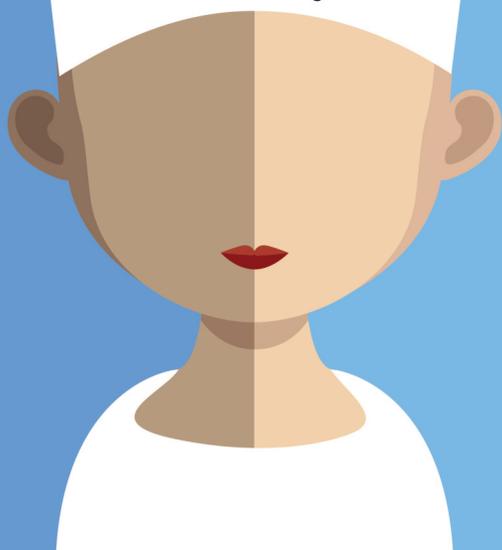


# The Bahar project

Many recipes,  
one city



## 12 RECIPES STORIES

of women living in Athens

BY INITIATIVE OF



WITH THE SUPPORT OF





**12** RECIPES  
STORIES  
of women living in Athens



This work has been authored by the Athens Coordination Centre for Refugee and Migrant issues (ACCMR) with the support of ActionAid Hellas.

This publication has been produced within the framework of the "SDGs and Migration – Multipliers and Journalists Addressing Decision Makers and Citizens in the EU" three year project, financed by the European Commission. This programme aims to inform about and raise awareness of sustainable development goals, migration and the ways the two are connected.

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- Bulgarian Platform for International Development (Bulgaria),
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**Actions were carried out thanks to the collaboration of the following partners:**

Kypseli Municipal Market, Melissa: Network of Migrant Women in Greece, ActionAid "EPIKENTRO" Centre, "Iason" Sports & Cultural Club of Kolonos, Afghan Migrant & Refugee Community in Greece, Georgian Community "Athens Georgian House", Friendship Club of Kios Street, "Borysthenes" NGO, Citizens Group "Our Kypseli", Children & Young Adult Library of the City of Athens Culture, Sports & Youth Organisation, Ano Ampelokipi Culture Club, Parents & Guardians Association of the 52nd High School of Kolonos, Al-masar, DIWATA (Determined Independent Women in Action for Total Advancement), Myrtillo café - arts centre. All actions were held under the auspices of the Athens Migrant Integration Council.

By initiative of



With the support of



**A few words on the Athens Coordination Centre - ACCMR:**

ACCMR was established in June 2017 by initiative of the City of Athens, with the Stavros Niarchos Foundation as a founding donor and the support of the Athens Partnership. ACCMR is a coordination hub facilitating know-how exchange between local and international NGOs, international organisations together with institutions and services of the City of Athens, aiming to enable the joint creation and implementation of innovative tools and initiatives promoting migrant and refugee integration on a local scale.

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## The Bahar Project

Getting to know one another  
through cooking!

"Bahar" is a symbolic term, not only because it is readily understood by many peoples –Greeks included– but also because in many languages, such as Arabic, Persian and Turkish, "bahar" means spring! And it really was spring when the amazing actions of the Bahar Project's initiatives took place. It all became –and still remains– for us a journey of discovery and knowledge through cooking and tasting. The Bahar Project sprang from our belief that cooking as a procedure and tasting as an experience possess the unique ability to bring people together, no matter where they come from. We all remember our most –and least!– favourite food from when we were kids, as well as the smells of both simple and complicated dishes that filled our homes before a feast with our loved ones.

Thus, as part of the actions performed in various neighbourhoods of Athens (Kolonos, Ampelokipi, Kypseli), we invited women who live in our city to help us plan three feasts of flavour – with a potent intercultural aftertaste. Using cooking as a starting point, we came to meet some energetic, creative and strong migrant, refugee and Greek women, who cooked with a hearty dose of love and gave the locals the opportunity to taste dishes from Greece and abroad, get to know each other, dance and have fun, regardless of their nationality.

The book you hold in your hands is the outcome of a wonderful journey – the Bahar Project. It contains twelve recipes that were actually prepared during this event, as well as the personal narratives of the women with whom we had the pleasure of working together, developing friendships, sharing meals and memories, laughing, getting emotional and, at the end of the day, discovering all the things that make us one and the same. Our warm thanks from the heart to all of them!

The Bahar Project journey and this book wouldn't have been possible without ActionAid's support. Special thanks to Sotiria Kyriakopoulou for loving our idea, embracing it and supporting it from the start. We would also like to thank Lefteris Papagiannakis, former Deputy Mayor for Migration and Refugees in the City of Athens, for supporting the Bahar Project with more than just words, with his very own cooking! Nadina Christopoulou was yet another invaluable partner in the Bahar Project journey: she was the one to welcome us to the "Melissa" Migrant Women Network –where we met many of the women that went on to working with us– in an environment brimming with love, full of experience in the field of migrant women empowerment and a strong will to interact, share and collaborate. We also wish to thank the following: Anna Agriteli, Taher Alizande, Mahmoud Abdelrassul, Stella Elmatzoglou, Nikos Kortesis, Elli Lambiri, Ilias Loukopoulos, Georgia Rafan, Mohtar Rezai, Dimitris Tzetzias, Marouso Fragouli. Last but not least, many thanks to all the volunteers who helped out with the events.

*Diona Lambiri, Marina Tomara*

*City of Athens Coordination Centre for Migrant & Refugee issues (ACCMR)*



*This book is dedicated to our moms Alexandra and Maro  
and to all the moms in the world.*

# Razie Sarifi

## Afghanistan



*“To me, the best part about cooking is the anticipation of tasting my food and the joy I feel when it tastes exactly the way I wanted it to!”*

Razie participated in the first Bahar Project event by preparing delicious traditional Afghani Bolani: fried potato stuffed flat-bread with homemade dough.

She learnt to cook from her father who lives in Iran. Razie was born in Afghanistan but raised in Iran, at the city of Karaj, which is very close to Tehran, the capital. She has very fond memories of all the festive occasions when they would invite numerous friends at home and cook traditional dishes. "I really love cooking. My dream is to enrol in a culinary school and then open my own restaurant in Athens, which will be filled with people from all over Athens, wanting to savour traditional Afghan and Iranian dishes."

Razie's favourite Greek food is Greek salad –with lots and lots of Kalamon olives– and spaghetti with minced meat. Her daughter, Athena, claims that her mom makes the best roast turkey with potatoes ever!

Razie is married to Mohtar, also Afghani, and together they have three daughters, Athena and her younger twin sisters. Razie currently works at a restaurant in Athens.

***Did you know?***

*Poetry holds a very important place in the Afghan culture and way of life. The Afghani have been narrating their stories in verse for more than a thousand years. In the Western city of Herat, it is a tradition for the young and old alike to gather every Thursday night together and share traditional and contemporary poetry while drinking tea and eating sweets.*

# Razie's *bolani* (potato-filled flatbread)

## INGREDIENTS

(for 20-25 bolani)

### FOR THE DOUGH

- 2 ½ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup water
- 1 tsp salt

### FOR THE FILLING

- 3-4 large potatoes, boiled and mashed
- 1 bunch spring onions, finely chopped
- Celery to taste
- Salt, pepper, turmeric, ginger, coriander, chilli, garam masala, a pinch of cumin, curry powder, all to taste
- Seed oil for frying

### FOR THE VINAIGRETTE

- 2 bunches fresh coriander
- ½ cup walnuts
- 4 cloves garlic
- ½ or 1 hot green pepper, to taste
- 1 tbsp sugar
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 ½ cup red or apple vinegar

## INSTRUCTIONS

**For the dough:** Mix all the ingredients well, until the dough is not sticky on your hands. Let it rest for 20 minutes, covered with a kitchen towel.

**For the filling:** Place the boiled and mashed potatoes in a large bowl and add salt, pepper, chopped green onions, celery and the spices (turmeric, ginger, coriander, chilli, garam masala, curry and cumin). Mix well with a fork, until all the ingredients blend together thoroughly.

Split the dough into small balls and roll it into thin dough discs. Place the filling on one half of the disc and cover with the other half into a half-moon shape.

Fry the bolani on both sides in a relatively deep frying pan with plenty of oil, until it turns golden.

**For the vinaigrette:** Combine all the ingredients in the blender to turn into a smooth dressing.

Serve the bolani while it's hot and crispy, accompanied with the vinaigrette or –if it's more to your liking– with some strained yoghurt.



The Bahar project  
Many recipes, one city

TODAY we cook **Afgani & Greek**

THURSDAY 21  
June 2018  
TIME: 17:00

**FREE ENTRANCE**

ΕΠΙΚΕΝΤΡΟ ActionAid  
Πέτρας 99, Κολωνός

ΕΥΝΟΙΟΦΑΝΕΙΣ:

ΑΡΧΗ ΕΥΧΑΡΙΣΤΙΑΣ ΤΩ:

ΜΕ ΤΗ ΣΥΜΠΕΤΟΧΗ:



# Afghan Migrant and Refugee Community in Greece



## INGREDIENTS

### FOR THE DOUGH

- 500 g flour
- 100 g water
- 100 g milk
- 1 tsp salt
- 2 eggs

### FOR THE FILLING

- 1 kg minced beef
- 4 big onions, chopped
- 1 tsp turmeric
- 1 tbsp tomato paste
- salt, pepper
- garlic to taste
- 1 tbsp coriander

- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsbp garam masala

### FOR THE TOMATO SAUCE

- 2 blended tomatoes
- 1 tsbp tomato paste
- 1 big onion
- 1 cup boiled yellow lentils, salt, pepper, fresh coriander, paprika, turmeric

### FOR THE YOGHURT SAUCE

- 2 cups yoghurt
- ½ cup water
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 garlic clove, minced

# *Mantu*

## *(traditional meat-filled dumplings)*

### INSTRUCTIONS

**For the dough:** Place all the ingredients in a deep bowl and stir well, until the dough doesn't stick on your hands. Cover with a towel and let it rest.

**For the filling:** In a frying pan, sauté the onions and the turmeric. Add the minced beef and stir well. Add the paste, salt, pepper and the spices, bring down heat and let the sauce simmer. If necessary, add some water. In the end, the mince shouldn't be very watery.

**For the tomato sauce:** Sauté the onion with the turmeric in a frying pan, then add the tomatoes, the paste and the yellow lentils. Stir softly. Add the rest of the ingredients and allow the sauce to simmer until it thickens.

**Mantu filling:** Roll the dough into a thin layer and use a small glass to cut out small round discs. Place a spoonful of the filling on each disc. Brush a little water around the disc's perimeter using your fingertips. Fold in a half-moon shape and press down on the edges. Bring together the edges and press down with your fingertips so that the edges stick together. This shape –the mantu should look like an oversized tortellini– helps so that the sauce stays on it.

**For the yoghurt sauce:** Mix all the ingredients in the blender.

In a pot containing water and some salt, boil the mantu at average heat for approximately 5 minutes, until they rise to the surface. If possible, it is best to steam it. As a matter of fact, it is traditionally prepared using special steamers.

Use a relatively deep and wide platter to serve. Spread some yoghurt sauce along the bottom and place the mantu on top. Drizzle with the remaining yoghurt and top off with the tomato sauce. Garnish with finely cut fresh coriander.



# Spyridoula Velaora

## Aetolia-Acarnania



*“It’s really great when events like Bahar are organised, because we have the chance to get to know other cultures. My daughter plays with all the other kids at school, no matter where they come from, and I encourage her to do that. Soon enough, she’ll go to university with these kids, they’ll spend an entire lifetime together, they need to communicate.”*

Spyridoula's place of origin is the village of Amorgianoi Val-tou at the Greek region of Aetolia-Acarmania. She grew up in the neighbourhood of Kolonos, where she lives to this day in her family home. She's done many jobs and has been working as a lollipop lady at a school for the last four years.

Spyridoula remembers how, as a child, she would often help her mother make local specialities, like the pasta pie that she cooked for the Bahar Project. "I was always looking to see what my mother was doing so that I could help. This means that I've been rolling out my own dough sheet since I was 12. In our region we have a large variety of pies, including wild greens pies and cheese pies. Pasta pies were a dish we'd serve both on special occasions and ordinary days. Even when my siblings and I got married and moved out, each Sunday my mother would have us come over for lunch. And now I'm teaching my own daughter, a fourth-grader at elementary school, how to make pies."



***Did you know?***

*The region of Aetolia-Acarmania is famous for its traditional pies, especially thanks to the "gyrismata" (spins), a technique mastered by local women that produces dough sheets of unrivalled crunchiness.*

# Spyridoula's pasta pie

## INGREDIENTS

### FOR THE DOUGH

- 1 kg flour
- 1 pinch of salt
- 2 tbsps vinegar or white wine
- 2 tbsps oil
- 1-2 cups of water (the dough must be soft but not sticky to the bowl's walls)

### FOR THE FILLING

- ½ kg spaghetti No 2 (for pastitsio)
- 5 eggs, whisked
- 300 g feta cheese
- 250 ml fresh milk
- 2 tbsps butter

## INSTRUCTIONS

**For the filling:** Boil the pasta in some water with a pinch of salt. Drain, add one tablespoon of butter, toss and let it cool. Once it reaches room temperature, add the whisked eggs, the crumbled feta cheese and the milk. Mix well.

**For the dough:** Place all ingredients in a bowl and knead thoroughly. Split the dough in 4 parts. Dust a thin rolling pin with flour and slowly roll out 4 sheets.

Grease a large round baking tray and place 2 dough sheets at the bottom, greasing the first before you lay the second on top and in such a way that the tray's side walls are also covered. If necessary, cut the edges that are too long. Grease lightly and add

all of the filling. Place the other 2 dough sheets on top, well greased, and sprinkle with one tablespoon of butter, cut in little pieces. Bring together the edges of the dough sheets, by curling them inwards.

Place the tray in the bottom rank in preheated oven and bake at 190 °C for 45 min. to 1 hour, using the conventional (top & bottom) heating mode.





# Hanna Oliynych

## Ukraine



*“Cooking reminds me of family. That we were, that we lived as one big, loving and happy family.”*

Hanna cooked varenyky, a traditional everyday dish of Ukraine. She has a joyful and outgoing personality despite the adversities; a lot like the city that she grew up in: the city of Chernivtsi in south-western Ukraine, where various religions and nationalities live together. When she was 15 years old, her mother lost her job and left for Greece, leaving Hanna to stay with her grandmother. "When my grandmother and I lived in Ukraine, our house stood at a street corner and had two windows –one facing on one side and one facing on the other side. Anyone who passed by knew that they could have something to eat. And anyone we ever invited over at gatherings just knew that they would leave taking a bag of food with them", she recalls. She learnt to cook from her grandmother and her mother, whom she thinks of with great love and admiration. "She loved to throw parties, it was something that she missed in Greece. When my mother and grandmother were alive, we held parties in Athens, too."

Later on, the grandmother came to Greece to join Hanna's mother, who had managed to start a cheese pie shop in Piraeus. Hanna remained in Ukraine, studied Finance and worked for many years for her country's Statistics Authority. She married her husband at 19 and had three children with him and a love that is still going strong. Their oldest son is a Marketing student and the middle one (born in Greece, same as the youngest son) is doing great at school. When, in 2005, her husband lost his job in Ukraine, they decided to come to Greece and the family was reunited. In the beginning, Hanna took on many jobs that were inconsistent with her studies. Since 2016, she has been working for the Melissa Network of Migrant Women, where her organisational skills led her to taking on multiple duties. "I prepare breakfast, take care of the room where we hold the psychological support group meetings for girls that have suffered domestic violence. I love my job, because I have always liked to help others, ever since I was a child. At school, the other kids would always vote for me to be the leader!"

***Did you know?***

*In Ukraine, Christmas Eve is celebrated on December 6 and, in keeping with tradition, it is customary to prepare twelve fasting dishes, as many as Christ's Apostles.*

# Hanna's *varenyky* with potato filling

## INGREDIENTS

- 3 cups flour
- 2 eggs
- 1 ½ cup water
- 100 ml sunflower oil
- ½ kg potatoes
- 2-3 onions
- 2 tbsps sugar
- salt
- Yoghurt / sour cream for serving (optional)

## INSTRUCTIONS

Peel the potatoes and boil them in some water with a pinch of salt until they are softened.

**For the dough:** Sift the flour, add two pinches of salt and stir in the eggs, lukewarm water and 2 tablespoons of sunflower oil. Knead into a soft dough that doesn't stick to your fingers. Cover and set aside for 30 minutes.

**For the filling:** Finely chop the onions. Sauté half of it in 5 tablespoons of sunflower oil for 6 minutes.

In a bowl, use a fork to mash the boiled potatoes until smooth. Add the sautéed onions, salt and pepper and combine.

Sauté the rest of the onions in the remaining oil and mix in the sugar to caramelise the onions. Set aside and maintain lukewarm until it is time to serve.

Roll out the dough in a thin layer and use a glass to cut out round discs of approximately 7cm in diameter. Place some filling on each disc. Using your fingertips, brush some water around its edges. Fold in the middle to create a half-moon shape and press well on the dough's edges so that the filling doesn't pour out while they boil.

Boil the pasta in water with a little salt. When they float to the surface let simmer for one more minute. All in all, they should be done in around 10 minutes.

Serve the pasta in a bowl, sprinkled with the caramelised onions. They can be accompanied with strained yoghurt or sour cream.



**The Bahar project**  
Many recipes, one city

**2nd EVENT**  
In the framework of  
**ATHENS 2018**  
**WORLD BOOK CAPITAL™**  
City of Athens

**A FEAST WITH RECIPES FROM NIGERIA, UKRAINE & GREECE**

**WEDNESDAY 19**  
December 2018  
TIME: 17:00-20:00

**FREE ENTRANCE**

**Myrtillo Cafe**  
Πλάκα ΚΑΠΑΨ  
ΜΕΤΡΟ ΠΛΑΝΟΥΜΟΥ

— ΣΥΝΕΡΓΟΙ ΜΕ ΤΗ ΣΥΝΤΗΡΗΣΗ ΤΗΣ — Συμπόσιος Αθηνών 2018 Συνδιοργάνωση Προεδρία του Δήμου Αθηναίων

ΕΥΧΑΡΙΣΤΙΑΣ



# Maria Ohilebo

## Nigeria



### **Did you know?**

*Nigeria is one of the most multicultural countries in the world, as 250 different nationalities call it their home, speaking more than 500 different languages and dialects. This gives rise to a very interesting mosaic of cultures and traditions and equally translates into a wonderfully rich cuisine.*

Maria has been living in Greece for 25 years now. In her homeland she and her husband were both actors. He visited Greece, fell in love with the place and stayed, and Maria followed suit after a while. In the beginning, Maria had a lot of trouble with the local language, as well as with the fact that the job opportunities were not quite what she had expected. Her first job was taking care of a disabled child. She spent the next five years working as domestic help for an Iranian family.

To her, cooking is a family tradition. Her grandmother was the best cook in their village and her mother was a professional cook. Maria heard the calling when she came to Greece. "After doing several jobs, I realised that difficulties help us find our purpose and bring out the best we can be." She decided to go to a culinary school and immediately found a job as a chef's assistant. "I like pouring all my art into cooking. I have participated in collaborative kitchens and numerous festivals. As a chef, I'm constantly in motion, I'm creative. I have also worked in an office but I find it quite boring." Despite the fact that for a long time she would go to school in the morning and work at a well-known pastry shop in the evening, thanks to her husband's support the two managed to raise their two daughters, who are now 25 and 18 years old. Her oldest daughter is also studying to become a chef.

Maria is particularly dynamic in migrant women's communities; over the years, she has been an active member of the African Women's Community and the Youth Against Racism organization, as well as president of the Nigerian Women's Community and vice-president of the Nigerian Diaspora. She is also a founding member of the "Melissa" Network of Migrant Women. All along with her husband Sunny they continue their acting careers and write movie scripts.

**“My outlook is: set goals, move forward – and you will achieve them!”**

# Maria's

## tomato rice

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 ½ cup olive oil
- 1 cup fresh tomatoes
- 200 g tomato paste
- 4 onions
- 2 hot peppers (habanero)
- 4 red Florina peppers, finely chopped
- salt, white pepper
- thyme, laurel leaves, curry
- 1 small tsp ground onion powder
- 2 cups chicken broth
- 6 cups long-grain rice

### INSTRUCTIONS

Heat the oil in a large pot and throw the onions in. Sauté the onions for 2-3 minutes and add the tomato paste. Bring down heat and let cook for 10 minutes. Stir frequently so that it doesn't stick to the bottom. Add the finely cut fresh tomatoes, the onion powder and the chopped peppers and let it cook for 10-15 minutes.

Add the spices and the hot peppers –thinly cut– and add some more oil if necessary. Stir constantly.

Wash out the rice with water so that the starch is removed and the rice doesn't mush.

Pour the chicken broth in the pot, add the salt and finally the rice. Once the rice starts to boil in the tomato sauce, bring down the heat to a minimum and cover the pot with a lid. Let the rice grow for approximately 10-15 minutes. Serve with **Moi Moi** (next recipe).

# Maria's *Moi Moi* (savoury bean pudding)

## INGREDIENTS

- 500 g black-eyed beans
- 2 bowls finely chopped onions
- 1 chicken cube
- 2 red Florina peppers
- 2 hot peppers (optional)
- 1 cup sunflower oil (or olive oil)
- salt

## INSTRUCTIONS

Submerge the beans in cold water for 4 minutes and then put them in the blender for a few seconds, until the skin separates from the grain. Submerge them again in cold water so that the skins float to the surface. Transfer the beans in clean water and let soak until they soften (1 hour approximately). Then put them through the blender again together with the onions and the peppers.

Place the mix in a bowl and add salt, oil and the chicken cube dissolved in 1 cup of warm water. Split the paste in small fireproof containers (in Nigeria the paste is wrapped up in banana leaves) and place them in a large pot with water. The containers must be immersed halfway in the pot.

Cover the pot and cook the bain-marie on low heat for approximately 50 minutes. Test with a knife to see if the pudding is ready, remove from the fire and take out the containers.

Moi Moi and tomato rice make a perfect match.



# Vasso Kardara

## Imvros



“ I love nature so much – especially the sea. I spend my entire summer wearing a mask and diving underwater. During winter, I like going for a walk and gather wild greens. All that reminds me of my home village. ”

### **Did you know?**

On the island of Imvros certain traditions that are evocative of ancient customs survive to this day. In the Agridia village, on Assumption's eve the locals gather some of their cattle to offer them to Virgin Mary; the priest blesses them and says a special prayer for health, mentioning the names of the believers who offered their animals. The meat is cooked all through the night and on August 15th, after the mass, everyone gets together to eat the "cour-couta", namely the meat's broth with pounded wheat. Afterwards, they place sweets and fruits on the tombs, as a custom dating back to the ancient funeral banquets.

Vasso cooked meatballs wrapped in eggplants, a delicious summer dish that they used to cook in the Imvros's village of Glyky, her birthplace. Vasso and her mother moved in Istanbul when she was 12 years old, after the last remaining Greek school on the island was shut down. Her father stayed behind to take care of their land and sheep. She remembers how difficult it was for her at the Greek school in Istanbul. She moved to Greece with her family when she was 19 years old. At the age of 22 she got married and then had a daughter, Emilia. She worked for a clothing manufacturer for many years and now she volunteers for the "Myrtillo" Social Cooperative Enterprise with a Special Purpose at Ampelokipi.

Vasso has many beautiful childhood memories from the village. "My mother would send me to gather eggplants from the garden for her to cook, and it felt like I was helping, like I was doing something important." She also remembers how difficult the farmer's life was at the village. "My father would leave at 3 in the morning to take care of the sheep, milk them, carry the milk over so that my mother could make cheese with it. During the winter they tended the olives, in the summer it was the harvest, the chickens... there were so many chores that needed to be done at the same time that we did not always get to eat together... Holidays were the only time we all ate together..."

Holidays, when the whole family gathered to eat round the table, have a special place in her heart. "At Christmas we would eat pork. We also used the pork to make sausages and then, on Epiphany Day, the priest would come over to bless them so that the goblins wouldn't eat them." Vasso's favourite food is the stuffed lamb that her family would cook at Imvros on Easter. "The day before, my father would bring the lamb and slaughter it; we were sent to the mountain to gather sorrel and to the rivers to get a specific type of mud. My mother would start preparing the lamb one day in advance: they would stuff it with rice seasoned with spearmint, spring onions, dry onions and many other herbs. Then they would sew the belly up so that the filling wouldn't pour out. They'd add potatoes all around and place it in the stone oven to cook through the night. They would mix the mud with the sorrel and seal the oven against the winds."

# *Salma meatballs* *with eggplants and tomato sauce in* *Vasso's oven*

## INGREDIENTS

### FOR THE MEATBALLS

- 1 kg minced meat (lamb or beef or both)
- 2 large onions
- 2 cloves garlic
- 2 eggs
- ½ small cup vinegar
- 1 ½ - 2 cups breadcrumbs
- 1 bunch parsley, finely chopped
- 1 bunch spearmint, finely chopped
- some dried oregano
- salt, pepper
- 2 kg eggplants

### FOR THE TOMATO SAUCE

- 2 kg tomatoes
- 1 onion cut in fourths
- 5 tbsps olive oil
- 1 tsp sugar
- parsley
- salt, papper

## INSTRUCTIONS

Cut the eggplants into slices and brush them with oil. Cook them in the oven at fan mode and medium temperature until golden and then set aside to cool.

Remove the skins and seeds from the tomatoes and mash them into a pulp. Boil them for approximately half an hour along with the other sauce ingredients on medium heat.

Place the minced meat in a bowl and add all the other ingredients. Knead everything together until well mixed. If it feels too tight, add some oil. Then cover the bowl with plastic wrap and let it rest in the fridge for about an hour.

Make small, cylinder-like meatballs (like soutzoukakia). Cook them in the oven at fan mode and medium temperature until brown on the outside. Then

wrap each meatball in an eggplant slice, place them in a somewhat deep pan side by side and cover with the tomato sauce. Let it cook in the oven at medium heat for about half an hour.





# Ismini Kotsoni

Icaria



Maria Mountzouroulia, Theodora Koutsogianni, Ismini Kotsoni (left to right)

*“Through the process of participating and giving, you feel that you are part of a whole – that you have an identity.”*

Together with her mother and her friend Maria, Ismini prepared soufiko at her place. It is a traditional dish in the island of Icaria and it is a lot like briam (or "tourlou"), though it prefers the pot and not the oven. Ismini was born and raised in Kypseli, Athens, but spent all of her childhood summers in the village of Evidilos in Icaria, where her mother comes from. She wasn't very fond of soufiko back then, but now she loves it and at times she longs for a plate of soufiko with sourdough bread and kathoura, an Icarian soft white cheese. Ismini grew up in a home that fully embraces the primary Icarian principles: openness and team spirit.

According to her, houses in Icaria may have been small and humble, but they would overflow with love, hospitality and – above all– freedom. She would spend most of her day together with the other kids at the beach. Then they would go to the coffee houses to arrange how they would get to the famous Icarian festivals. This is where Ismini learnt the meaning of offering and working together at an early age, since festivals in Icaria are a collective affair.

"I grew up with groups of people, I volunteered at weddings, fairs, christenings, everywhere – and it always felt like I was doing something important. This is precisely what I have found in the "Our Kypseli" Citizens' Group: other people to do things with. We all give and this is what binds us together", she says before speaking of the Bahar Project:

"I absolutely loved it, because I met new people from cultures I was unfamiliar with. Food and music are a common language that connects all of us!" Ismini lives in the house where she grew up in Kypseli; she studied English literature, she worked for Olympic Airways, now she's retired and has two daughters.

***Did you know?***

*According to tradition, a woman once forgot to cook and when her husband came back home hungry from work, she hastily poured a little oil in a pot and threw in any kind of vegetables she found in the garden. She took a taste, then a second, then a third; unable to stop she kept telling her husband at each mouthful: "sou 'fiko, sou 'fiko", meaning "I'm leaving some for you too". But in the end she left him nothing of the "soufiko".*

# Ismini's *soufiko*

## INGREDIENTS

- 2-3 pear-shaped eggplants
- 6 zucchinis
- 2-3 medium-sized carrots
- 3-4 large onions
- 3-4 green peppers
- 2 cloves garlic
- 1 can diced tomatoes (or 2-3 ripe fresh tomatoes, diced)
- 1 bunch parsley, finely chopped
- 1 teacup olive oil
- 1 small glass white wine (preferably Icarian!)
- salt, pepper

Dina Dimitriadi, Theodora Koutsogianni, Maria Mountzouroulia and Dimitra Panousi helped Ismini cook for the Bahar Project event.

Soufiko is all about using vegetables that are in season, so that the outcome is much more delicious. Ismini is recommending a soufiko version that makes for 4 servings.

## INSTRUCTIONS

Cut all vegetables in large cubes, except for the carrots and onions that need to be sliced. Finely chop an onion and the garlic.

Place all vegetables in a deep frying pan, add salt, pepper and the parsley and douse with the oil. Mix with both hands to

spread the oil thoroughly. Add tomato juice and a small glass of water. Let simmer on medium heat with the lid on for as long as it takes for the vegetables to soften. Towards the end, pour in the wine and take the lid off for a while to evaporate, before turning off the heat. Serve with some fresh olive oil and fresh bread.





# Aleka Ksenaki Gogo Papadopoulou



Gogo Papadopoulou, Aleka Ksenaki (on the right)

*“What we love most about Kypseli is the sense of community. We have gained a lot through the "Our Kypseli" Citizens' Group, and we also had the chance to come to know human nature in depth.”*

Aleka and Gogo cooked Greece's "national food": the bean soup! Both dynamic members of the "Our Kypseli" Citizens' Group, like Ismini, they decided to take part in the Bahar Project, because they enjoy living their neighbourhood, meeting its inhabitants and doing things with others. Gogo was born and raised in Kypseli, whereas Aleka has been living in Kypseli since the age of 15.

To Aleka cooking is a ritual and she just loves to cook for friends. "I enjoy it, I add emotion in the food", she says. Gogo, on the other hand, is not crazy about cooking, but she does have her own attachment to flavours. "Each winter we would go with my parents to the Chania village of Mount Pelion. One year we were cut off by snow and I remember thinking 'what will we eat?' I went into the cellar and found some beans. I relaxed immediately. To me, bean soup means cosiness."

Aleka studied finance, worked for years in the National Bank of Greece and now she's retired. She is a mother of two. Gogo studied business administration and specialised in human resources management and communication. She has been working as a systemic life coach for close to twenty years and has a son.

***Did you know?***

*The beans we use to make bean soup with were unknown both to Greeks and the Byzantines. Although "fasoli", the Greek word for bean, can be traced back to ancient Greek, most bean varieties were brought here from the Americas. It might be that bean soup today has fallen out of fashion, but it was much appreciated by our predecessors. When at an advanced age, the famous poet Kostas Varnalis was asked what the great joys of life are, he replied: "Women, the sea, bean soup and watching people play backgammon at the Vyzantio" (the café he used to frequent in Kolonaki).*

# *Bean soup with Prespa beans*

## **INGREDIENTS** (6 servings)

- 500 g mid-sized dry beans
- 1 can diced tomatoes (or 3 ripe fresh tomatoes, blended)
- 3 carrots, sliced
- 2 dry onions, finely chopped
- 1 bunch celery, finely chopped
- 1 cup olive oil
- salt, freshly ground pepper

For the Bahar Project event, Kostoula Antonatou and Rodousa Mpakogianni helped Aleka and Gogo with the cooking.

## **INSTRUCTIONS**

On the night before, submerge the beans in cold water and let them soak.

On the next day, strain them and discard the water. Put them in a deep pot with cold water and let simmer for 10 minutes. Strain and rinse the pot clean.

Pour olive oil in the pot and add the finely chopped onions and the sliced carrots; stir well so that everything gets oiled. Sauté for 2-3 minutes on medium heat and then add the beans, the tomatoes, celery, pepper and salt. Pour in additional boiled water, until all ingredients are fully covered.

Place the lid on the pot and let simmer for 50 minutes to 1 hour, until the beans soften and the broth thickens (both time and the amount of water needed depend on the quality of the beans).

Serve the bean soup steaming hot in deep plates, accompanied by olives and fresh bread.





# Debby Valencia Ivy Delacion Philippines



Debby Valencia, Ivy Delacion (on the right)

“*To us pancit noodles are a symbol of celebration and joy, whereas cooking, for the effort that it requires, is a statement of love that brings the family close together.*”

## **Did you know?**

*In the Philippines, noodles represent longevity and should therefore never be broken. This is also why ingredients should be cut diagonally into long and similar-looking strips. Pancit is made of rice noodles, egg or soy beans and is accompanied by chicken, shrimps, pork, etc., as well as vegetables.*

Debby and her friends, Loida, Remy and Melody, prepared delicious rice noodles with vegetables and chicken. You have definitely tried noodles, but are you aware of how many secrets they unveil about the Filipino culture? Pancit rice noodles are a direct influence from the Chinese and are cooked with different ingredients in the different regions, depending on availability. "In Greece we find the ingredients all the year round. This is a dish that you come across at each and every step of life in the Philippines. From your very first birthday to your own wedding. For us it symbolizes celebration, joy and love", says Debby. "It is a dish that passes down from one generation to the next. This is how I felt when I made my own family and started cooking pancit for my children", says Ivy, a representative of the younger Filipino generation.

Ivy came to Greece at the age of three in the early '90s, to start her life; her mother was already working here. Ivy studied journalism and then worked in the shipping industry. For more than a year now, she is a member of the "Melissa" Network of Migrant Women, where she is responsible for the communication actions.

Debby came to Greece a few years earlier than Ivy, looking for a fresh start. Together with her husband they came as political refugees and spent the first few years striving to organize the Filipino community. Together with several others they managed to create the Unity of Filipino Migrant Workers (KASAPI) and set up a kindergarten for the community. She is a founding member of the DIWATA women's organisation and co-founder of the Melissa Network of Migrant Women, where she is able to put her studies to use, by assisting in the organisation and participatory representation of migrant communities. Ivy and Debby consider that the Bahar Project was an opportunity both for migrant communities and for Greeks to come closer. "What do I expect from the next Bahar? I would like to use a Greek recipe as the basis for a brand new dish, using ingredients from other cuisines", suggests Debby. Debby has one son and lives in Kypseli, while Ivy lives in Pagrati.

# *Pancit rice noodles with vegetables and chicken*

## **INGREDIENTS**

- 1 tbsp sunflower oil
- ½ kg chicken breast (boneless), diced
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- ½ kg noodles (vencemeli or rice)
- 1 ½ kg mixed vegetables (carrot, cabbage, flat beans, spring onion), finely chopped
- 2 cups chicken broth (chicken cubes dissolved in water)
- 4 tsp soy sauce
- 1 tsp shellfish sauce
- salt, pepper
- Lemon (sliced or diced)

Loida Dollete, Remy Mesa and Melody Kacinio cooked for the Bahar Project event.

## **INSTRUCTIONS**

In a deep wok or a large non-stick pan on medium heat, put the sunflower oil and the chopped chicken breast and sauté. Remove to a plate and set aside.

In the same pan, sauté the finely chopped garlic and onion for 2 minutes. Add the chicken and salt and pepper. Then throw in the vegetables and sauté for 3-4 minutes until softened. Add the chicken broth, soy sauce and shellfish sauce and let boil. Mix the noodles in, stirring until they are covered by the broth and softened, for approximately 3-4 minutes (take care not to overcook them). If the noodles seem dry or crispy, add broth or water until they

soften some more. Season with salt and pepper (and some more soy sauce, if necessary). Serve with slices of lemon.





# Ia Kourdazvili

## Georgia



*“I had a really, really great time at the Bahar. It is a wonderful feeling to cook for so many people who have never tasted your food before and watch them enjoying it. At the next event we had at the Kypseli Market they asked me ‘do you have khinkali?’ I felt such joy!”*

Ia cooked for the Bahar Project two of Georgia's most popular dishes: khachapuri (Georgian cheese pie) and khinkali. Khinkali is a recipe from her mother's village and they would make it quite often when she was a child, same as the khachapuri. "As a child, my grandmother and I would make khachapuri and bake them in the stone oven. It was an everyday dish, while khinkali was served primarily on special occasions." Their house was always open to relatives and friends, who often came over for dinner.

Ia has had the "cooking bug" ever since she was a child. She married at the age of 19 and went to live at Tsnori, her husband's home town, which is very close to Tbilisi, the capital. She managed to open her own pastry shop on the second floor of their house, and she run it for 16 years. It did so well that eventually she even hired an employee. Still, 8 years ago financial struggles drove her to come to Greece looking for a better life. It was very difficult at first, because she left behind her four children and her husband. All of her children are top students: her oldest daughter now lives here with her, her youngest son is going to school, her oldest son is a nurse in Georgia and her youngest daughter ranked first in the admission exams for the Tbilisi School of Medicine.

Although she is no longer cooking professionally, she is constantly making delicious sweets and meals for her friends.

"Cooking is my medicine. If I'm not well, I prefer kneading to taking medication." Today, Ia works at a house where she is very happy, but her dream to open up a pastry shop in Athens remains. Her favourite Greek dish is fish soup.

**Did you know?**

*Georgia has the oldest wine industry in the world and a tradition that has persevered seamlessly for more than 8,000 years. Nowadays, more than 500 varieties of grapes are still grown in Georgia. Archaeologists maintain that the Kakheti region, well known for its wine, is in fact the birthplace of wine. Contemporary Georgian wineries are the only places in the world where the unique orange wine is produced – a trending novelty, with roots in the past.*

# *Ia's khinkali*

## *(boiled meat-filled dumplings)*

### INGREDIENTS

- 500 g minced pork
- 500 g minced beef
- 200 g onion
- 1 kg flour
- 200 g water
- 100 g salt
- coriander, cumin
- pepper

### INSTRUCTIONS

Mix the flour, water and salt and knead. Split into small balls and roll out in round discs of approximately 12 cm.

Toss the mince with the onion and spices and place sufficient quantity at the centre of each disc. Use your fingers to gather the dough upwards and into a purse-like shape and close the top by pressing firmly together. Put the little purses (khinkali) in a pot of boiling water.

When they rise to the water's surface, let boil for approximately 10 min. Serve hot with freshly ground pepper.



# Ia's *khachapuri*

(country cheese pies)

## INGREDIENTS

- 200 g milk
- 100 g yoghurt
- 200 g butter
- 100 g salt
- 2 eggs
- 100 g olive oil
- 1 ½ kg flour
- 1 ½ kg cow cheese, shredded\*
- 1 pack dry yeast

## INSTRUCTIONS

Warm the milk, remove from heat, pour into the flour and knead. Add the yoghurt, salt, yeast and olive oil, knead and let the dough rest for an hour. Divide the dough into 10-12 balls and press them with your hands until they become dough discs. Place the cheese in the centre of each disc and wrap it with the dough by bringing the edges together, forming a ball. Place the stuffed ball upside down on the table and use a rolling pin to

shape a new disc, stuffed with cheese. Place the discs in a hot non-stick frying pan with no oil. Fry on both sides until the dough turns golden. Serve the khachapuri hot, after dousing with melted butter.

\* Ia uses a Georgian white cheese that turns gummy when melted. It is a cross of feta and mozzarella cheese. If unable to find it, you can use a mixture of feta and some soft yellow cheese.









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