



# APPETIZERS



*In Greece, mezedes (appetizers or hors d'oeuvres) provide an environment for social discourse. At a local taverna, over retsina (a wine originating from the Aegean Island of Chios) or ouzo (an anise-flavored aperitif), loves blossom, fortunes rise and fall, and politics are hotly debated while nibbling at an array of appetizers. Mezedes are also the first course for most meals. In addition to the recipes in this chapter, you'll find more dishes suitable as appetizers in the fish and seafood chapter.*

## **TZATZIKI**

### *Yogurt Dip*

Strained yogurt (thicker yogurt) can be found in Greek delicatessen shops. Otherwise it can be easily made at home, starting with plain, unsweetened yogurt.

Serves 4

#### **Ingredients**

1 small cucumber, peeled and seeded

2 cups Greek strained yogurt (yaourti sakoulas)

2 cloves garlic, minced

2 tbsps. first pressed olive oil

½ cup finely chopped fresh dill

Pinch sea salt

#### **Preparation time: 30 minutes**

Line a colander with cheesecloth or a large flat-bottomed coffee filter. Put a bowl underneath the colander and add the yogurt. Refrigerate for at least an hour, until all excess water has drained and the yogurt has thickened.

Coarsely grate the cucumber in a medium bowl. Drain the cucumber well, and then pat it dry with a paper towel to remove any remaining liquid.

Return the cucumber to the bowl and add the yogurt, garlic, olive oil, dill, and sea salt, mixing well. Refrigerate for 30-60 minutes. Serve with olives and hot pita bread.



*Tzatziki increases your appetite!*

# MELITZANOSALATA

## *Eggplant Dip*

Eggplants are a good source of vitamin K, which helps with blood clotting and osteoporosis, and also serves as a source of folic acid, which is important for pregnant women and helps with anemia. They contain vitamin B6, which fights diabetes, stress, and insomnia, and potassium and manganese, two vital nutrients. Eggplants are also a good source of dietary fiber.

Serves 4

### **Ingredients**

3 large eggplants

½ medium onion, finely chopped

¼ cup finely chopped fresh dill

¼ cup finely chopped fresh parsley

1 small, fresh tomato, finely chopped

½ cup finely chopped scallions

1 clove garlic, crushed

¼ cup olive oil

Juice of ½ lemon

Sea salt and black pepper to taste

1 tbsp. mayonnaise

### **Preparation time: 40 minutes**

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Wash the eggplants and pierce with a fork to allow moisture to escape. Place in an oven-safe dish and bake for 20 minutes, until the skins turn soft and wrinkled.

Remove the eggplants from the oven and cool at room temperature. Peel. Finely chop the eggplants and place the pieces in cheesecloth, squeezing off any remaining liquid.

In a large mixing bowl, combine the eggplant, onion, dill, parsley, tomato, scallion, garlic, olive oil, lemon juice, sea salt, and black pepper. Mix well. Add the mayonnaise, mixing until combined.

Serve at room temperature.



# SPANAKOPITAKIA

## *Small Spinach Pies*

Feta cheese contains many vitamins and minerals, but it can also be high in saturated fat and sodium. Too much saturated fat is unhealthy, but when eaten in moderation, feta cheese is a delicious treat. It contains calcium, which keeps bones strong and can help prevent osteoporosis, and vitamin B12, which should be part of your daily diet to protect red blood cells and promote healthy brain activity. Feta also provides small amounts of iron, folate, and vitamin D.

Because of its high salt content, I usually cut a block of feta cheese into small slices and soak them in water overnight. I change the water on the second day and let it soak a little longer so it is properly de-salted.

Yields 24-32 pieces

### **Ingredients**

¼ lb. feta cheese

½ cup olive oil

2 medium onions, chopped

⅓ cup water

3½ lbs. fresh baby spinach, without stems, washed and roughly chopped

½ cup chopped scallions

½ cup chopped fresh dill

½ cup chopped fresh parsley

2 fresh leeks, chopped

Sea salt and black pepper to taste

2 eggs

Olive oil, for greasing

1 lb. frozen phyllo pastry sheets, defrosted

½ cup olive oil, for brushing the phyllo sheets

### **Preparation time: 1 hour**

Soak the feta cheese in water for at least two hours to remove excess salt. Drain and pat the cheese with a paper towel and then crumble the cheese. Set aside.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. In a large pan, warm the oil over medium heat. Add the onions and water and simmer for a minute and a half.

Add the spinach, scallions, dill, parsley, leeks, sea salt, and pepper. Cover and simmer for a minute and a half. Uncover and stir constantly until the spinach wilts.

Remove the pan from heat. Place the mixture in a colander, squeeze out any excess liquid, and pat dry with paper towels.

Set the mixture aside in a refrigerator to chill, occasionally checking and removing any liquid that may appear using paper towels. To prevent the phyllo from becoming soggy, the filling must be cold and dry.

In a medium bowl, whisk the eggs. Add the crumbled feta cheese and mix.

Fold the cold spinach mixture into the egg mixture until well combined. Grease 2 large baking trays with olive oil.

Unroll the phyllo. Lay a sheet flat on a clean work surface. Take care to keep the phyllo covered with a slightly damp, but not wet, towel while working in order to prevent it from drying out and becoming brittle.

Brush a sheet of phyllo with olive oil. Place a second sheet of phyllo on top, brush it with olive oil, and top with a third sheet of phyllo, also brushed with olive oil. Repeat this process and form stacks of three phyllo sheets until all phyllo sheets have been used.

With a sharp knife, cut the sheets lengthwise into thirds or fourths to form 2½-inch strips. Repeat the process with all phyllo sheets.

Place a tbsp. of filling near a corner of each layered phyllo strip. Fold each end at an angle over the filling to form a triangle. Continue to fold the triangles along the strips, like folding up a flag, until you reach the end.

Brush the tops of the pies with olive oil and place them on the baking trays. Keep the trays covered while preparing the remaining pies. Repeat until all the filling and phyllo strips are used.

Bake for 20 to 30 minutes until the triangles are crisp and light golden brown. Serve hot, warm, or cold.



# TIROPITAKIA

*Individual Cheese Pies*

Yields 20 pieces

## Ingredients

½ lb. feta cheese  
2 eggs  
¼ lb. cream cheese or goat cheese  
4 tbsps. grated parmesan cheese  
Freshly ground black pepper to taste

Olive oil, for greasing  
1 lb. frozen phyllo pastry sheets, defrosted  
⅓ cup olive oil, for brushing the phyllo sheets

## Preparation time: 1 hour

Soak the feta cheese in water for at least two hours to remove excess salt. Drain and pat the cheese with a paper towel and then crumble the cheese.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

In a large bowl, whisk the eggs. Add the three cheeses and black pepper, mixing thoroughly. The mixture should be thick and slightly lumpy.

Grease two flat baking pans by brushing with olive oil. Unroll the phyllo pastry, taking out one sheet at a time. Take care to keep the rest of the phyllo covered with a slightly damp, but not wet, towel while working in order to prevent it from drying out and becoming brittle.

Brush the sheet of phyllo with olive oil. Place a second sheet of phyllo on top,



brush it with olive oil, and top with a third sheet of phyllo, also brushed with olive oil. With a sharp knife, cut the sheets lengthwise into fourths to form 2½-inch strips. Repeat this process with 4 additional stacks of 3 phyllo sheets each to obtain a total of 20 strips. Put the unused phyllo in an airtight plastic bag and return to the freezer.

Place a tbsp. of filling near a corner of each layered phyllo strip. Fold each end at an angle over the filling to form a triangle. Continue to fold the triangles along the strips, like folding up a flag, until you reach the end.

Brush the tops of the pies with olive oil and place on the prepared baking pan ½ inch apart.

Bake for approximately 15 minutes, checking every couple of minutes after the first 12 minutes, until the pies are light golden brown.



*Place a tbsp. of filling near one end of each layered phyllo strip.*



*Fold the end of the phyllo strip at an angle over the filling to form a triangle. Continue to fold the triangle along the strip until the end, like folding a flag.*



*Brush the tops of the pies with olive oil and place on the oiled baking pan 1/2 inch apart.*



*Bake for approximately 15 minutes, checking every couple of minutes after the first 12 minutes, until the pies are light golden brown.*

# TYROPITTA STRIFTI

*Twisted Cheese Pie*

This recipe is very similar to the previous recipe, tiropitakia. The only difference between the two is the method of shaping the phyllo. Instead of layering three phyllo sheets and cutting that stack into quarters, two full, uncut sheet are required to make each pie. You can also add spinach to the filling and turn this into spinach pie.

Serves 5

## Ingredients

½ lb. feta cheese  
2 eggs  
¼ lb. cream cheese or goat cheese  
4 tbsps. grated parmesan cheese  
Freshly ground black pepper to taste  
Olive oil, for greasing  
1 lb. frozen phyllo pastry sheets, defrosted  
⅓ cup olive oil, for brushing the phyllo sheets

## Preparation time: 30 minutes

Soak the feta cheese in water for at least two hours to remove excess salt. Drain and pat the cheese with a paper towel and then crumble the cheese.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. In a large bowl, whisk the eggs. Add the three cheeses and black pepper, mixing thoroughly. The mixture should be thick and slightly lumpy.

Grease a flat baking pan by brushing with olive oil. Unroll the phyllo pastry, taking out two sheets at a time. Take care to keep the rest of the phyllo covered with a slightly damp, but not wet, towel while working in order to prevent it from drying out and becoming brittle.

Brush both sides of both phyllo sheets with olive oil. Place the two sheets, one on top of the other, lengthwise in front of you.

Cover ⅓ of the phyllo (the bottom third closest to you) with a uniform, ⅛-inch-thick layer of the cheese mixture. This should be about ⅓ of the filling mixture. Leave a ½-inch border along the left and right edges of the dough, as this will prevent the filling from leaking. Roll tightly from the bottom (the end nearest you, which contains the mixture) to the top, forming a long roll.



Gently twist the roll with a movement similar to that of wringing water from a towel. Twist about 1 inch of each end of the dough in the opposite direction. Take care not to over-twist the roll to the point of breaking.

Holding one end of the phyllo down with your finger, turn the twisted dough around your finger to form a spiral (as shown in the photograph).

Repeat this process with eight additional sheets of phyllo to make a total of five pies. Put unused phyllo in an airtight plastic bag and return to the freezer.

Place the pies on the prepared baking sheet. Bake for approximately 15 minutes, checking every couple of minutes after the first 12 minutes, until the pies are light golden brown.



## **DOLMADES**

### *Stuffed Vine Leaves*

Yields 20 pieces

#### **Ingredients**

1 cup rice (brown or white)

2 cups water

5 tbsps. olive oil

1 tsp. vegetable bouillon or  
½ vegetable stock cube,  
divided

Black pepper to taste to taste

1 tbsp. tomato paste

1 medium onion, grated

2 cups veal mince

Sea salt to taste

1 jar prepared vine leaves (or see below)

Juice of 2 lemons, divided



#### **Preparation time: 1 hour (including stuffing and rolling)**

In a saucepan, simmer brown rice with 2 cups of water on low heat, covered, for 20 minutes. If you're using white rice, soak the rice in 2 cups of water but do not cook it. Drain the rice, retaining the water.

In a medium pot, mix the olive oil, half of the bouillon, and black pepper. Stir. Simmer the mixture for 20 minutes.

Meanwhile, prepare the rice and mincemeat filling. In a large bowl, mix the rice, tomato paste, onion, and veal mince with very little sea salt and additional black pepper.

Carefully remove the vine leaves from the jar. Place them in a colander and rinse with cold, running water to remove excess salt.

Arrange the leaves on a clean work surface. Place a spoonful of filling on each vine leaf, just above the point where the stem was. Fold up the bottom of the leaf, fold down the top of the leaf, and then fold in the right and left sides.

Arrange the stuffed vine leaves tightly next to each other in a separate pot. Be sure that there is no space between the leaves, as they might pop open. Layer the stuffed leaves on top of one another once the bottom of the pot has been covered.

Pour the simmered olive oil, bouillon, and black pepper mixture into the pot with the stuffed leaves. Add the reserved water mixed with the other half of the bouillon and the juice of 1 lemon to the pot. The water level must be at least 1 inch above the level of the stuffed leaves.

Put a heat-resistant plate inside the pot to hold down the stuffed leaves and prevent them from falling apart while cooking. Simmer, covered, on low heat for about 30 minutes, until almost all of the water has evaporated. (Check frequently after 20 minutes.)

Carefully tilt the pot sideways and remove the plate. Add the remaining lemon juice. Replace the plate.

Let the dish sit, covered, for 10-15 minutes to allow the leaves to absorb any remaining juices.

Serve garnished with fresh lemon slices. Olives, feta cheese, Greek salad, and other mezedes (appetizers or hors d'oeuvres) can accompany this dish.

### **How to prepare fresh vine leaves for stuffing:**

Select vine leaves without thick veins. Remove the entire stem. Bring water to a boil in a large pot.

Add the leaves (making sure they are completely covered by the water), the juice from one fresh lemon, 2 tbsps. of olive oil, and a pinch of sea salt.

Cover the pot and reduce the heat to low. Simmer the leaves for 1-2 minutes and remove from heat.

As soon as the leaves are softened, remove them from the pot and immerse in cold water for 5 seconds.

Drain the leaves, stack, and tightly cover with foil. Place them in an airtight bag, squeeze to remove all air, seal, and freeze until needed.

If you do not have time to prepare your own, you can buy ready-to-use vine leaves from any Greek or Middle Eastern food store. These are parboiled, rolled, and preserved in brine, so make sure you place them in a colander and rinse with cold, running water to remove excess salt before using.



## ELIES ME KAFTRERES PIPERIES

*Mixed Olives with Red Chili Peppers*

Red chili peppers are rich in antioxidants and vitamins A, C, and K, which can help prevent cell damage, cancer, and other diseases. This dish is usually served before a meal with wine or ouzo.

Serves 2

### Ingredients

4-5 chili peppers  
2 cups mixed olives  
1 tbsp. olive oil

### Preparation time: 5 minutes

Lightly grill the chili peppers, if desired. In a small bowl, toss the olives with the olive oil. Transfer to a serving plate and arrange the chili peppers on top.

## TYRI FETA

*Feta Cheese*

Feta cheese is made with sheep's or goat's milk, and it has a strong, tangy flavor.

Serves 2



### Ingredients

2-4 oz. feta cheese, sliced from a block  
Olive oil to taste  
Chopped fresh oregano to taste

### Preparation time: 5 minutes

Place the feta slices on a serving plate. Top with olive oil and oregano to taste.

Note: If you are concerned about salt intake, soak the feta slices in water overnight before serving.

## ELIES KALAMATAS

### *Kalamata Olives*

Picking your own olives is a wonderful activity. Because they are large, Kalamata olives are particularly easy to pick. With their lovely black color, they look nice in a variety of dishes.



Slice the Kalamata olives on one side or pierce with a fork several times. After being cut or pierced, they should be left to soak in water for eight to ten days. This water has to be changed every day or two.

Drain the olives. Add extra virgin olive oil – enough to cover the olives – and very little vinegar, as well as half a tablespoon of sea salt. Cover the olives and let them sit until the bitterness is removed.

If you are working with more than two or three pounds of olives, they have to stay longer in the water before they are drained. The procedure is exactly the same; just be sure to add a bit more salt when you add the olive oil and vinegar.

Olives are a source of vitamin E, which improves skin tone, protects against heart disease, and aids gastrointestinal functions. They also have anti-inflammatory qualities.

## ELIES ANAMIXTES

### *Mixed Olives*

This appetizer is quick to make and has a delicious flavor that's milder than a dish made with Kalamata olives.



Serves 4

### **Ingredients**

4-5 cups mixed olives  
2 tbsps. olive oil  
1 fresh lemon, thinly sliced

### **Preparation time: 5 minutes**

Place the olives in a serving bowl and add the olive oil and lemon slices. Toss well to coat all olives evenly and distribute the lemons. This dish will stay fresh for about 5-6 days.

## PASTA ELIAS

*Olive Spread*

Serves 4

### Ingredients

40 unsalted black olives, pitted	1/3 cup chopped fresh parsley
1 tbsp. capers, soaked, rinsed, and drained to remove excess salt	1 clove garlic
	2 tbsps. olive oil
	1 tbsp. fresh lemon juice

### Preparation time: 5 minutes

Place all ingredients in a blender. Cover and blend on the highest speed for 1 minute.

Reduce the speed to medium and continue blending for 2 minutes. Continue blending longer if necessary until smooth, adding a tsp. of water if the mixture becomes too dry.

Refrigerate and use within 10 days.

Note: This is a tasty spread for sandwiches, is delicious on crackers, and can also be used as a condiment.

## REVITHIA STO FOURNO

*Baked Chickpeas*

This is a staple for monks during wintertime. Chickpeas contain zinc and folic acid. A good source of protein, they are high in dietary fiber and low in fat. Recent studies maintain that they can also assist in lowering cholesterol.

Serves 4

### Ingredients

1 1/2 cups dried chickpeas	1/3 cup olive oil
6 medium onions, peeled and sliced	Sea salt and black pepper to taste

### Preparation time: 2 hours and 10 minutes

Soak the chickpeas in water overnight. They should be doubled in size the next day. Wash thoroughly and drain. Preheat the oven to 300 degrees.

In a small saucepan, cover the chickpeas in water. Boil on low heat for 40 minutes.

Place the chickpeas in an oven-safe pan with their cooking liquid, adding the sliced onions on top of the peas.

Bake for 30 minutes. Add the olive oil, lower the heat to 200 degrees, and cook for another hour. Taste for seasoning and add water if needed.

# REVYTHOKEFTEDES

## *Chickpea Patties*

The monks' favorite!

Serves 4-5

### **Ingredients**

1 (15 oz.) can ready-cooked chickpeas	½ cup all-purpose flour
1 large onion, finely chopped	½ cup corn flour
2 cloves garlic, pressed	1 tbsp. lemon juice
1 cup chopped fresh parsley	1 egg, beaten
½ tsp. ground cumin	Sea salt and black pepper to taste
	Olive oil, for baking

### **Preparation time: 1 hour 10 minutes**

Preheat the oven 350 degrees. Drain the chickpeas and put them in a blender. Blend for 2-5 minutes.

In a large bowl, thoroughly mix the chickpeas, onion, garlic, parsley, cumin, all-purpose flour, corn flour, lemon juice, egg, sea salt, and pepper. Knead the mixture until it reaches a stiff, doughy consistency.

Shape the mixture into patties that are 1½-inches in diameter and ¼-inch thick. Put on a plate, covered, or in a sealed container. Refrigerate for at least 20 minutes or until thoroughly chilled.

Place the patties in a baking pan and cover with a ½-inch layer of olive oil. Bake for 20 minutes on each side for a total of 40 minutes.

Sprinkle with additional lemon juice and serve with a mixed salad and bread as an appetizer.

# GIGANTES PLAKI

*Baked Beans in Tomato Sauce*

Beans contain vitamin B6, which helps fight stress, arthritis, various types of infection, high cholesterol, fatigue, and skin disorders. It also maintains healthy hair.

Serves 4

## Ingredients

½ lb. dried lima beans  
5 cups water  
½ cup chopped fresh parsley  
2 cloves garlic, chopped (optional)  
1 cup organic vegetable or chicken stock  
2 large, ripe tomatoes, chopped  
1 tbsp. dried oregano  
¼ cup first cold-pressed olive oil  
1 large white onion, chopped  
1 tbsp. tomato paste  
Sea salt and black pepper to taste

## Preparation time: 1 hour and 45 minutes

Soak the lima beans in water overnight.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Drain the beans. Add the beans to a saucepan and cover with the 5 cups of water.

Bring the beans to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer on low for 50 minutes. Drain the beans, retaining the cooking liquid.

Place the beans in an oven-safe dish with enough of the cooking liquid to just cover them. Add the parsley, garlic, stock, tomatoes, oregano, olive oil, onion, tomato paste, and salt and pepper. Bake for 45 minutes, until the beans are soft and the sauce has thickened.





# FAVA

## *Yellow Split Peas*

Yellow split peas are rich in amino acids, which help regulate mood and control hunger. It is also rich in vitamin B1, which aids metabolism and helps the nervous system. Phosphorus helps develop healthy bones, and potassium regulates blood pressure and promotes healthy arteries.

Serves 4

### **Ingredients**

- 1½ cups yellow split peas
- 4½ cups water, divided
- 3 tbsps. olive oil
- Sea salt to taste
- ½ tbsp. fresh lemon juice (optional)

### **Preparation time: 30 minutes**

Boil the peas in 4 cups of water until the peas are cooked through and all the water has evaporated. This will take approximately 25 minutes. If the peas are still not well done, add more water and continue boiling.

Purée the peas in a food processor with ½ cup water and the olive oil. Return the mixture to the pot. Simmer on low heat with sea salt and lemon juice, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon to prevent sticking, until the peas reach a creamy consistency.

Remove from the heat, cover, and let the peas sit for 5 minutes before serving to cool and thicken. Serve at room temperature.

Garnish with finely chopped onions (squeezed and rinsed under cold water, if a milder taste is required) and olive oil.



# TARAMOSALATA

*Fish Roe Purée*

Tarama, or roe, is usually carp roe, but the name also extends to cod fish roe. Carp roe is normally sold in glass jars and tends to be very salty, so take care when you're preparing this dish. The roe can be purchased from Greek or international markets in larger cities. Try to avoid the dark-pink variety, as color is due to a chemical dye. The best quality has a light pink-cream color.

There are many ways to make taramosalata. This recipe uses potatoes, but it can also be made with white bread (crusts removed), sometimes with the addition of ground walnuts.

Serves 6

## Ingredients

5 medium potatoes  
2 tbsps. carp roe (tarama)  
Juice of 2 fresh lemons  
½ cup olive oil

## Preparation time: 1 hour

Steam the potatoes in the skins, to retain nutrients, for 35 minutes. Cool, peel, and slice. Cover and set aside.

Combine the tarama, lemon juice, and olive oil in a food processor, mixing well on medium speed for 2 minutes.

If the mixture gets too thick, add 1-2 tsp. of water. Add the potatoes to the food processor. Switch to low speed and blend for 2 minutes. Increase the speed to medium and blend for an additional 2 minutes.

Serve with warm pita bread, carrots, celery, or any other fresh vegetables.



## SKORDALIA

### *Garlic Dip*

Greeks usually serve this garlic dip as an accompaniment to baked or fried bakaliaros (cod or halibut), but it also goes well with many other types of fish or vegetables, such as eggplant or zucchini.

Serves 6

#### **Ingredients**

5 garlic cloves, minced

⅓ cup olive oil

1 tbsp. white wine vinegar

¼ cup water

Sea salt and black pepper to taste

4 medium potatoes, steamed and mashed



#### **Preparation time: 30 minutes**

Combine the garlic, olive oil, vinegar, water, salt, and pepper in a blender. Cover and blend for 1 minute on highest speed. If you are using a smaller blender, add the ingredients little by little.

Turn off the blender and add the mashed potatoes. Blend on medium speed until soft and smooth. If necessary, add a little additional water one teaspoon at a time.

## HTAPODAKIA

### *Baby Octopus*

Serves 2

#### **Ingredients**

1½ lbs. baby octopus

1 cup water

½ small anchovy

2 tsp. extra virgin olive oil

1 tsp. vinegar or fresh lemon juice

Black pepper to taste

½ lb. baby arugula

½ fresh carrot, peeled and thinly sliced

#### **Preparation time: 40 minutes**

Clean the octopus under cold, running water. Boil 1 cup of water, add the octopus, reduce heat to low, and simmer for 30 minutes.

Mash the anchovy with the olive oil in a small bowl until completely smooth. Add the vinegar or lemon juice and black pepper, whisking well.

Drain the octopus. Arrange the arugula leaves and carrots on a serving dish and place the octopus on top. Pour the anchovy sauce over the octopus and serve.

# HTAPODI STI SCHARA

## *Grilled Octopus*

A type of seafood that is available year-round, octopus is a good source of iron, selenium, vitamin B12, and zinc.

Serves 4

### **Ingredients**

1 medium octopus  
2 cups water  
2 tbsps. red wine vinegar  
2 tbsps. red wine vinegar or fresh lemon juice, for the sauce  
2 cloves garlic, finely chopped (optional)  
3 tbsps. olive oil  
2 tbsps. dried oregano  
Sea salt and black pepper to taste

### **Preparation time: 1 hour**

Clean the octopus and separate the tentacles from the body in order to facilitate placing it in the pan.

Boil the water and 2 tbsps. of red wine vinegar in a large pan. Add all of the octopus, reduce the heat, and simmer over very low heat for 40 minutes; this way it will be cooked in its own juices. Turn off the heat when the octopus starts to soften and acquires a deep-red color. Remove with a fork and taste for doneness.

Preheat the grill to 350 degrees. When the octopus is cool enough to handle,

rub it under running water to remove the dark outer membrane. Grill for 5 minutes on each side and place on a serving plate.

Mix 2 tbsps. of red wine vinegar (or lemon juice), garlic, olive oil, oregano, salt, and pepper in a blender or in a bowl with a fork until thick. Pour over the octopus. Sprinkle with additional oregano and serve.



# CALAMARI SALATA

*Boiled Squid*

Serves 4

## Ingredients

3 lbs. squid, cleaned  
4 cups water  
2 sticks celery, finely chopped  
2 fresh tomatoes, chopped  
½ cup olive oil  
Juice of ½ fresh lemon  
½ tbsp. dried oregano  
½ cup chopped fresh parsley  
3 cloves garlic, finely chopped (optional)  
Sea salt and black pepper to taste

## Preparation time: 45 minutes

Ask your seafood supplier to clean the squid, or prepare it in advance and refrigerate until use.

Bring 4 cups of water to a boil with sea salt to taste. Slice the squid in ½-inch rings and add to the boiling water. Reduce heat to low and simmer for 8-10 minutes, until the squid starts to soften.

Drain the squid in a colander and place it in a bowl. Add the celery, tomato, olive oil, lemon juice, oregano, parsley, garlic, sea salt, and pepper. Mix thoroughly and refrigerate in a sealed container if needed.

Stir and serve at room temperature on a bed of lettuce, over a mixed salad, or as an accompaniment to grilled asparagus.

