



الجمعية الخيرية اليونانية في بيروت
ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΚΟΙΝΟΤΗΣ ΒΗΡΥΤΟΥ
GREEK COMMUNITY OF BEIRUT



Ta Nea

Issue 39
JANUARY 2023

2023....Oh you better be good to us!

Humanity's seen a heavy load of troubles, financial crisis, unjustified wars, worldwide scary pandemics....total collapse!

They say you got to fall so you can rise....Let's hope after this "heavy" downfall, we will all rise and walk through it. Let's hope our hearts will be soft, our intentions kind and our actions loud.

It is tradition to welcome the New Year, the Greek way, by gathering around a big familial feast when children – adults too - have their gifts delivered by Agios Vasilis and to honour him "Vasilopita" is cut at midnight.

The one that finds the "flouri" – coin – hidden in it, is said to have a fortunated year.

At the strike of midnight, a pomegranate is smashed while one member of the family, usually a child, is the first to re-enter the right foot. The more seeds fall on the ground, the more "good fortune" will be brought to the house.

How did the world come to setting resolutions on New Year exactly? We owe it to Babylonians some....4000 years ago!

What were your resolutions for 2023?

Καλή χρονιά!

Till then, stay safe and enjoy reading!



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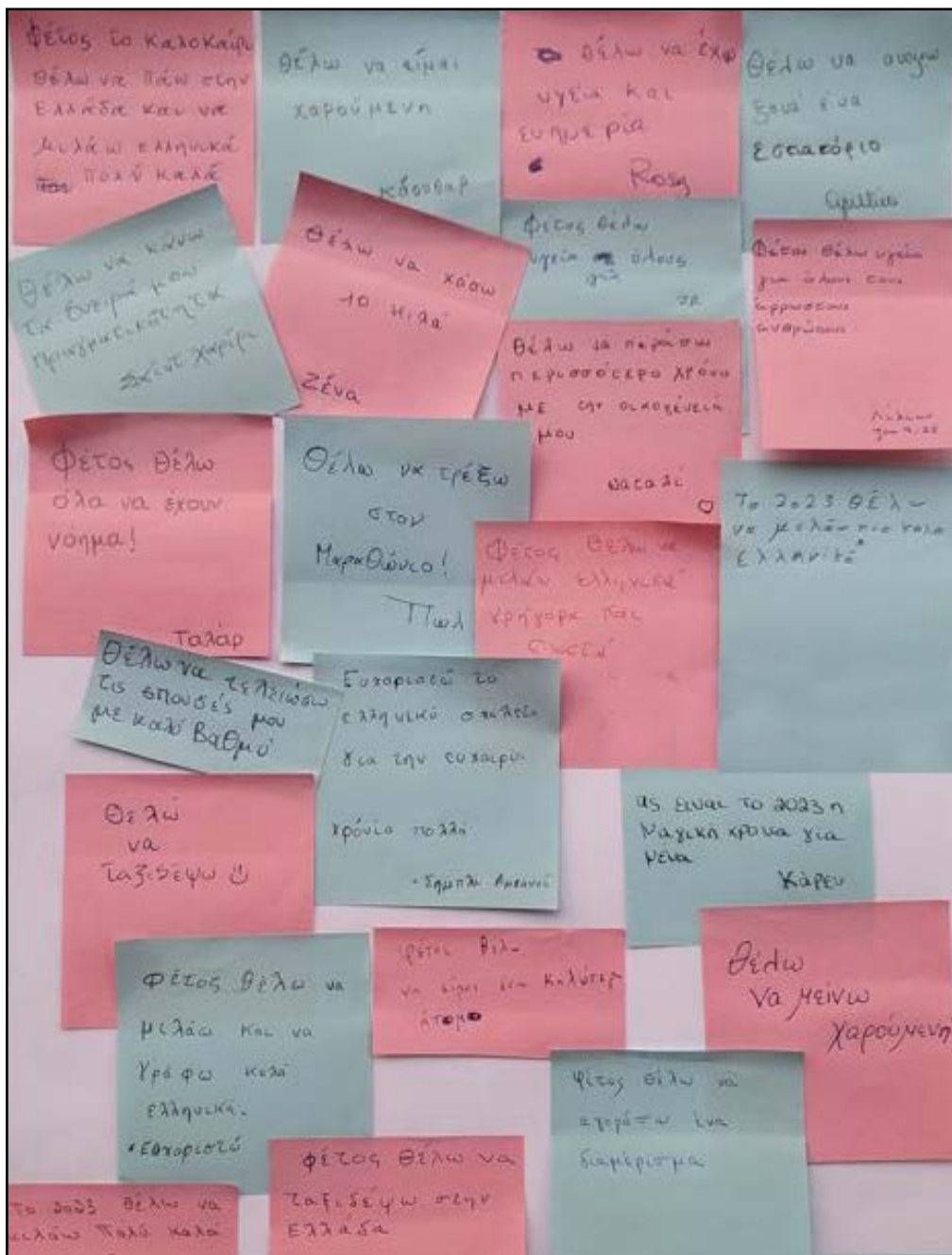
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To welcome our students back in class, a small but fun assignment was handed over to them.

Φέτος θέλω





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katerinakatopis 6th of January marks the end of the Christmas festivities in Greece with the Festival of Light ('ton Foton'), also called Epiphany. On this day, we commemorate the Baptism of Christ in the River Jordan and the revelation of the Holy Trinity and it is customary to bless the waters. Χρόνια πολλά! 🌟🙏

Θεοφάνια = “God shining forth” or “Divine manifestation”

In the Greek Orthodox tradition, the feast of Epiphany, one of the most sacred celebrations, refers to the baptism of Jesus Christ in the Jordan River.

Tradition has it in Greece, during the ceremony of “Ta Fota” for a priest to throw a cross into the open water – which has been blessed first- and for the brave ones, both adults and younger men, to dive after it.

The one that retrieves it, is said to have good fortune throughout the year. This tradition is also carried out in the Czech Republic, Russia, Bulgaria, South Australia, etc.

Nikos Solis



HAPPY THREE KINGS DAY!

In the Western tradition, Epiphany is known as “Three Kings’ Day”, a celebration of the three magi visiting baby Jesus. Be it for Western or Eastern Churches the main essence of Epiphany is the manifestation of Christ to the world.

The Epiphany season applies to the period from Epiphany to the day before Ash Wednesday. It extends from January 6 to “Septuagesima Sunday” – and has from 1 to 6 Sundays, according to the date of Easter.

The earliest reference to Epiphany as a Christian feast was in 361 AD by Ammianus Marcellinus.



The Baptism site “Al-Maghtas” in Jordan is part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Customs



In Ethiopia, Epiphany is celebrated on January 19 as the Timkath Festival which is included in the UNESCO heritage list of festivals

In the Armenian Apostolic Church, January 6 is a celebration for the Nativity and Theophany of Christ.

Both in France & Belgium, it is tradition to share the king cake “Galette des Rois”, this well known flake pastry filled with frangipane mainly containing a figurine “feve” and the one who gets it, is crowned King or Queen,

In Lebanon, in the Maronite church, Christians pray for their deceased, attend midnight mass as Christ will be passing to bless their homes, exchanging “Deyem Deyem” and they also bake a dough made out of water and flour without the use of yeast as it is blessed, and will rise.





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Did You Know: Some Facts on Majestic Acropolis of Athens

Majestic Acropolis, towering above Athens on top of a rock, cradle for ancient Greek civilization, serving mainly as a place of worship to the goddess Athena, holds many secrets.

* The Acropolis was built sometime around the second half of the 5th century BC by the well-known architects Callicrates & Ictinus, along with the renowned sculptor Phidias, under the direction of Pericles, determined to bring this massive building to a level of splendour not seen before; a period that coincides with the golden age of Athens (460- 430 BC).

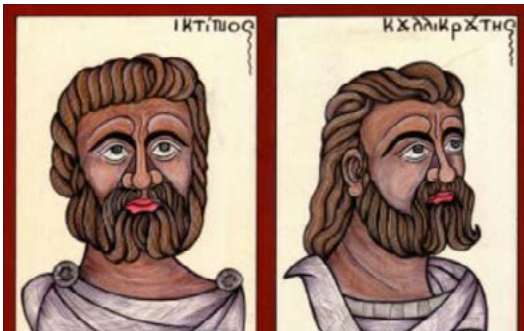


Image of Phidias from <http://www.memo.fr/Media/Phidias.jpg>



* The first ever photograph of the Acropolis was taken by the French photographer and draughtsman Joseph-philibert Girault de Prangey .



The photograph that is considered the oldest existing photograph of the Acropolis, 1840, by Joseph-Philibert Girault de Prangey (1804-1870).

* The word “Acropolis” is derived from two Ancient Greek words “akro” meaning extremity/highest point and “polis”, city.

* The highest settlement of the city is over 3,300 years old.

* The Acropolis rises 490 feet above sea level and covers a surface of about 30,000 square meters.

* The Acropolis has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1987.

* The Parthenon is the temple that dominates the Acropolis of Athens. It is seen as the foremost symbol of democracy. It was completed in 438 BC and is considered to be the pinnacle of Doric achievement.



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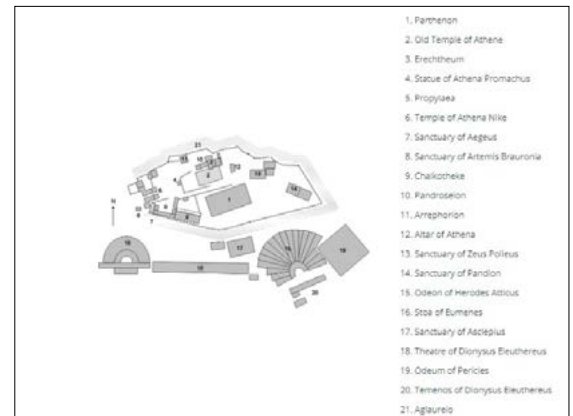


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* The Odeon of Herodes Atticus built in 161 AD, is one of the most popular attractions; it is located on the southern slope of the hill. This stunning open-air theatre nowadays hosts some of the most prestigious concerts.

* The Propylaea, designed by Mnesicles and built around 437- 432 BC is the entrance to the Acropolis.

Credit: ilias_zacharakis_



* *Mircomeria Acropolitana* is a small plant with a delicate pink flower that only grows on the slopes of the Acropolis. It is said it was first collected in 1906 and was considered extinct until its rediscovery in 2006. It measures in height 5 to 30 cm and blooms from May till June.



* The area around the Acropolis is called Anafiotika. It is a small neighbourhood nestled beneath the north slope of the Acropolis. Pnyka Hill, is one of those special spots offering a great view of the Acropolis and a nice walk through the forest paths. It is located to the west of the Acropolis and represents the hill where Athenians, back in 507 BC gathered, where democracy was first created.



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* To safeguard and showcase the Acropolis in a legal framework, Greece's highest court has approved a set of terms and building restrictions to apply in and around the Makrygianni and Koukaki neighbourhood with heights ranging from 17.5 meters (Zone 3) to 24 meters (Zone 2) maximum.



katerinakatopis With a view like this what more do you need? Did you know that there are building restrictions around Athens, to safeguard seeing the Acropolis from pretty much everywhere? 🏠📺

* The Greek flag flying over the Acropolis has a historical significance that dates back to the fiery defiance of two young men from the Greek Resistance movement in 1941 against the Nazi occupation. They managed to raise the flag back up through secret passages. Nowadays, only Evzones have the honour of raising and lowering the flag at dawn and dusk on Sundays.





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In the News: SNF Grand Mécène de la Culture

After twelve ongoing years of renovation works since 2010, the historic home of France's national library, the Richelieu site, historic home of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, finally reopened its doors on September 17th, 2022.

The Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF) helped support the restoration work, and was honored with the title of Grand Mécène de la Culture by France's Minister of Culture. It is no wonder that the SNF took part of this prestigious renovation as it is one of the world's leading international philanthropic organizations, making grants in the areas of arts and culture, education, health and sports, and social welfare. SNF takes on worldwide initiatives towards achieving its mission and vision; it has been honored numerous times, recognized for its philanthropic contribution and work supporting thousands of non-profit organizations.

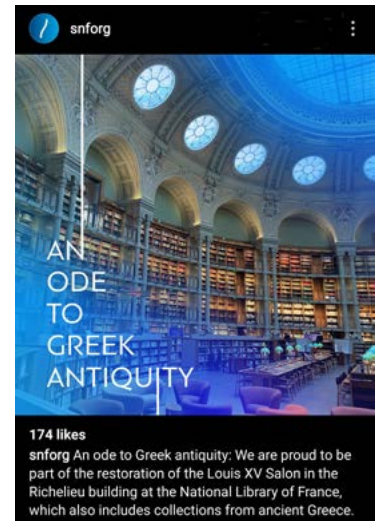
Founded in 1771, the BnF Richelieu library was designed by the royal architect François Mansart. Its Baroque ceiling showcases frescoes painted in 1647 by Italian artist Giovan-Francesco Romanelli, listed as a heritage monument.



Expede sur la rue Vivienne - @GiselaLoberg - BnF



La salle Ovale renovée - © Jean-Christophe Buis - BnF



In the Oval Room, with its 18-metre-high ceilings, designed in the late 19th century by Jean-Louis Pascal, around 20,000 works are available for consultation, including 9,000 comic books and digital arts. This enables visitors to discover the history of the arts and heritage.

The royal library complex, once reserved for scholars and researchers, is now accessible to the general public who can visit its magnificently restored reading rooms, garden and brand new museum.

Both SNF and the BnF Richelieu library should be on your bucket list!



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Did You Know: Does Netflix have a thing for Greece?

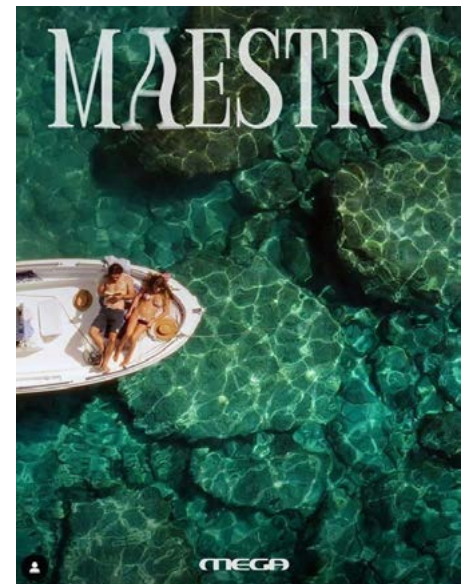
The first Greek series to be ever featured on Netflix is finally out: *Maestro*. Created for Mega TV by Christoforos Papakaliatis, who also stars in the series along with Klelia Andriolatou as his love interest, it aired on Greek television this fall.

It has everything Greek television has to offer: love affairs, family drama, and crime taking place in an otherwise idyllic small-town setting. It consists of nine episodes and the plot takes place in the island of Paxos.

Make sure to search for the new title “Maestro in Blue.”

You could also get a glimpse on the below Facebook link to get you intrigued.

<https://fb.watch/hliTvRxbc8/>



There is also another movie which was recently added to Netflix the last month of 2022: *Glass Onions: A Knives Out Mystery*. It features Daniel Craig, Kate Hudson, Edward Norton amongst other actors.

The glamorous island of Spetses was chosen as a setting with its mansions, beautiful hiking trails and secluded beaches.

As Netflix highlighted on their website:

NETFLIX IS NOW TRULY GREEK

Did you know that Netflix came to Athens on December 12, 2017?

Happy streaming Greece!



IMPORTANT NOTICE TO GREEK CITIZENS

Kindly contact our Center by phone or email informing us about any change of address, phone number or social status helping us to keep our data list updated.





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Let's explore: Monemvasia, the Enchanting Medieval Castle

On a small island off the east coast of the Peloponnese, emerges an enchanting castle: Monemvasia. This small island is part of Laconia and is linked to the mainland by a short causeway 200 meters in length.

I had the chance to personally visit this medieval gem and was immediately mesmerized by its striking charm. These cozy little alleys paved with greyish and earthy cobblestones; these dimmed lights carved in the right corners; these vivid bougainvilleas endlessly intertwining to mimic life; these perfect little houses sticking side by side with warm stones and fiery bricks; how could you not fall for this medieval charm?!



Why medieval? As a first glance, this imposing island gracefully floating on its own semi-attached to mainland only to fuel its mundane needs, can be compared to an unusual ship ready to sail away, or even the ideal siege, a hidden well-guarded fortress.

Originally, the town and fortress of Monemvasia dates back to the 6th century and served as a refuge from the Slavic and the Avaric invaders who dominated most of Greece from about 500 to 700 AD.

The inhabitants of ancient Laconia settled on a rock that had been split from the mainland by an earthquake in 375 AD. Monemvasia grew with time into a major Byzantine trading port and in 1464, Venetians took control of it. They built a massive fortress high above the town. You can still visit this now ruined citadel if you hike all the way up to the rocks' summit. Little did they know that this fortress would help hold back the Turks about 100 years when, in 1540, they managed to seize the town and hold it until 1690.

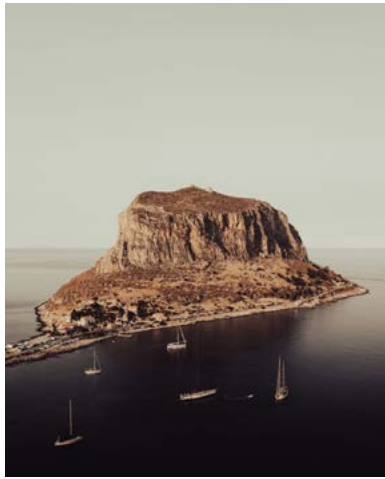
The tug of war between Venetians and Turks kept going on until Monemvasia was finally liberated in 1821 during the Greek war of Independence.



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Malvazia, as it is known to the French, is among the most romantic places in Greece, with its rich cultural heritage, it feels like a trip back in time!



Things not to miss during your stay or visit in Monemvasia: admiring the home of the internationally renowned poet, Giannis Ritsis who was born in Monemvasia in 1909. He got the National Poetry Award in 1956 and the Lenin Peace Award in 1977. He was also proposed for the Nobel Prize for Literature, nine times, unsuccessfully.





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The Archaeological Museum which was the former Muslim Mosque, is one of the best preserved buildings in the town. It was built during the 16th century and first opened to the public in 1999.

The small church in the Old Town in Kato Poli, is the most famous church of the castle town. The Church of Elkomenos Christos holds the icon of Christ in chains before he was crucified and the Crown of Thorns on His Head. The church was probably constructed in 1697 and probably on the site of a former church founded in 6th- 7th century according to a carved inscription at the entrance. It is said that the icon of Crucifixion was stolen in the 2nd half of the 14th century and was restored in 2011.

Once you visit the church, you should march in the plateia, the central square, that has the old canon and from there you may admire the view towards the Myrtle Sea.



There are around 40 churches, each with its own story, worthy of being explored in Monemvasia. Agia Sofia church at the top of the castle is definitely not to be missed. It stands out with its breathtaking location at the edge of a sheer cliff with its Byzantine architecture in an octagonal domed church with a room on the south side. It seems to date to the 12th century.



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Our Lady of Hrisafittisa, built in the XV century, was turned into a warehouse for wheat when Monemvasia was under the Turkish possession. On the site of one of the buildings was built the hamam bath. It is said that, the water flowing from the miraculous spring under the temple, contributes in the conception of children. Monemvasia might exhume a lot of intrigue and mysticism but it all comes down to simple pleasures such as wandering around, dining out, soaking in all the beauty it emanates. The perfect swimming spot would be the cove of Portello which was once the port for the castle town, or Pori beach, one of the most popular or Kakkavos the pebble beach. You could also take on a taste tour to explore the local cultural side with Monemvasia famous wine, “Malvasia” (a sweet wine known as “nectar of the nobles”), and the locally made olive oil.



“Mone” and “Emvasia”, the two words that derive from Monemvasia meaning “single entrance”, is one place I personally wouldn’t mind at all getting lost in with those charming cobbled alleys brimming with history and a mystical atmosphere!

You need four hours by bus from Athens and the trip will be full of beautiful and captivating sceneries!



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Everything you need to know about the consulate:

All requests should be addressed by email in order to obtain an appointment.

Visa Applications: For visa applications please visit our website

www.mfa.gr/missionabroad/en/lebanon-en.

Additionally, due to the lockdown and the restrictions, Greece is not issuing visas at the moment.

Exceptions can be made to specific cases and only by appointment.

Passport renewal or issuance: You will get an appointment by receiving an email.

Required documents are: 2 photo passport size (4x6), a Greek identity card or a birth certificate (that can be provided by us if you send us in advance any old Greek birth or family certificate).

For additional info kindly visit <http://www.passport.gov.gr/en/>

Legalization of documents: The Consular Office can legalize any Lebanese official document that has been stamped by the Lebanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is advised to ask for an appointment by email.

Power of Attorney: The Consular Office can exceptionally provide a power of attorney to Lebanese citizens that have already made an investment in Greece and want to apply for a residence permit.

Marriage, birth, death registration: Required documents: The Lebanese certificates of marriage, birth or death stamped by the Lebanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and translated in Greek (translations in English or French are accepted as well).

Any old Greek birth or family certificate to be sent in advance by email.

The Consular Office is currently upgrading the embassy's website in order to make it more friendly user and to provide all necessary information and downloadable documents.

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO GREEK CITIZENS

This section has been specially created by the Greek Community of Beirut with the kind collaboration of the consulate of Greece in order to better serve Greek citizens who wish to have information on all administrative formalities before presenting their requests.

Consular Office can be reached by email at grcon.bei@mfa.gr



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In the News: Announcement by the Embassy for voting at the National Elections for Greek residents abroad



EMBASSY OF GREECE
IN BEIRUT

ANNOUNCEMENT

Information and conditions for voting at the National Elections in Greece for Greek residents abroad

- 1) We would like to inform you that Greek nationals residing in Lebanon may take part in the upcoming 2023 Greek National Elections, while in Lebanon.
- 2) According to Article 2 of Law No 4648/16-12-2019, Greek citizens are eligible to register to vote abroad under the following conditions:
 - a. to be already registered in an electoral list at a Greek Municipality
 - b. to have resided for at least 2 years in Greece during the past 35 years, following their registration (this can be proven by school or university certification of attendance, proof of insurance contributions or proof of completion of the military service in Greece, as stated in a. 4 par. 4 of Law 4648/2019)
 - c. to have a tax registration number in Greece (ΑΦΜ) and to have submitted their tax declaration during the current or the previous year. Dependent family members are exempted from this if:
 - they are under 30 years old and
 - one of their first-degree family members has already submitted his/her tax declaration during the current or the previous year (during the registration process, applicants will have to upload a copy of their last tax declaration).
- 3) Once the above conditions are met, Greek voters residing abroad should register in a special platform through the following links:
<https://apodimoi.gov.gr> and <https://www.ypes.gr/ekloges/aitiseis-eksoterikou/ypovoli-aitisis>
- 4) The voting will take place in Lebanon only if a minimum of 40 voters are registered.
- 5) Deadline to register will be up to 12 days before the election day set by the Greek Government.
- 6) Greek nationals who require assistance to register through the above-mentioned platforms can book an appointment at the Greek Consulate in Beirut, via email (grcon.bei@mfa.gr), and present themselves on the agreed date with the required documents, their Greek passport & ΑΦΜ certificate.



Let's Cook by Giorgos Tsoulis

Meat Pie from the Island of Crete – Κρεατότουρτα Χανίων

8-10 Portions 15 min Preparation 1h 30min Cooking



This flavor packed meat pie comes from the city of Chania, on the Greek island of Crete. It is a gorgeous, cake-looking pie filled with lamb and various Greek cheeses and aromatics that will really satisfy!

#tsoulotip: You can use any meat you like best.

INGREDIENTS

For the dough:

200 ml meat stock, from the boiled meat in the recipe
20 ml Stakovoutiro (Pure Butter Oil from Crete), melted
50 g all-purpose flour
100 g Greek strained yogurt
9 g active dry yeast
1 pinch of salt
1 teaspoon granulated sugar

For the filling:

700 g lamb, boiled - then separate the meat from the bones
400 g Greek Myzithra cheese
200 g Greek Anthotyro cheese
100 g Greek Graviera cheese, grated
½ bunch mint, finely chopped
1 medium egg yolk + little water, whisked (egg wash)
Salt & Pepper

For sprinkling:

Sesame seeds

METHOD

- 1 For the dough:** In a mixer's bowl, add the lamb stock, yeast and sugar. Whisk and set aside so the yeast can activate.
- 2** When ready, add the flour, Greek strained yogurt, Cretan stakovoutiro (butter) and a pinch of salt. Beat with the hook attachment, until you create a soft and smooth dough.
- 3** Transfer to a greased bowl and cover with cellophane wrap. Set dough aside for 1 hour, to rise.
- 4 For the cheese filling:** In a large bowl, add the mint, Graviera cheese, Myzithra cheese and Anthotyro cheese. Season with salt and pepper and set aside until needed.
- 5** When the dough has risen, divide it in half. Take the first half, dust a working surface with some flour and using a rolling pin, roll dough out to create a round shape that is about 32x33 cm in diameter.
- 6** Preheat oven to 180° C (356° F) Fan.
- 7** Brush a 30 cm round baking pan with some olive oil and fit the circle of dough in it nicely, making sure the ends drop over the edges of the pan.
- 8** Add half of the cheese filling to the pan. Cover with the pieces of lamb and top with the remaining half of the cheese filling.
- 9** Roll out the other half of the dough in the same way as the first one and place it over the filling. If needed, use a pair of scissors to trim some of the overhanging dough, but do not cut all the way to the edge of the pan. Carefully roll overhanging edges inward, to create a nice border.
- 10** Brush with the egg wash mixture and score the surface into slices (like a cake). Sprinkle with some sesame seeds and bake for 1 – 1.15 minutes, until golden.



Dessert as well...

Traditional Greek New Year's Cake – Vasilopita

10 Portions 10 min Preparation 1h Cooking



#tsoulotip: 1. All of the ingredients need to be at room temperature, so that the mixture doesn't curdle. 2. If the mixture appears to be splitting, don't worry, it will become nice and smooth as soon as you add the flour. 3. If you add the coin, make sure to dust it with flour so that it doesn't fall to the bottom of the cake.

INGREDIENTS

250 g butter, at room temperature
180 g granulated sugar
6 medium eggs
0 ml cognac (optional)
½ teaspoon vanilla extract
Grated zest of 1 orange
250 g evaporated milk
600 g self-rising flour
1 pinch salt

For decorative coating:
300 g dark chocolate couverture, melted
180 g white chocolate couverture, melted

METHOD

1. Preheat oven to 170° C (338° F) Fan.
2. In a mixer's bowl, add the butter and sugar. Beat for 3-4 minutes on high speed, using the paddle attachment, until light and fluffy.
3. Stop mixer and scrape down the sides of the bowl with a spatula. Begin beating again and add the eggs, one at a time, waiting for each addition to be completely incorporated before adding the next.
4. Add the cognac, vanilla extract, orange extract and evaporated milk. Beat until incorporated.
5. Add the flour in batches and beat until completely incorporated and the mixture is smooth and creamy.
6. Grease a 30 cm round cake pan with butter and line with a sheet of parchment. Add the cake batter and smooth the surface with a spatula, and flattening it out a little more in the center than the sides, since the cake usually rises more in the center.
7. The Greek tradition is to "hide" a golden coin (you can use a regular coin) in the batter. When someone finds the coin in their piece of New Year's Cake – Vasilopita, it is a sign of good fortune and it is believed that they will have good luck throughout the New Year. Of course this is optional!
8. Bake for 40-45 minutes, until golden.
9. When ready, remove from oven and place on a wire rack to cool completely. Unmold and at this point you can either sprinkle with some icing sugar and serve or continue with the recipe and decorate with chocolate.
10. Decorating with chocolate: Spread the melted chocolate over the cake nicely. Drizzle with white chocolate, up and down the cake in the same direction. Using a knife, drag it over the surface, starting from the sides of the cake, to create a pretty pattern.



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Let's meet Giorgos Tsoulis



Chef George Tsoulis

George Tsoulis has taken over many successful cuisines of Greek restaurants and has shared his culinary skills through popular TV shows in Greece and Cyprus. With his unique temperament and directness in communication, Chef George Tsoulis has won the love of the public that follows him faithfully and trusts his recipes that are updated daily at giorgostsoulis.com and social media [@giorgos_tsoulis](https://www.instagram.com/giorgos_tsoulis), while every Friday at four at noon shares with us a new cooking video #MiMassa through the YouTube channel of [@GiorgosTsoulis](https://www.youtube.com/@GiorgosTsoulis).

Recently, two new cooking hotspots were inaugurated in the city bearing the signature of the Chef, the COOK by GiorgosTsoulis located in Melissia and is an ode to Greek Mediterranean cuisine, while its second gastronomic hangout is located by the Naval Seaside Gastrobar for fine dining and top brunch right next to the water!

The European Committee for the Environment, Oceans and Fisheries has chosen George Tsoulis to represent Greece in the "Taste the Ocean" campaign where great European Chefs urge us to consume sustainable fish and seafood.

Following the Taste the Ocean campaign, the European Union again partnered with him to invite the Chef to speak at the Opening of the EU Green Week 2021, the largest annual European environmental policy event to focus on the EU's ambition for zero pollution.

Last year, the organization Ambassadors of Taste for the Global Gastronomy® and Greek Taste Beyond Borders honored George Tsoulis with the Chef of the Year and World Ambassador of Greek Gastronomy awards, as well as with a gold medal Quality & Taste from estiatoria.gr

Currently, the Chef produces daily, together with his team, new delicious recipes for his site and digital media at the cooking studio #tsoulomageiremata in Melissia, while also preparing his first cookbook.

[@Giorgos Tsoulis](https://www.instagram.com/giorgos_tsoulis)

www.giorgostsoulis.com



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ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΚΟΙΝΟΤΗΣ ΒΗΡΥΤΟΥ
GREEK COMMUNITY OF BEIRUT



Ta Nea

And play!





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Ta Nea

Cutting of the Traditional Vasilopita

This year, our annual celebration of cutting of the Vasilopita, finally took place.

Tradition has it the cutting of Vasilopita takes place within 40 days of each New Year. It is an official celebration in Greece.

The Greek custom of the Vasilopita and that of the lucky coin originates from St. Basil's history back in 330 AD in Caesarea in Cappadocia. The hidden coin brings prosperity, health, and success to anyone who finds it in their slice.

Special thanks to Chef Giorgos Tsoulis for baking the delicious Vasilopites and his professional team for organizing their shipping back to our humble community.

Και του χρόνου!





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Ta Nea



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