
- 4 Fold the stem end over the filling, fold in the sides, then roll away from you into a tight cigar shape about the size of your thumb. Repeat until the filling is used.
- 5 Line the base of a wide heavy pot with the reserved torn leaves. Pack the rolls in tightly, seam side down, in concentric circles.
- 6 Pour over the remaining olive oil and the juice of one lemon, then add enough hot water or stock to just cover.
- 7 Sit a heatproof plate directly on top of the kouperia to weight them down. Bring to a gentle simmer, cover the pot, and cook on the lowest heat for 45 to 55 minutes, until the rice is tender.
- 8 If finishing with avgolemono, take the pot fully off the heat and let it stand for 2 minutes. Beat the eggs hard with the juice of the second lemon, then temper with hot liquid from the pot, a ladleful at a time, whisking constantly.
- 9 Pour the tempered mixture back over the kouperia, tilting the pot gently to coat them. Do not return to the heat.
- 10 Serve warm, with extra lemon wedges at the table.

Σεφταλιά

Sheftalia, shef-tah-lee-AH

Sheftalia

Sheftalia are Cypriot sausages made from minced pork, onion, parsley and cinnamon, wrapped in caul fat rather than a skin, and grilled over charcoal.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL
30 min	15 min	6	Intermediate



INGREDIENTS

200 g (7 oz) caul fat

700 g (1 lb 9 oz) minced pork, or pork and lamb mixed

2 large onions, grated

1 large bunch flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped

1/2 tsp ground cinnamon

1 slice stale bread, soaked in water and squeezed dry, optional

salt and black pepper

lemon wedges and pita, to serve

KITCHEN NOTE

It is rarely on display but most butchers carry it or can order it in for you, since several cuisines use it the same way.

METHOD

- 1 Unfold the caul fat gently in a bowl of cold water and leave it to soften for 10 minutes. Cut into squares roughly 15 cm across, using a double layer for each sausage.
- 2 In a large bowl, mix the minced pork, grated onion, parsley, cinnamon, and the soaked bread if using. Season generously with salt and pepper and mix well with your hands.
- 3 Take a portion of the mixture about the size of a small egg and shape it into a short, fat cylinder.
- 4 Place the cylinder at the edge of a caul fat square and roll it up, tucking the ends underneath so the seam sits on the bottom.
- 5 Repeat with the remaining mixture. Chill the sheftalia for 20 minutes to firm up before grilling.
- 6 Light a charcoal grill and let it burn down to hot, glowing coals.
- 7 Grill the sheftalia seam side down first, turning regularly, for 12 to 15 minutes, until deeply golden and crisp all over and cooked through. Do not press down on them with tongs.
- 8 Rest for 2 minutes, then serve with lemon wedges and warm pita.

286

CALORIES

17 g

PROTEIN

3 g

CARBS

23 g

FAT

Photo: Georgios LCA, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

Αφέλια

Afelia, ah-FEH-lee-ah

Afelia

Afelia is a Cypriot dish of pork pieces marinated in red wine and crushed coriander seed, then browned and slowly braised until the wine reduces to a thick, dark, sticky sauce.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL
15 min	75 min	4	Beginner



INGREDIENTS

1 kg (2 lb 4 oz) pork shoulder, cut into 4 cm chunks

500 ml (2 cups) dry red wine

3 tbsp whole coriander seed, crushed

3 tbsp olive oil

1 bay leaf

salt and black pepper

KITCHEN NOTE

Pre-ground coriander loses its aromatic oils quickly. Crushing whole seed just before cooking is what gives afelia its real character.

METHOD

- 1 Put the pork in a bowl with the red wine and crushed coriander seed. Cover and marinate in the fridge for at least 2 hours, or overnight for a deeper flavour.
- 2 Lift the pork out with a slotted spoon, reserving the marinade, and pat the pieces dry.
- 3 Heat the olive oil in a heavy pan or casserole over a high heat. Brown the pork hard in batches, without crowding the pan, until well coloured on all sides. Remove and set aside.
- 4 Pour the reserved marinade into the same pan along with the bay leaf. Bring to the boil and let it bubble hard, uncovered, for about 10 minutes, until reduced by at least half.
- 5 Return the pork to the pan. Season with salt and pepper, bring back to a simmer, then turn the heat down low.
- 6 Cook uncovered or part-covered for 55 to 65 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the pork is completely tender and the sauce has reduced to a thick, dark, glossy coating.
- 7 Check the seasoning, remove the bay leaf, and rest for 5 minutes before serving.

468

CALORIES

38 g

PROTEIN

3 g

CARBS

28 g

FAT

Photo: Cyprus Tourism CH, CC BY 2.0, Wikimedia Commons

Κούπες

Koures, KOO-res

Koures

Koures are Cypriot fried snacks made from a bulgur and semolina shell wrapped around a filling of minced meat, onion and cinnamon, shaped like a small torpedo.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL
75 min	25 min	8	Advanced



INGREDIENTS

FOR THE SHELL

400 g (2 1/2 cups) fine bulgur wheat

100 g (2/3 cup) fine semolina

1 small onion, finely grated

1 tsp salt

FOR THE FILLING

400 g (14 oz) minced beef, or beef and lamb mixed

2 onions, very finely chopped

2 tbsp olive oil

1 tsp ground cinnamon

1/2 tsp ground cumin

salt and black pepper

vegetable oil, for deep frying

METHOD

- 1 Soak the bulgur in enough hot water to cover generously, and leave for 30 minutes until fully softened and swollen. Drain thoroughly and squeeze out as much water as possible in a clean tea towel.
- 2 Turn the drained bulgur into a bowl with the semolina, grated onion and salt. Knead by hand for 5 to 10 minutes until it forms a smooth, cohesive, slightly tacky paste. Cover and set aside.
- 3 For the filling, heat the olive oil and cook the chopped onions gently for 10 minutes until soft.
- 4 Add the minced meat, breaking it up well, and cook over a medium-high heat until browned and completely dry, with no liquid remaining in the pan, about 12 minutes.
- 5 Stir in the cinnamon and cumin, season generously, and cook for 2 minutes more. Spread on a plate and cool completely.
- 6 Wetting your hands with water, take a golf ball sized piece of the bulgur paste and work it into a hollow shell in your palm, thinning the walls as you turn it.
- 7 Fill the hollow with a heaped teaspoon of the cooled filling, close the shell over the top, and shape into a torpedo with tapered ends, sealing any cracks with wet fingers.
- 8 Repeat with the remaining paste and filling. Chill the shaped koures for 20 minutes to firm up.
- 9 Heat vegetable oil in a deep pan to 170C. Fry the koures in batches, without crowding, for about 5 minutes each, until deeply golden and crisp all over.
- 10 Drain on kitchen paper and serve hot.

Φλαούνες

Flaounes, flah-OO-nēs

Flaounes

Flaounes are Cypriot Easter pastries made from a spiced yeasted dough folded around a filling of grated hard cheese, eggs, mint and raisins, brushed with egg and topped with sesame seeds before baking.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL
90 min	35 min	16	Advanced



INGREDIENTS

FOR THE FILLING

400 g (14 oz) kefalotyri or pecorino, coarsely grated

200 g (7 oz) halloumi, coarsely grated

3 eggs

3 tbsp semolina

2 tbsp dried mint

60 g (1/2 cup) raisins

black pepper

FOR THE DOUGH

600 g (4 3/4 cups) strong white flour

10 g (2 1/4 tsp) fast-action dried yeast

100 g (1/2 cup) caster sugar

1 tsp ground mahlepi

1/2 tsp ground mastic, crushed with a little sugar

1/2 tsp salt

200 ml (3/4 cup plus 1 tbsp) warm milk

2 eggs

100 g (7 tbsp) butter, melted and cooled

1 egg, beaten, for the wash

4 tbsp sesame seeds

METHOD

- 1 The day before, make the filling. Mix the grated cheeses, eggs, semolina, dried mint, raisins and a good grinding of black pepper in a bowl until well combined. Cover and refrigerate overnight.
- 2 The next day, make the dough. Mix the flour, yeast, sugar, mahlepi, mastic and salt in a large bowl.
- 3 Warm the milk gently, then add it to the dry ingredients with the 2 eggs and the melted butter. Mix and knead for 8 to 10 minutes, by hand or machine, until smooth and elastic. It should be soft and slightly tacky.
- 4 Cover and leave to rise in a warm place for about 1 hour 30 minutes, until doubled in size.
- 5 Knock back the dough and divide into 16 pieces. Roll each into a round about 14 cm across.
- 6 Take the cheese filling out of the fridge and give it a stir. Place a generous heaped tablespoon in the centre of each round.
- 7 Fold three sides of the dough up and in towards the centre, leaving the filling visible in the middle, and pinch the three corners together firmly to hold the shape.
- 8 Place the shaped flaounes on lined baking trays, spaced apart, and leave to rise again for 25 to 30 minutes.
- 9 Heat the oven to 180C fan 160C. Brush the pastry, not the filling, with the beaten egg, and scatter sesame seeds generously over the egg wash.
- 10 Bake for 30 to 35 minutes until deep golden brown all over.
- 11 Cool on a wire rack. Serve at room temperature or gently warmed.

Ταχινόπιτα

Tahinopita, tah-hee-NOH-pee-tah

Tahinopita

Tahinopita is a vegan spiral bread made from an oil-based dough rolled with a filling of tahini, sugar and cinnamon, coiled and baked until deeply golden.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL
40 min	30 min	8	Intermediate



INGREDIENTS

FOR THE DOUGH

500 g (4 cups) strong white flour

7 g (2 1/4 tsp) fast-action dried yeast

50 g (1/4 cup) caster sugar

1 tsp salt

300 ml (1 1/4 cups) warm water

80 ml (1/3 cup) olive oil, plus more for brushing

FOR THE FILLING

250 g (1 cup) tahini, well stirred

100 g (1/2 cup) caster sugar

2 tbsp ground cinnamon

2 tbsp sesame seeds, for the top

METHOD

- Mix the flour, yeast, sugar and salt in a large bowl. Add the warm water and olive oil and mix, then knead for 8 to 10 minutes until smooth and elastic.
- Cover and leave to rise in a warm place for about 1 hour, until doubled in size.
- Mix the tahini, sugar and cinnamon together in a bowl until smooth and well combined.
- Knock back the dough and roll it out on a lightly floured surface into a large rectangle, about 40 x 30 cm.
- Spread the tahini mixture evenly over the dough, right to the edges.
- Roll the dough up tightly from one long edge into a log.
- Coil the log around itself into a spiral, tucking the outer end underneath. Transfer to a lined baking tray.
- Cover loosely and leave to prove for a further 20 to 30 minutes.
- Heat the oven to 180C fan 160C. Brush the top of the spiral with a little olive oil and scatter with sesame seeds.
- Bake for 28 to 32 minutes, until deeply golden all over. Cool on a wire rack before slicing.

348

CALORIES

8 g

PROTEIN

42 g

CARBS

17 g

FAT

Photo: Undead q, CC BY-SA 3.0, Wikimedia Commons

Σουτζιούκος

Soutzoukos, soo-JOO-kos

Soutzoukos

Soutzoukos is a traditional Cypriot sweet made by threading whole almonds or walnuts onto string and dipping them repeatedly into thickened grape must until a firm, chewy coating builds up.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL
40 min	60 min	12	Intermediate



INGREDIENTS

1.5 litres (6 cups) fresh grape must, or unsweetened dark grape juice reduced by a third

4 tbsp plain flour or cornflour

150 g (1 cup) whole blanched almonds or walnut halves

strong kitchen string, cut into 30 cm lengths

KITCHEN NOTE

Simmering it down by about a third before you start concentrates the flavour closer to genuine fresh must.

METHOD

- 1 Thread the almonds or walnuts tightly onto lengths of string, leaving a loop at the top of each for hanging. Set aside.
- 2 Whisk the flour into a cup of the cold grape must until completely smooth, with no lumps.
- 3 Pour the remaining must into a wide, heavy pan and bring to a simmer. Whisk in the flour mixture.
- 4 Cook over a medium heat, stirring constantly, for 20 to 30 minutes, until the mixture thickens enough to coat the back of a spoon heavily and hold a clear trail when a spoon is drawn through it.
- 5 Pour the thickened must into a tall narrow jug or container, deep enough to dip the full length of a string.
- 6 Dip a string of nuts fully into the must, lift out, and let the excess drip off. Hang to set for 15 to 20 minutes.
- 7 Dip again, repeating 6 to 8 times in total, letting each coat firm up before the next, until a thick, even layer has built up.
- 8 Hang the finished strings somewhere cool, dry and out of direct sunlight for 2 to 3 days, until the coating is completely firm and no longer tacky to the touch.
- 9 Cut into shorter lengths to serve, or wrap individually for storing.

186
CALORIES

3 g
PROTEIN

30 g
CARBS

6 g
FAT

Photo: Lessormore, CC BY 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

Ανάρι με μέλι

Anari me meli, ah-NAH-ree meh meh-LEE

Anari me Meli

Anari me meli is fresh anari, a soft Cypriot whey cheese similar to ricotta, served simply in slices or spoonfuls with honey drizzled over and crushed walnuts scattered on top.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL
5 min	0 min	4	Beginner



INGREDIENTS

300 g (10 1/2 oz) fresh anari, or fresh ricotta

4 tbsp good honey, ideally Greek or Cypriot thyme honey

40 g (1/3 cup) walnuts, roughly crushed

a few fresh mint leaves, optional

KITCHEN NOTE

Dried anari is salted and firm, meant for grating over pasta. This dish specifically wants the soft, fresh, unsalted version.

METHOD

- 1 Take the anari out of the fridge 15 minutes before serving so it is closer to room temperature.
- 2 Slice or spoon the anari onto four small plates.
- 3 If the honey has crystallised, warm it very gently until it loosens, then drizzle generously over each portion.
- 4 Scatter the crushed walnuts over the top.
- 5 Finish with a few mint leaves if using, and serve at once.

218

CALORIES

9 g

PROTEIN

16 g

CARBS

13 g

FAT

Photo: Zlerman, CC BY-SA 3.0, Wikimedia Commons

Μακαρόνια του φούρνου

Makaronia touournou, mah-kah-ROH-nyah too FOOR-noo

Makaronia tou Fournou

Makaronia touournou is a Cypriot baked pasta dish related to Greek pastitsio, made with macaroni layered with a cinnamon-spiced meat sauce, but finished with a topping of grated halloumi mixed into beaten egg rather than a separate flour-based bechamel.

PREP COOK SERVES LEVEL



INGREDIENTS

FOR THE PASTA AND SAUCE

500 g (1 lb 2 oz) long tubular pasta, such as bucatini

600 g (1 lb 5 oz) minced beef, or beef and pork mixed

2 onions, finely chopped

3 cloves garlic, chopped

400 g (14 oz) tin chopped tomatoes

2 tbsp tomato paste

120 ml (1/2 cup) red wine

1 tsp ground cinnamon

1 bay leaf

3 tbsp olive oil

salt and black pepper

FOR THE TOPPING

5 eggs

300 g (10 1/2 oz) halloumi, coarsely grated

100 ml (7 tbsp) whole milk

1/4 tsp freshly grated nutmeg

black pepper

METHOD

- 1 Cook the pasta in well-salted water for 3 minutes less than the packet time, so it is well short of al dente. Drain and set aside.
- 2 Heat the olive oil in a wide pan and brown the mince hard over a high heat, breaking it up well. Add the onions and garlic and cook for 8 minutes until softened.
- 3 Pour in the wine and reduce until almost gone. Stir in the tomatoes, tomato paste, cinnamon and bay leaf, season, and simmer uncovered for 30 minutes until thick and nearly dry. Remove the bay leaf.
- 4 Heat the oven to 180C fan 160C. Oil a deep baking dish, about 30 x 22 cm.
- 5 Layer the drained pasta in the dish, spoon over the meat sauce, and mix through roughly so the sauce is distributed rather than kept in a strict separate layer.
- 6 Beat the eggs well in a bowl, then stir in the grated halloumi, milk, nutmeg and a good grinding of pepper.
- 7 Pour the egg and halloumi mixture evenly over the pasta, tilting the dish gently so it settles into the gaps.
- 8 Bake for 45 to 50 minutes, until deeply golden on top and just set with barely a wobble in the centre.
- 9 Rest for at least 15 minutes before cutting into squares.

612

CALORIES

34 g

PROTEIN

48 g

CARBS

31 g

FAT

Photo: CyprusPasta, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikimedia Commons

THAT'S TEN

There is a whole island left to cook

These ten are only the start. Kalliopi's Kitchen keeps growing its Cyprus collection alongside hundreds of recipes from every corner of the Greek mainland, the islands, and now Cyprus too, all with the same real method and the Greek name written out properly.

Nutrition figures in this guide are calculated estimates, not laboratory analysis. Every photograph is credited to its photographer on the recipe page it belongs to.

Yiayia Kalliopi