

The taste of
MACEDONIA



THE TASTE of **MACEDONIA**



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A field of sunflowers in bloom, with a semi-transparent text box overlaid in the center. The sunflowers are bright yellow with dark brown centers, and their green leaves are visible. The background is slightly blurred, showing more sunflowers in the distance.

Macedonia is a small country in the southeastern part of the Balkan Peninsula, surrounded by land on all sides. Yes, every country has its own story about the sun, the mountains, the lakes, the rivers, the archaeological sites, the history, the tradition and the culture. Stories, more or less intriguing depending on the personal curiosity. However, the thread that connects everyone, the thread that weaves the hours spent in exploring and verifying any eventual story, colouring the day and the mood, is the segment that everyone takes for granted with pleasure - the food. It provides a kind of an immediate taste of the history and the culture, the inevitable ingredient of the gastronomy art; undoubtedly one of the key elements of the material cultural heritage, one of the factors of a particular nation's identity, of a certain geographical area. It is indeed an individual choice how one explores Macedonia. After all, as we have stated, Macedonia is a small country and it only takes from two to four hours drive to any particular destination.



You can visit monasteries, climb mountains, dive into the nature, or else, you can let us guide you by suggesting certain interesting locations and pointing out some specialties related to those places which may tell you something about people's lives as well. A bundle of information, some of which may be inspiring for you. Meet Macedonia through a sense that builds memories.

The gastronomic story about Macedonia begins with the assumption that foods used in everyday diet were determined by the basic occupations of the population in this area - agriculture and animal breeding, as well as foods that could be found in the nature, even though limited in choice of products, technologies and options, unlike today's diversity. As a country where many nations have passed through, it began to build flavours from all those different nations and to record development, not only at a cultural level, but in relation to nutrition as well. The Turks had a great influence on our national cuisine and on its specific form, derived from the dominant influence, due to the long Turk stay on our territory. A major breakthrough in our national cuisine happened with the introduction of new cereals and garden crops in the agriculture, especially the rice brought by the Turks, the

maize brought in the 18th century; the potatoes were introduced in these areas at the end of the 19th century, the peppers and the tomatoes. The religion, the holiday festivities and the customs related to it have also spiced the food. In a search for a better life people started migrating abroad at the end 19th century and brought specific innovations from the West - the French, the Hungarian, the English, and the Russian cuisine, though they insignificantly influenced the Macedonian cuisine. It is often only known that some dishes were preserved by the word of mouth from generations to generation, modified by the way; their origin or the cause of their existence yet unknown. Let's call it a day for now, and get back later. As they say, an empty stomach makes the journey longer. Set the table, raise the glasses for new gusto encounters, for new appetizing mouthfuls – Cheers!












THE REGION OF SKOPJE



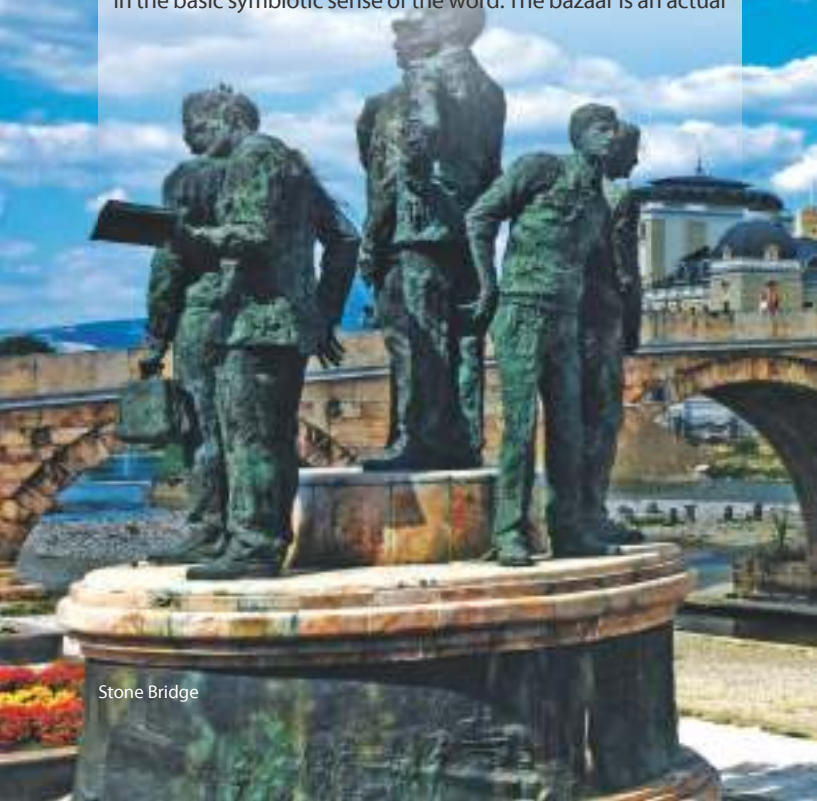
An aerial photograph of a village nestled in a valley. The houses have prominent red-tiled roofs. In the lower-left, a church with several blue domes is visible. The surrounding area is lush with green trees and vegetation. A semi-transparent text box is overlaid on the upper right portion of the image.

If you are in the capital of the Republic of Macedonia for the first time, the city located in a low valley surrounded by seven mountains, what you probably immediately notice is the variety it offers. A dynamic urban life, a cultural heritage, a tradition that has progressed in an appealing way, a mixture of old and new, a mixture of the East and the West, of urbanism and nature. It seems like everything functions in tandem and provides an original and unique experience. The ancient records of Justinian a Prima say there are beautiful squares, bridges and inns in that city. The citizens of Skopje have been cherishing diverse traditions until the present day.

You might be interested

The Stone Bridge overlooking the river Vardar in the center of the city carries 1.500 years of history (6th century). It has undergone several major renovations, which is why the greatest restoration that occurred during the reign of Murat II in the 15th century is often taken as the beginning of the construction of the bridge. Today the bridge connects the new with the old part of the city.

Go back in time through the narrow streets of the **Old Skopje Bazaar**, which has been a trading center since the 12th century, and now represents an iconic heritage of the city. At the entrance you are welcome by the Daut Pasha Amam, a public bath in the past and a gallery space today, which introduces the spirit of what the Ottoman structures were converted into, in that old corner of the city. The culture is mixed with the tradition in the basic symbiotic sense of the word. The bazaar is an actual



Stone Bridge

memorial of the past and the Ottoman heritage with all its mosques, public baths, inns and hundreds of craft shops. Even today, the hustle and the bustle of the numerous lively cafes, tea houses, restaurants and shops perfectly fit into the timeless surrounding and offer original experience for every traveller.



Old Bazaar

The Fortress Kale as a dominant structure is yet another great symbol of the city. According to the archaeologists, it was built from stone blocks taken from the ruined city of Skupi in the 6th century during the reign of the Byzantine Emperor Justinian. It was partially destroyed in the 1963 earthquake, but quickly restored and conserved.



Fortress Kale





Memorial House of Mother Teresa

Skopje is a city internationally known for being the birthplace of **Mother Teresa**. Skopje is a city of medieval churches and monasteries, such as the 12th century monastery St. Panteleimon and composition "The Lam-

entation of Christ", considered as herald of the Italian Renaissance. Skopje has a magnificent promenade on the river Vardar, deep shades in the **City Park**, and linden fragrance in the air in June.

Have a look at the city of Skopje from the peak of the mountain **Vodno**. It is the nearest adventure destination and offers something for everyone. Regardless of whether you are an experienced mountaineer or prefer a relaxing walk, the mountain has tracks of diverse difficulty degree to offer. It is a great place for adrenaline enthusiasts, bikers and paragliders. For others who just want to indulge themselves in the breathtaking view and breathe fresh air there are several cafes and a cable car that takes you to the top.

Link with the nature in the **Matka Canyon**. The dramatic ravine surrounded by steep cliffs is a perfect adventure experience. There are dozens of caves and the **Vrelo Cave** is one of the deepest underwater caves in Europe and the World. The canyon is a home to more than 70 species of butterflies. There are several rocky formations that are ideal for alpinism. Along the canyon you can visit many churches and monasteries; you can walk, rent a boat or a kayak. Or you can just stay at the bottom of the canyon and enjoy the incredible view while drinking coffee at the local cafe.

After the stroll, it is time for an enjoyable flavoursome break to regain strength. Nevertheless, it seems like a regular citizen of Skopje is always puzzled when asked about a typical city delicacy. A criterion imposed on how to choose what is most eaten, is a cult in Skopje. Indeed, it is a cult in Skopje to eat deliciously divine "**burek-pie**",



St. Pantelejmon

"**simit-pie**", **stews- tripe, veal ...** specialties eaten with gusto by both young and old. And the thrill is even greater when they bring extra garlic with parsley in vinegar and a freshly baked delicious crusty homemade bread bun.



Canyon Matka

Stew (Turkish çorba) is a kind of thick soup that is traditionally prepared in Eurasian cuisines. The stews are made from various types of vegetables and meat. Macedonian housewives cook different stews, both with or without meat. In the past, the meat was usually cooked in stews, rarely roasted; only for certain special occasions or festive holidays.



The tripe stew is both a legend and a cure. Everyone knows that after a long night (read a lot of alcohol) the best thing one can do for the body is to have a hot tripe stew. However, you don't have to go to the nearest tavern to have that savoury elixir, you can prepare it at home.

Live in the lap of luxury

TRIPLE STEW

Ingredients: 1 ½ kg tripe, 150gr wine, 1 dry hot chili pepper, 2-3 celery leaves, oil, garlic clove, red paper, black paper, flour and salt

Clean the tripe well, wash and chop into small pieces. Bring to boil together with the wine, the salt, the celery, the garlic and the chili pepper. When cooked well, make gravy with some oil, 1 tablespoon of flour and 1 tablespoon of red pepper and pour it over the stew. Simmer for another ten minutes, add some black pepper. Enjoy it.



“Burek” (Turkish börek) comes from the word “bur” which means “wrap”. It is a pastry in layers that can be found in many countries part of the Ottoman Empire. It is made of phyllo dough or nicely

fermented dough usually generously relished with minced meat. There is also burek with white cheese, spinach, leek and sour cabbage. The lovers of this delicious traditional burek, consider pizza flavoured burek- the modern version of this dish - a desecration. It is



usually eaten with fingers, and served with cold yogurt. Burek is a typical breakfast for the citizens of Skopje, but it is also eaten in the late hours after a fun night out.

“Simit-pie” is one of the rare specialties that is sold almost exclusively in Skopje. It is a sandwich made of bread roll (kifla) stuffed with – piece of crusty pie made with milk-fat, which resembles the burek. It is called “an empty sandwich” or “bread in bread”. The bread roll is seasoned with chickpea, while the peculiar taste of the pie comes from the sheep or cow fat. (The animal fat is a milk product. It is made by “beating” the milk). It can be eaten with yogurt. Except the notion that it had been present in the bakeries from a long time ago, there is no exact information about the origin of this delicacy.



Generally, in Macedonia the lunch starts with appetizers – **meze**, few traditional one-bite palatable dishes served before the main meal which are so delicious and versatile that they can be a proper meal. The most common appetizers are **ajvar** (a salad made of baked, crushed and fried peppers), **pindjur** (a salad made of baked peppers, eggplants, tomatoes and garlic), **makalo** (chopped garlic with oil and salt), **taratur** (crushed garlic, sour milk and chopped cucumber), fried vegetables, **turshija** (preserved vegetables in vinegar), mushrooms, white cheese (sheep and cow), **shopska** (a salad made of cucumbers, tomatoes, onions and grated white cheese)

The most famous appetizer is **ajvar**. The word itself comes from the Turkish language and it means “salty pate” or “caviar”. Many people say that it is a jar full of summer veggy flavors that should be eaten in winter. It is prepared in late summer and early autumn when there is an abundance of red peppers. The best ajvar, of course, is the home-made one. Before the ban on making ajvar in a public place, its preparation had a great social significance. It was an occasion for the family and the neighbors, to improve



their good relations; a family almost always needed a pair of extra neighbour’s hands for the time consuming procedure of peeling and roasting procedures, timber logs and recipes sharing etc. Making ajvar is not done just for the sake of making food; it is a kind of a ritual that brings people together. (*A friendly chat, makes the journey faster, One good turn, deserves another*). Otherwise, the preparation involves washing, grilling, and putting the peppers into plastic bags to make it easier to peel. During the peeling, the seeds are removed. Then they are chopped, grinded and fried on low heat for 2-3 hours with constant stir. Some people add tomatoes, carrots and eggplants. When the pate is almost cooked, the jars are heated in the oven at 100°C. Once the pot is removed from the heat, the ready to eat ajvar is immediately put in hot jars. After that, the jars are wrapped in a blanket or paper to keep them warm, and are let ‘to cool’ for at least 24 hours. The legend says that even for the wise brains like Aristotle and Plato, the ajvar was a regular appetizer.

A salad named **“shopska”** is one of the Macedonian traditional appetizers, and it is also a typical meze for Bulgaria and Serbia. The region around Shopluk is notified as a place of its origin, acknowledged for the good white cheese that the inhabitants used in various dishes. It was named after the Slavic tribe “Shopi” who lived in that region.

SHOPSKA SALAD

Ingredients: 500 g tomatoes, 3 onions, 1 green hot pepper, 200 g sheep-milk white cheese, 2 cucumbers, oil and salt



Dice the tomatoes and the peeled cucumbers and chop the onions into small pieces. Sprinkle some salt, add some oil and stir gently. Put some finely chopped hot pepper on top and grate the cheese.

“Mastika” is drunk as an aperitif (brandy made from anise) or yellow **“rakija”** (grape brandy matured in oak barrels (give the yellowish colour). The brandy (rakija) is usually drunk only with the appetizers.

The citizens of Skopje often choose some kind of meat specialty as a main course. The first notion Macedonians have when they mention meat as a meal, is **skara** – grilled meat. The meat-skara usually consist of different kinds of meat prepared on barbeque, smoke or hot coal. Pork chops, burgers, liver, chicken steak, chops, pork lean steak, minced meat wrapped in bacon (ushtipci), schnitzels, sausages, and everything you can think of and is made of meat. And certainly, the most delicious and most popular - **The kebab.**



The word “kebab” comes from the Persian language, and it initially referred to meat that is not roasted, but fried. It was used in the Arabic language through the Aramaic, which has a root in the Acadian language, where *kabābu* means something burnt, fried and charred. It is believed that the first kebabs were made by the outlaws, who were sleeping in an open near the fire to keep them warm, who prepared small meatballs (to have enough for everyone) from minced meat and grilled them on fire. Nevertheless, even the ancient Greeks from the 8th century BC wrote about some kind of meat dish made in a shape of an obelisk - who knows, perhaps their own versions. They became popular on the Balkans only in the middle of the 19th century, when inns were opened in the bigger towns, where the special delicacy were precisely the kebabs. Nothing complicated, yet very tasty - all you need is a good piece of minced meat, turning it into a spiced concoct that should stay overnight. They can be served with any side dish, but still finely chopped fresh onions, freshly baked bread and “Skopsko” beer (made in Skopje’s brewery) is “a dream combination”.



MACEDONIAN KEBAB

Ingredients: 600gr minced meat, 4 onions, 50g oil, garlic, 50g flour, 4 eggs, salt and black pepper

Add salt to the meat and leave it in the fridge overnight. The next day knead it again and add the grated onion, the flour, some oil, the crashed garlic, the eggs and the black pepper. Mix well and leave for another 4-5 hours and then make the kebabs and grill them.

The history and the tradition of the Macedonian beer began in 1924 when in the plants of "Parna Pivara" - Skopje the first barrel and bottle with "Skopsko" was produced. That was actually the first Macedonian beer, which today is a synonym for "the best of Macedonia" and is one of the national landmarks. Its advertising slogans are "Skopsko, Our Best", as well as "Skopsko, and Everything is Possible."



I drink, you get drunk

MACEDONIAN SHASHLIK

Ingredients: 750-800 g pork (fine lean meat), bacon, minced meat, onion and salt



Sprinkle some salt on the pork meat. Slice the bacon and make small minced meatballs. Put everything on a stick in the following order: first a piece of pork, then a piece of bacon, after that a meatball, then a slice of onion and again the same order, until you come to the end of the stick. Grill it and serve hot.

Other popular traditional meals with meat are stuffed peppers, pork knees and the so-called “**selsko meso**” (village meat) – an earthen pot filled with meat, a meal typical for the villages in the Skopje region. There are varieties of this dish and one of these is called **selska tava** – “village pan”. In some regions, chicken meat is added.



After the bread, peppers were the most consumed food at the Macedonian table, eaten raw, dried, pickled, roasted, fried, and boiled. Countless meals were prepared with them.

STUFFED PEPPERS

Ingredients: 8 green peppers, 5 large tomatoes, 500 g minced meat, one cup of rice, 1 onion, 1 egg, 3 tablespoons of animal fat, 1 tablespoon flour, 1 tablespoon red pepper, parsley, salt and black pepper

Wash the peppers and remove the seeds. Fry the finely chopped onion adding a tablespoon of animal fat, add the minced meat and the rice and fry everything. Remove from the heat, add an egg and the finely chopped parsley, sprinkle some salt and black pepper. Stuff the peppers with this mixture and cover the top with sliced tomatoes. Arrange them in a pot, add the remaining tomatoes and pour water to cover. Simmer the peppers to soften, then make the gravy. Fry the remaining animal fat in a pan, add the flour and the red pepper. Pour the gravy over the peppers and leave to boil gently for a while. Serve the stuffed peppers with yogurt or sour cream.



SELSKO MESO (VILLAGE MEAT)

Ingredients: 800g pork lean meat, 3-4 red dried peppers, onion, oil, salt and mushroom sauce

Fry the onion on a little oil, add the diced meat and fry until it softens, then add the mushroom sauce and finely cut dried peppers. Sprinkle with salt at your taste.



Some consider “Skopski kukurek” as a local artistic delicacy for Skopje’s region, a specialty made of animal intestines. The disadvantage of this dish is that it is prepared only spring time, when fresh meat from young lambs is available, which means it is not on offer in the menus in Macedonia throughout the year.



KUKUREK

Ingredients: 800g lamb tripe and intestines, salt, 120g oil, bay leaf, 1 g red pepper and 10g garlic

Wash the lamb intestines thoroughly using a stick to turn them inside out and wash them again. Clean the tripe thoroughly as well and cut lengthwise stripes 2-3 cm wide. Make a braid with the tripe stripes and the intestines - kukurek. Tie at the end, place in a circle and put in a greasy pan, preferably earthen pot. Pour some water adding few tablespoons of oil, red pepper and bay leaf. Roast in the oven at a moderate temperature. While cooking wet the kukurek constantly with the meat juice mixture and if necessary add some more water. When cooked, season the intestines with a thin fried gravy (oil, flour, red pepper and crushed garlic) and roast shortly in the oven. When ready, cut into pieces and serve on a plate, pouring on top the juice it was cooked with. It is served with sour cream.

One of the specialties made by the housewives of Skopje, and traditionally prepared in Macedonia is “**turli-tava**”; everyone cooks it in their own way, although that does not change the main recipe and the taste. As one can assume from the name (a pot with everything in it), it is a dish prepared from different veggie ingredients available at that moment in the house. And remember, the most delicious is when prepared in an earthen pot.



TURLI-TAVA

Ingredients: 1 ½ kg mixed meat (lamb, pork and veal) ½ kg French beans, 100 pieces okra, 1 eggplant, 1 zucchini, ½ kg cabbage, ½ kg green peppers, ½ kg tomatoes, ½ kg carrots, ½ kg potatoes, 200 g oil, salt and black pepper

Wash the vegetables, chop into pieces and put them in a roasting pan. Mix well and sprinkle some salt. Add the pieces of previously washed and salted meat over the vegetables. Spice with some red pepper, pour some oil and put in the oven to roast at 200°C for 2-3 hours.

A true homemade delicacy in the Macedonian traditional cuisine is **"Sarma"**. It can be prepared with pickled or fresh cabbage, a grapevine leaves or with a sorrel. The word "sarma" originates from the Turkish language and it means "to fold". Again the Ottoman influence in these regions is obvious. As an inevitable part of the traditional Macedonian cuisine in the lent period, housewives prepare "sarma", without meat. "Rice-sarma" in combination with spices chosen by the housewife - leeks, nuts, mint, parsley, carrots...

SARMA

(CABBAGE ROLLS WITH PICKLED CABBAGE)

Ingredients: 750 gr minced meat (beef and pork), 150gr bacon, 150g animal fat, a big cabbage, 50gr rice, 1 large onion, black pepper, red pepper, parsley and salt

Put the meat in a larger bowl. Add the finely chopped onion and diced bacon. Add the parsley, the rice, the animal fat, the salt and the red pepper and mix well.



Separate the cabbage leaves one by one. Cut off the hard parts of the leaves, put the meat mixture in the middle of each leaf and roll making them as large as you like.

Put several cabbage leaves on the bottom of a deep roasting pan and arrange the cabbage rolls in layers in a circle in the pan. Slice the remaining bacon and put among the cabbage rolls. When you are done, pour the rolls with some of the salty water in which the cabbage was preserved or just tap water if the cabbage is sour enough. Cover with an aluminum foil and put in the oven to simmer for 2-3 hours at the temperature of 150°C.

In winter brine and bacon, In summer cow and sunshine

The culture of coffee drinking in Skopje. Morning coffee, lunch coffee, coffee before dinner, “forsee your future in a coffee cup”. Have coffee at home, have coffee in a cafe, enjoy coffee on a bench. Macedonian loves coffee. The traditional coffee is a Turkish coffee - finely grinded, made in a coffee pot (gezve), often with sugar; it is served hot in small cups (filjani), and the mushy residue of the coffee remains at the bottom of the cup. Of course, the Turkish coffee is not a must. Everyone drinks whatever they want. However, almost no one would refuse an invitation like “Let’s go for a coffee and sweets”.





APPLE PIE

Ingredients:

The dough: 250g flour, 120g butter or margarine, 2 eggs, 70g ground walnuts, lemon zest

The filling: 1 kg sour apples, 120g sugar, 2 tablespoons of rum, 120g sweet milk cream, 1 vanilla sugar

Wash, peel and finely chop the apples. Sprinkle with sugar, add rum and fry until soften. Leave to cool. Mix the dough and leave it in a cool place to rest. Place the dough on a greased baking tray and roll it to a thickness of two centimeters, then bake in a pre-heated oven. Cover the pastry with the prepared apple mixture. Whip sweet milk cream and cover the pie.





Skopje by night



THE REGION OF POLOG

A valley, surrounded from the north-west side by rising mountain massifs of the highest peaks in Macedonia, a national park, artificial and natural lakes, rivers, waterfalls, ski resorts, small villages with authentic architecture, two towns and one traditional wedding - a fantastic place for outdoor activities, intense adventures, freestyle skiers, hikers and cycling, for indulging your senses into the green nature and new gusto dine and wine treat.





You might be interested

Shar Planina (Shara) is a favorite mountain destination and a hiker challenge, since it is the only massif in Europe where you can go 95 km, from Ljuboten to the last peak Rasangul, and never descend below 2,200 m. The highest peak - Titov peak (2,748 m). Springs, steep streams, around 30 glacial lakes, pastures. It is constantly covered with snow from December to March. A variety of wild species of plants, fungi and animals, and also specific characteristic of this region - the local dog breed "sharplaninec" and the sheep "sharplaninka". Wild horses grass grazing, breathtaking views, sheepfolds scattered on greenly slopes, attractive sites and "Popova Sapka" - the oldest ski resort on the Balkans, with cottages, hotels, restaurants, mountain lodges, ski terrains and more.





Painted Mosque

The town of **TETOVO** lies on the slopes of the Shara Mountain; a multicultural city with rich history. It is recognizable by **The Painted Mosque** that captivates your attention with its fascinating colorful ornaments. An even more striking mystery opens behind the high wall of the complex of **Arabati-baba Teke**, the former center of the mysterious Dervish brotherhood of Bektashi. There is a beautiful panoramic view from the **Tetovo Fortress** located on the Baltepe Hill.

People in Tetovo live in a region rich in a wide selection of groceries. The favorable temperature, favorable soil and abundant water potential allow cultivation of cereals, garden-vegetables, fruits, forage and some industrial crops. Regarding the livestock, the same conditions are suitable specifically for the development of the cattle breeding. However, the high-mountain pastures are precondition for the development of sheep breeding. In these areas, the influence of the Turkish cuisine is inevitably felt.



DRY PEPPER SALAD

Ingredients: 20 pieces dry peppers, 250g tomato sauce, 3-4 cloves of garlic, 250g oil and salt



Wash the peppers well and put in a saucepan to boil. When they are soft take them out of the water and put on a cutting board. Peel with a knife and put in a wooden bowl where you previously crushed the garlic. Crush the peppers add the tomato sauce, stir well and at the end add the oil gradually. Sprinkle some salt to taste. This salad is served with yellow and white cheese.

The Macedonian red peppers, strings of red pepper dried in the sun are one of the strongest autochthonous images of the Macedonian traditional cuisine. Many Macedonian dishes are made of peppers or are part of the main meal. The image of strings of red peppers that are "baked" in the sun on the verandas or the walls of the country houses is amazing. The dry red peppers are great for winter dishes and for a variety of dips.

The truth hurts like hot pepper in the eyes

By the way, everyone in our country knows what beans is; it is a traditional homemade meal cherished like any other savoury custom; there isn't anyone who hasn't tried it. Most Macedonians has beans at least once a week on their menu. And not that there are no beans and beans specialties elsewhere, but the beans such as "tetoec" prepared in an earthen pot with dry pepper – "there is nowhere else like it", people from Tetovo would say. Beans in the Macedonian traditional cuisine was prepared as soup bean with white (only white flour and oil) gravy, red gravy (with red pepper ,flour and oil), as a side dish with fish, or as "tavche gravche"-baked beans in an earthen pan.

It is tasty to eat, but be careful, the beans have high calorie value. Therefore the elderly would say, that the children of the poorer families in the past were plump, healthy and red-cheek - because they had beans on their daily menu.



TAVCHE-GRAVCHE (BAKED BEANS IN AN EARTHEN POT)

Ingredients: 500g beans, 250g oil, 3 onions, 2 dry peppers, 1 clove of garlic, salt, red pepper, parsley and black pepper

Boil the beans, but be careful not to overcook. Put some oil in the earthen pot and fry the onions. Once the onion is fried, add some red pepper and the boiled beans. Mix well, then add the beans stew. Add the salt, put the dried peppers, the garlic pieces cut lengthwise, the parsley and the black pepper and put everything in the oven to bake.

The connection of the people from Tetovo with the nature is visible even in the names of certain dishes. On the top of the list is **“sharska pleskavica”** – the Shara burger, one of the favorite traditional dishes. It is simple -minced meat mixed with finely chopped onion, salt, black pepper; leave the mixture to rest for about 15 minutes. Add cheese, cut into small cubes or grated on a coarse grinder, mixed well again adding a little oil. Make burgers - each about 180-200g weigh, and grill them(they can be fried). Besides this burger, there are also other dishes:



SHAR PLANINA LAMB STEW

Ingredients: 1 lamb's head, 250g lamb's black liver, 200g lamb's white liver, 1 bunch of spring onions, 2-3 cloves of garlic, 50 g rice, 1 bunch of parsley, 1 egg, lemon juice and salt



Clean and wash the lamb head and put it in a saucepan add some water, add the onion, the parsley and the garlic and boil until soften. When the head is ready, remove the meat from the bones and put the meat back in the sieved stew. Cut the liver in small pieces and add it with the rice in the stew. When the rice is boiled, add the salt, the whisked egg and the lemon juice. Before serving add the chopped parsley in the stew.

SHAR MOUNTAIN VEAL SCHITZELS

Ingredients: 6 veal schnitzels, 150g sheep's white cheese, 100 g yellow cheese, 150 g cream –"kajmak", 3-4 bunches of parsley, 1 onion, 3 eggs, 1 tablespoon of red pepper, black pepper and salt

Mix the finely chopped onion and the diced cheese, add the cream and the grated sheep's white cheese. Put the black pepper, parsley, red pepper and the eggs into and stir everything well to



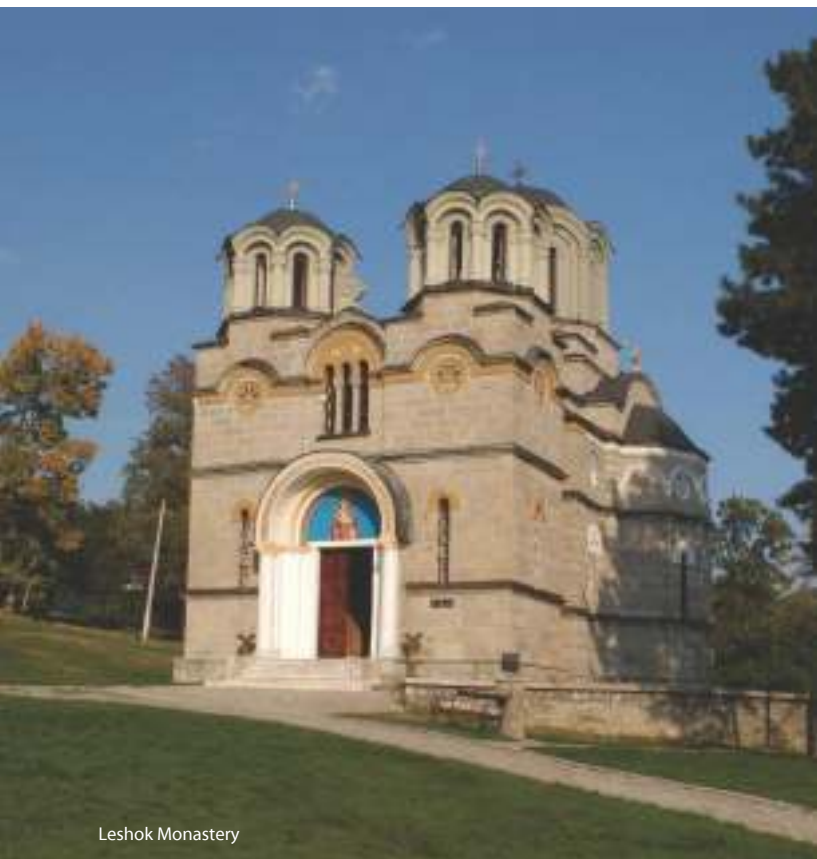
get a homogenous mixture. Soften the schnitzels with a wooden bat and put some portion of the mixture in the middle of each schnitzel. Fold each schnitzel in half and attach with a toothpick so that the filling doesn't fall out. Grill on both sides.

TETOVO LIVER

Ingredients: 1 lamb liver, 3 onions, oil, 1 tablespoon of tomato sauce, 100 g white wine, laurel leaf, vinegar, black pepper, salt and garlic

Wash the liver and boil it; leave to cool and chop into medium sized pieces. Slice the onion, add salt and fry it in oil until it gets golden yellow. Add the liver, tomato sauce, wine and 1 tablespoon of vinegar, laurel leaf, black pepper and the finely chopped garlic. Simmer gently on moderate temperature.





Leshok Monastery

Tetovo customs. “Prochka” or “Veliki pokladi”, is a day in Orthodox Christianity for mutual forgiveness among the believers before the start of the Easter fasting. Prochka or forgiveness is when youngsters ask for forgiveness from the older saying the words “forgive me,” and the older respond “I forgive you and may God forgive you too”. “The week before Prochka is called a white or a “white-cheese week”, when you do not eat meat, but you eat dairy products or homemade pies”. Prochka in the family is celebrated with a festive generous lunch that ends with “amkanje” –catching an egg tied on a thread. Boiled egg is tied on a thread above the table and turned above the heads of the children. The kid that will manage to bite the egg is considered to be the happiest in the next year and receives a reward.

GOSTIVAR, the city of hospitality, is famous for the springs (village Vrutok) of the river Vardar, the largest river in Macedonia. It is also well known for the Bey's House and Clock Tower and the "banjichki" onion. Nevertheless, it is widely popular for its sweet pie-baklava (under the influence of the oriental cuisine), whose crust layers are hand made. The filling varies from the original made with nut and pistachios, to fillings with sour cherries, chocolate, poppy seed, etc. We offer you a recipe with pre prepared pie-crust layers.

BAKLAVA

Ingredients: ½ piecrust layers **Filling:** 250g butter, 200g walnuts, 80g raisins **Syrup/ sherbet:** 300g sugar, 500g water, 1 lemon

Spread some melted butter in a baking tray and put 4-5 layers of piecrust. Sputter each layer of pastry with melted butter and put a mixture of crushed walnuts and raisins. Repeat the same procedure for all piecrusts, but leave 3-4 layers on top. Cut the baklava into rhombic or square shape, pour some melted butter and bake it in the oven at 200 degrees C until its crust gets brown. When the baklava is baked immediately pour the cooled syrup-sherbet made of water, sugar and lemon. Leave the baklava for 4-5 hours to absorb the syrup and then serve it.





If Tetovo is famous for the beans, Ohrid – for the cherries, Strumica – for the peppers, Gostivar is proud of its “banjichki” onion. Red in colour, juicy, mild and palatable to taste, onion on a very big demand in the markets.

Butter wouldn't melt in one's mouth

The MAVROVO National Park covers the most beautiful part of the western Macedonia - five mountain massifs with the highest point in Macedonia (the peak **Golem Korab**, 2.764 m), beautiful **Mavrovo Lake** and small villages with remarkable architecture ethnologically significant, peculiar areas, dense flora and rich fauna (beech forest all around you), numerous rivers, rapid streams and waterfalls, the monumental breathtaking monastery “**St. Jovan Bigorski**” from the 11th century. One of the most incredible parts is the vivid gorge of the Radika River, which at some parts has steep cliffs up to 1,500 meters. Nevertheless, besides the natural beauties, the reason to visit Mavrovo National Park are also the hotels and the sheepfolds scattered on the mountain slopes, where you can enjoy mountain tea, hot-boiled brandy and vegetable preserves, white cheese and yellow cheese locally produced; you can sunbathe in the mountain sunshine or visit some of the small villages to taste their (Reka) specialities.



Mavrovo Lake

Owing to its mountainous relief, the Rekanski region was mostly known for its livestock breeding.



GALICHNIK. A village that is picturesque due to its vividly structured houses with wide verandas amphitheatrically built one above another on steep slopes. It is surrounded by mountains, located on the slopes of the Mountain Bistra. Galichnik is widely known for the Petrovdan wedding, the Galichnik folk costume, its customs and folk instruments, the "zurla"- double reed woodwind instrument and the drum, its cheese and white cheese, "the bakrdan"- hominy, the roasted lamb and the wedding (meal) meat.



St. Jovan Bigorski Monastery

GALICHNIK CHEESE

A traditional home-made cheese with a unique scent and savoury taste. The locals from Galichnik prepared the milk with teleme, an ingredient part for cheese, white cheese and curd production. In order to produce



this type of cheese there are certain procedures to follow. It is salted 2-3 times a week, 40 – 50 days. The salt needs time to melt. After that the cheese is washed and it is left 5-6 days to dry. Than it is placed on boards to dry in the sun, to release its natural fat and to prevent mold. After the “sunbathing”-drying in the sun, it is stored in a storeroom where it is “denkosuva”. It is a procedure when the cheese pies are placed one onto another, not get mold, while the cheese matures.

Business is business



BAKRDAN (HOMINY)

Ingredients: 3 handful of corn flour, 2 tablespoons of oil, salt

Boil 2l. of water in a deep saucepan, add salt and 1-2 tablespoons of oil. When the water is boiled, put the flour gently on the surface, and make 2-3 holes with the handle of a wooden spoon. Leave the hominy to boil 20 min on a moderate heat. Remove the hominy from the heat, mix it well with a wooden spoon and put hot oil over. Serve it in a plate and sprinkle sheep's milk cheese. Enjoy it with yoghurt.



Corn is the most important cereal crop in our country. It was prepared boiled in grains sugar-sweetened, as well as cooked as corn on the cob, or they milled it, and used the flour for making many products. One of the most famous is **Bakardan**, widely well known under the names of kachamak and polenta. This meal is healthy and tasty, easy to prepare and consumed in combination with a variety of side dishes such as cheese, fried pork fat, fried bacon, greaves, sour milk, sweet milk, sugar and cream (kajmak).

Once bitten, twice shy

GALICHKO MEZE (APPETIZER FROM GALICHNIK)

Ingredients: 600 g pork steak, 1 lamb or pork placenta, 120g galichko sheep's white cheese, 1 dry red pepper, 100g tomatoes, 100g onions, 40g ham, 100g oil, 30g butter, 200g potatoes, 100g carrots, 50g mushrooms, parsley, black pepper and cayenne pepper

Cut the meat in 8 pieces, salt it, soften it with wooden bat and fry it in oil. When the meat is fried, arrange it in an earthen pot. Put a slice of fried ham over each piece of meat and grate some galichko white cheese over. Put cayenne pepper on top and finally decorate with parsley. Cover the prepared meat with the lamb placenta and put in the oven to roast for 10-15 minutes. Serve with vegetables prepared in the following way: clean the potatoes and cut in larger pieces, then boil them in salted water. Boil the carrots in the same way. After they are boiled, fry them in oil and add the butter and the mushrooms. Add spices and serve with the roasted meat. Decorate with parsley, sliced tomato and dried peppers.



GALICHKA SCHNITZL

Ingredients: 750-800g meat from (type of lean meat) pork or veal, 120g galichko white cheese, salt and vegeta (spice)

Cut the meat in schnitzel. Put 30g of white cheese over each schnitzel, roll it and grill. When the schnitzel is ready, garnish it with vegetables as you wish, and grate galichko white cheese on top. Serve hot.



The **Galichnik Wedding** is a festive celebration held every year on the religious holiday Petrovden (July 12). The wedding is actually an amazing course of folk customs and it goes like this: The guests wait for the sound of drums, the mother-in-law folk dance, the bride goes to fetch water, the wedding flag is placed, the dead are invited, the groom is shaved, the bride is "taken" from her parent's house, the bread is kneaded while the wedding itself takes place in the church "St. Peter and Paul". When drums and zurlas begin to play, the custom is as follows: the young and beautiful youngsters hold their shoulders and in a slow step rhythm, start the traditional folk dance known as "Teshkoto" – ("The difficult") which represents the enduring life's hardships of the past.

*Our bride is very modest:
only when she sleeps, she is not hungry!!*

Galichnik Wedding



ALANDITI (VALANGII)

Ingredients: 1kg flour, 1/2l water, salt, butter, ground or crushed walnuts (if you prefer)

Mix some dough with lukewarm water, salt and flour as for pancakes. On a large greasy tray fry the pancakes from both sides. Place the fried pancakes in a baking pan and sprinkle each with some butter and salted water. Add some ground or crushed walnuts on every third pancake layer. When all pancake layers are used placed in the pan, cut in rhomboid shape pieces and bake for a short time in the oven.







THE SOUTHWESTERN REGION





This picturesque region is the only region in Macedonia that has “a state” within the country’s border. It is famous for its healing waters, and a cave like the one from the movie “Lord of the Rings”, natural beauties, villages with ancient customs and a very old lake, famous for its cheese and for the clean eco-environment. Along the way to the pearl of Macedonia the most attractive part of this region, the Macedonian freshwater “sea”, there are several destinations unique in their offer.



You might be interested

DEBAR, a town at the bottom of Krchin and its unique gypsum relief, rarely seen in Europe and beyond, is a small town famous for the **Debar Lake** and the **Debar baths of Tzapa**, known under the names “Banjiste” and “Kosovrasti”. The healing power of these thermo-mineral waters have been confirmed by world experts; they are classified as the most healing in Europe, and take the third place in the world.

The cave **Peshna** is located 6 km from the town **MAKEDONSKI BROD**. According to the legend, it was named after King Marko’s sister - Peshna. The cave is a masterpiece of the nature that welcomes you with the largest entrance on the Balkans. In the spring one can hear a loud murmur sound from the river that springs out of the lake, where a human fish has been discovered (blind fish with a human skin). The cave is 30 m high and about 70 m deep, and as a cave system it is long more than 10 km. It is described in an article in “New York Times” as identical to the “Helm’s Deep” from the movie “Lord of the Rings”.



Cave "Peshna"



ZUPA. In this region, the population is mainly engaged in stock-breeding and agriculture. An interesting fact is that the local women still prepare handmade pasta jufki and tarana together. After drying out in the sun, the pasta is stored and eaten during the winter period. They are consumed boiled, similar to the bakrdan (hominy). Tourist attraction are also the different wedding meals prepared in large cauldrons (such as beans, pilaf, and meat) served in special dishes called “sani” for the whole group.

This region is characterized by mixed climate, mountain and valley relief. There are more pastures than farmland. Wheat, corn, potatoes and fruit plantations are dominant. Hence, flour and meat meals are not surprising.



MACEDONIAN JUFKA

Ingredients: 5kg flour, 20 eggs, some milk, salt



Put the flour on a kneading board, make a hole, put some salt and add the eggs. Mix everything adding some milk to make dough as for any pie. Knead the dough well to roll the pasta nicely. Cover the dough with a wet towel to avoid drying. Leave it to rest for an hour. Afterwards make small balls of the dough and roll them as thin as possible. Let them dry on a clean sheet on a drafty place. When the crust start to crack, put them in cloth bags and leave them in a dry place to use them in winter.

TARANA

Ingredients: 1 kg flour, 5 eggs and salt

Mix the flour, the salt and the eggs to make very hard dough. Grate the pastry finely and leave it to dry on a drafty place. When it is completely dried put the tarana in cloth bags in a dry and cold place. The tarana prepared this way can be kept fresh to eat for several months.



When you think of a main meal in this region of Macedonia you usually cook lamb. It is meat that “melts” in the mouth due to the clean and rich pastures. There are many recipes for perfectly roast lamb; it is usually prepared by making small cuts into the meat and filling it with garlic and rosemary. This meal is often prepared during the festive holidays. Apart from this common recipe, there is an old Debar recipe, where the meat is served with dried plums. Drink heavy red wine, such as: a Vranec, Prokupec and Kratoshija with the lamb meat.



VEVCHANI. It is “a state” within the country state, a place of satire and free speech. It is spread on the slopes of the Mount Jablanica, surrounded by beautiful forest and water surfaces, where beside their unique houses, the inhabitants will cordially welcome you in their “Vevcani State”; a state with all the necessary decorations - their own coat of arms, flag, passport, central bank and money. The currency was named after the protector of the village St. Spas, who is also called “lichnik” (handsome male) by the people in Vevcani.

Vevcani’s springs are genuine attraction. They represent SIFON-SKO VRELO with an average capacity of 1,500 l in a second. The main spring is located in the mouth of the cave, and dozen of meters below there are 7 smaller springs connected under the ground to the main source. All these springs together are known as Vevchanska Reka (River of Vevchani) which flows into the river Crn Drim at the bottom of the village of Veleshta. Just imagine the water roaring

sound in the spring months, when the snow from the mountains starts to melt!!! The spring water flows through the village, through the yards of the houses, and in the past it was used for watermills, which today are one of the attractions for the tourists.

Vevchani's Carnival. (January 13th and 14th on a holiday named Vasilitsa). It is a tradition as old as Vevchani itself (1,400 years). There are masked people disguised in various creatures; sound of zurli (woodwind instrument) and drums; 48-hour absolute freedom of spirit. It is a performance in which every house and alley, turns into theater scenes.



Otherwise, the region is well known for its local food supplies. A small amount of the produced supplies reach the markets. They have meat, they have cereals, they have wines, fruits, vegetables - They have everything.

Nobody left Vevchani hungry and thirsty, because of the custom - you must try the traditional delicacies and homemade brandy and wine, pork roasted under "sach" (an iron cover for baking covered in amber), homemade sausages - "lukanec", "kashanik", "komat" , Vevchani's goulash, Vevchani style casserole, different type of local white cheese, all accompanied by homemade wine and brandy.

The old people say: Who hasn't tried a meal prepared under "sach", hasn't eaten anything delicious.

PORK SHANKS MADE IN A CASSEROL UNDER EMBER

Ingredients: *pork shanks, onions, carrots, rosemary, oil, water, salt, pepper and spices*

Place the shanks in a large casserole, put some salt, pepper and some spices. Then rub to soak the spices. Add the carrots, the onions and the rosemary, than pour some oil. Add a large glass of water in the casserole and put it under ember. Roast and serve! Red wine would be a good choice for this meal.



Kashanik from Vevcan is kneaded with holy water (blessed in a church by a priest). It was usually made in the morning of Vasilitsa on January 14th, and a coin is put in the dough. After it is baked, it is shared among the members of the family. The one who finds the coin is considered to be the happiest during the coming year. Kashanik is an unfermented dough, a mixture of wheat flour and yeast. After the kneading, the dough is immediately baked in a copper tray under sach. A trivet is necessary for baking the kashanik. The tray is greased with pig fat, whereas nowadays oil is used instead. Crust layers (like pancakes) are baked one by one in the tray, placed on the trivet above the ember. The tray is covered with a lid, heated previously. The layers of the kashanik are baked this way one on top of the other until the kashanik is ready. Kashanik is a specialty from Vevchani that is regularly served to the guests on the festive holiday Vasilitsa. It is served with "lukanec" (Vevcani sausages) and sour milk.







Finally, the pearl of Macedonia - **Ohrid Lake**, two ancient towns of Ohrid and Struga, as well as the “St. Naum” monastery the cradle of the Slavic literacy, are placed on the lake shore. It is one of the oldest lakes in the world, 3 to 5 million years of continuous existence. Ohrid Lake and the town of Ohrid, which originate from the Neolithic period, have been declared a World Heritage and are under the protection of UNESCO. The choice is diverse here - sailing along the lake by boats, rowing boats, sailboats; diving into the crystal clear water; sunbathing on the pebble beaches; visiting plenty of the ancient and medieval basilicas remains, countless churches and monasteries; strolling down the narrow streets between the unique old-town architecture houses or enjoying refreshments in some of the restaurants and cafes along the coast.

You might be interested

In the town of **OHRID**, (“city of light”, which is a literal translation of its old name Lychnidus), you can climb to the **Samoil Fortress**, which was not only one of the official seat of the first



Samoil Fortress



Church "St. Sofia"

Macedonian Slavic state, but it is an ancient symbol of the town today. In addition, from the top of the fortress there is also a magnificent view of the lake and the city. The old Roman amphitheater, the church "**St. Sofia**" (11th century), the church "**St. Jovan Kaneo**" (13th century), "**The Holy Mother of God Perivlepta**" (13th century), **Plaoshnik**, all these medieval remarkable monuments decorated with priceless icons are located in this area.

Outside the town, you can climb a mountain or descent with a paraglide from the heights of the mountain **Galichica's National Park**. Or you can travel back 6,000 years in the past and arrive in the "**Bay of Bones**" – A Museum of Water. It is a prehistoric settle-



"Bay of Bones" - A Museum of Water



St. Naum – The river Crn Drim' springs

ment from the late Bronze and Early Iron Age; a slight illustration of the life of prehistoric people in this region. Perhaps you will be interested where the first Slavic university was founded in the 9th century - the locality of **“St. Naum”**; You can also see the springs of the river Crn Drim, that flows into the lake and then flows out in the town of Struga.

If you get tired of the daily walking through history, you can indulge yourself on a beach or in a restaurant, where the traditional irresistible specialties will recapture how people in this region had always lived. They say that the mentality of the people living near water is different. There is some truth in it. The fact that the fish was the main meal for the inhabitants of Ohrid is more than obvious. The most popular delicacy is the Ohrid's trout, but eels, belvitza and plashitza (freshwater salmonid fish endemic to Lake Ohrid) are also on offer. Here is something easier to start with.

LAKE FISH SOUP

Ingredients: 400gr different kind of lake fish, 1 bunch of sorrel, 1 onion, oil, 1 glass of white wine, 2 bay leaves, black pepper, red pepper, lemon juice and salt



Clean and chop the onion, the sorrel and fry in oil. Add 1 liter of water, the bay leaves, the black pepper and the salt. Boil for 5 minutes. Clean the fish and slice it, soak in the lemon juice and cook for 10 minutes in the soup. Then pick the bones from the fish. Add some red pepper and cook until the greens soften. Add wine and the fish cook for a while. Before serving sprinkle some parsley.

Ohrid's trout. It is an endemic fish, one of the landmarks of Macedonia. In addition to the trout, 17 other species of fish exist in the lake, 10 of which are endemic species. (All can be eaten.)

First catch a hare then cook it

OHRID'S TROUT

Ingredients: 1kg trout, 2 tablespoons of flour, 3-4 onions, 3 peppers, 150gr of rice, 2 lemons, 5-6 bunches of parsley, black pepper, salt and oil

Remove the main bone from the previously cleaned trout, add salt and leave for a while. Fry the finely chopped onion and add the peppers. When the peppers soften, add boiled rice, parsley, salt, black pepper and the juice from one lemon. Mix well, remove from the heat, stuff the trout with this filling and sew it with a cooking thread. Roll the trout in flour; put on a greased pan and roast in the oven for about 20 minutes. Serve it with lettuce. We recommend white wine with this dish.



Ohrid's Pearl. The core is entirely made of mother-of-pearl beads by cutting the shells. Several layers of emulsion are applied to the mother-of-pearl, produced from the scales of the fish plashitza.

Охридски бисер



*Beauty is
not eaten,
only seen*

OHRID'S EEL COOKED IN ASH

Ingredients: 1 eel (2kg), 200gr onion, 5-6 hot peppers, 200gr white wine



Cut the skin under the eel's head, and peel it off towards the tail. Rip it open, clean, wash well and add salt. Pour wine over and leave for about 15 minutes. Put the eel in a parchment paper bag and stick it. Place the bag in hot ash; cover well on all sides with a thick layer of hot ash. The roasting lasts for 1-2 hours depending on how hot the ash is. When the eel is ready, carefully take it out of the bag and place it on a long plate. Pour just a little bit of the gravy it was roasted and sprinkle some finely chopped onion, decorate with green peppers and serve with salad.









If you are fed up of eating fish, you can taste the Ohrid's pride - they say, "To visit Ohrid and not try gjomleze (pie) is just like to come to Macedonia, and not visit Ohrid." It takes 5 hours to knead and bake gjomleze. It is a kind of oriental meal made of corn or wheat flour crust layers, baked under "vrshnik"(a pot with a lid covered with ember). This is similar to kashanik from Vevchani . There are some other versions of this recipe that can be found in the Macedonian cuisine. We also offer a third version - "turi potpechi".

Gjomleze, gjomelezec, turi-potpechi or kashanik-It is a Macedonian traditional dish, a delicious culinary symbol of Ohrid and Struga. The word gjomleze derives from the Turkish word gözleme, which means -wafel. Traditionally, gjomleze is prepared only from flour, water and salt, and recently oil is added and baked under "vrshnik" .

I have flour, I have everything

TURI-POTPECHI

Ingredients: ½ kg corn flour, ½ kg wheat flour, oil, salt and sheep fat

Make two doughs from the corn and the wheat flour as for pancakes with a pinch of salt and water. Grease the pan with oil. Place at the bottom of the pan a portion of the corn flour mixture. Bake under vrshnik. Sprinkle with sheep fat and put another layer of the wheat flour. Repeat this until you have used the mixture putting alternately layers of corn flour and wheat flour. Put the pan under vrshnik to bake. Serve with sheep white cheese. Sour milk is also a good choice.



Ohrid's "cooked" bagel. It is usually eaten for breakfast, but this ring-shaped pastry with sesame, combined with yoghurt or cheese, can be an irresistible snack in every part of the day.

OHRID'S BAGEL

Ingredients: 800 gr flour, 1 fresh yeast (or 2 tablespoons dry yeast), 1 cup of water (lukewarm) 4 tablespoons of oil, 1 tablespoon of pork fat, 1 teaspoon of salt, sesame (to sprinkle), 1 teaspoon of honey and 1 liter of water for boiling



Place the flour, the yeast, the salt, the oil and the pork fat in a bowl. Mix well together adding the water. Make medium soft dough. Allow the dough to grow for about an hour. Divide the dough into balls (18 to 20 balls should come out of this quantity). Use the rolling pin to stretch the dough balls. Fold them in a ring-shape to form bagels. In the meantime, put 1 liter of water in a large saucepan to boil. Put one spoonful of honey in the water. Boil the bagels for about 1 minute, and then transfer them onto a baking tray. Sprinkle the sesame seeds on top and bake at 180°C for about 40 minutes until the bagels get a beautiful brown color.

Although people from Ohrid have grown up eating these lake delicious delicacies, indulging themselves in a good quality meat with a glass of red wine is no exception.

OHRIDSKI CHOMLEK (OHRID MEATSTEW)

Ingredients: 1 kg veal lean meat, 1 kg of a walnut-size onions, 5 garlic bulbs, 150g oil, 1 glass of white wine, salt and black pepper



Cut the meat into small pieces (in the size of the onions). Clean the onions and the garlic and wash them. In an earthen pan put a layer of the onions (whole bulbs) and several garlic cloves, and then add the chopped meat over. Salt to taste, put some black pepper, pour some of the oil, and repeat this until you use all the ingredients. At the end, add one glass of white wine and the rest of the oil. If no lid, cover the pan with aluminum foil and roast at 150°C for 1.5-2 hours.

The well-known Ohrid “**makalo**” perfectly fits in addition to meat-grill, fish or a veal stew. You need 5-6 cloves of garlic, 1 teaspoon of salt, oil and vinegar as needed. The garlic is well cleaned, washed and put in a blender. Add salt and vinegar and briefly blend - about 1 to 2 minutes. Then, gradually (drop by drop) add the cooking oil. A solid, homogeneous mixture like a mayonnaise should be obtained.



Struga- The Outflow of the river Crn Drim

STRUGA. The town of Poetry - every year “Struga Poetry Evenings” event is held there; people from all over the world read their articulated intimacy poems. There is a saying about it: “Ohrid has a lake, but Struga has a river”. Indeed, there is, **Crn Drim** ... the one that springs from “St. Naum”, and flows into the lake to magnificently flows out in the town Struga - wide, clear and deep. Struga also originates from the Neolithic period and it impresses with its old architecture and archaeological sites, the cave church in **Kalishta**, the subtropical climate, and the birthplace of the most influential representatives of the Macedonian culture and the national awakening in the 19th century - the brothers Miladinov . And yes, even more, it offers marvelous gusto for gourmands.

STRUGA'S TROUT

Ingredients: 4 smaller trout, 3 onions, 3 green peppers, 4 tomatoes, 3-4 cloves of garlic, 1 glass of white wine, salt, black pepper, parsley and oil



Chop the onions, fry on oil, and add the chopped peppers, the parsley and the garlic. Add some salt to taste, and then continue frying. When the peppers soften, add the peeled and chopped tomatoes, pour the wine and cook for a little while. In the meantime, clean the trout, remove the gills and the main bone, but keep the fish whole. Add salt, roll in flour and fry on both sides. Fill the fried trout with the prepared mixture, put it in a greased pan and roast in the oven.





THE REGION OF PELAGONIJA





Two valleys and a beautiful park between. Pelagonia – it is our biggest breadbasket, with an excellent structure soil and excellent climate conditions and a long agricultural history. **The National Park “Pelister”** – is not our smallest, but the oldest national park on the mountain Baba, recognizable by the ancient pinus peuce (molika), the lake “Pelister’s Eye”, its archeological findings, endemic species and the wonderful view of the small and large **Prespa Lake**. It is connected with the Ohrid Lake with its underground canals on an altitude of 853 m, which offers a unique holiday enjoying the remarkably stunning beauty given by the nature itself, far from the crowds and the hustle and bustle of the nearby towns. This region is a mixture of pure living environment and urban parts with a millennial history, active villages, rich cultural heritage, and of course, authentic extraordinary gastronomy.

Turkish Palace (Saray) in Resen



RESEN is the administrative center in the Prespa region. It is recognizable by the bazaar, the ceramic colony, the monastery “**St. Georgi**” (12th century) in Kurbinovo, but also by the **Turkish palace (saray) of Niyazi Bey**. What is interesting about this region is that in September the entire Prespa scents the odour of the juicy apples. The climate and the soil - the conditions - are simply ideal and have made the apple symbol of this region. Refresh yourself with a “**Prespa well**” - white wine with apples, and do not miss to try out the “longevity medicine” made by the locals – dried Prespa belvitza (fish) – Cironka, which is consumed at least twice a week. Whether roasted or fried, the combination with garlic, olive oil, red pepper, parsley, hot bread with a cup of brandy or wine is divine.

Golem Grad (Big Town)



Prespansko Lake



PRESPANSKI CIRONKI

Ingredients: 300gr of dried fish belvitza, 100gr of oil, bukovec (cayenne pepper), dried mint

Grill the fish (cironki) just a little and put immediately in hot water. Let them simmer in the water until they soften. Put them in a strainer to drain, remove their heads and put on a plate. Sprinkle some oil, "bukovec" and dried mint. Mix well and serve.



Appetizer for everything, brandy, wine and beer



In the Macedonian folklore the apple takes an important place. It is a symbol of the female beauty - the face as clear as the sun, as white as cotton, and cheeks as red as an apple. It was part of the wedding ceremonies where the exchange of an apple among young people is a token of their mutual love; it was a symbol of fertility - "Give this apple to your queen to eat. If she eats the whole apple, she will give a birth to a boy; if she does not eat it whole, she will give a birth to a girl." The legends say there were blessed apples and gold-plated apples.

The elderly say that a day spent without eating at least one apple is a lost day. An apple is really an effective and very useful fruit. It is thought that everyone who eats an apple regularly has a long life, a healthy body and above all healthy lungs. Do not store apples near any other fruits or vegetables, if you do not want it to ripen too quickly because it releases ethylene, which intensifies the process.

BITOLA. Situated at the bottom of Baba Mountain, “The Town of the Consuls”, was the most important town in Macedonia in the middle of the 19th century, a host of the consular offices of European countries during the Ottoman Empire. Today it is a significant administrative, cultural, economic, industrial, educational and scientific center in Macedonia. In the town you can see typical urban houses from the Ottoman period.

You might be interested

Clock Tower is the most recognizable monument that identifies Bitola. It is said that during its construction, 60,000 eggs were collected from the village households from Bitola and used in the material for binding the stone blocks. By doing so, the builders believed that the walls would be much stronger.



Clock Tower

Bezisten. It was a covered oriental market in the past, used mainly for the sale and storage of valuable goods, textiles, money, and other valuables; today – it is one of the most valuable and preserved old buildings, with recognizable architectural and aesthetic values.



The Old Bazaar – it was larger in the past, and nowadays it is a complex of narrow alleys with low houses, and a witness of ancient times.

Shirok Sokak (Wide Alley) - Every town, every place could rightfully use the phrase, “If you’ve been here, and haven’t tried this or haven’t done that, it’s just as if you haven’t been present there.” The townspeople of Bitola would say so as well, “If you have been



in Bitola, and haven’t walked through the Wide Alley (Shirok Sokak), it’s like you have never been and seen anything. It is the Bitola’s promenade, an exclusively pedestrian zone, with a lot of shops, plenty of restaurants, a theater with opera house, the galleries, and many cafes and clubs., that make the true heart of the town. It is a great place to entertain and relax.

The Macedonians, no matter where they come from enjoy grilled meat, tasty filled with meat pots, sau-

sages, mushrooms, beans, red peppers, prepared under “vrshnik” (a pot with a lid and covered with ember) and the seasonal salads with a glass of rakija (brandy). Nevertheless, anyone who had had a meal in Bitola cannot forget the taste of the “bitolski pitulici” (kind of doughnuts,) and melted white cheese baked in a furnace served with homemade crunchy sticks of bread (furnarinki).

BITOLSKI PITULICI (DOUGHNUTS)

Ingredients: 300gr of flour, 200ml of water, 1 teaspoon of sugar, a teaspoon of salt

Put water in a bowl and add the salt.

Stir well for salt to melt. Add the flour and mix well to avoid lumps.

Water is added as needed; the dough shouldn't be too thick. After that leave the mixture to rest for at

least 1 hour. This quantity is sufficient for 30“pitulicii . In a frying pancake pan pour some of the mixture equally with a scoop. Fry at a moderate temperature. When the edge of the pitulica start to come off from the pan, turn it over and fry the other side. It's ready when it's not sticky anymore.



This delicious specialty is characteristic for the Demir Hisar-Bitola region, and in many homes it is a compulsory part of the Christmas lent dinner table. An interesting fact is that this specialty does not contain any animal ingredient, nor does it contain any artificial additives; it is simple, but rich in taste. It is an excellent delicacy eaten both: sweet or salty.

A guest eats what you serve, not what he wants

Our grandmothers who lived in big extended families in the past could not afford enough food; they consumed meat rarely, and very often they fasted. Pitulici were often at their table, and the girl who could make “maznik” (kind of a pie) and “pitulici” was considered a great housewife. The difference between the pancakes and “pitulici” is the white color. “Pitulici” are animal fat-free and fewer ingredients are used for its preparation.

Certainly, there are different kinds of recipes for the “enthusiastic gourmand” - “pitulici made with fat”.

PITULICI (DOUGHNUTS)

Ingredients: ½ kg of flour, 4 eggs, 200gr of white cheese, 100 gr. of cheese, milk, sparkling water, oil and salt



Make dough the same as for pancakes mixing the flour, 2 eggs, the milk, the sparkling water and some salt. Fry the doughnuts in a frying pan. Then put them in a baking pan and sprinkle some grated white cheese and oil. After that, cut them in 8 pieces and spread 2 mixed eggs and the grated cheese. Put in the oven to bake. These doughnuts can be filled with fried minced meat.

CHEESE IN FURNACE

Ingredients: 100 g feta cheese, 100 g gouda cheese, 100 g white sheep cheese, 100 g pepperoni/roast /bacon, 1 tomato, 1 pepper, 1 tablespoon butter, 1 tablespoonful of sour cream, 20 ml tomato paste, fresh mushrooms (champignons), spices by choice



Cut into cube pieces and put in a clay pan, previously coated with butter or cooking oil. Arranged in the following order: tomato paste, tomato, feta cheese, pepper, the delicatessen meat products, mushrooms, white cheese, sour cream and finally Gouda. Add spices and butter on top, and bake 15 minutes in a preheated oven at 200°C. (It is a great appetizer for home-made rakija or beer)

If you are leaving Bitola, do not miss visiting one of the most important archaeological sites – Heraclea, built in the 4th century BC by Philip II. Located on the most important road artery of that time - Via Egnatia, Heraclea had risen into the most significant crossroad in the region in those ancient times.



Marko's Towers



Rock "An Elephant"

PRILEP. It is known as the "Town of Tobacco", but more commonly known as "The town under Marko's Towers" - the landmark of the town. They were built during the reign of the mighty Macedonian kings and their dominant defense system makes them unique on the Balkans. They were named after the last king, the most famous, even in the folk epic poetry, King Marko, who ruled until 1395. The Marko's Towers are one of the five largest fortresses on the Balkans. The mass amazing sequences and the stone formations are more than 300 million years old, of which the most striking one is the "Elephant" rock.

You might be interested

In the region of Prilep there are two important monastic and spiritual centers - the monastery "**Treskavec**" (14th century), 10 km from the town, raised high above the rocks in the mountain,

Monastery "Treskavec"





Monastery "Zrze"

1,280 m above sea level, with an incredible view of the surrounding mountains, the Pelagonija Plain, the towns of Prilep, Bitola and Krushevo; and the mystical monastery "**Zrze**" (14th century), 34 km from the town, at the Mount Dautica foot, where the monks welcome you with coffee and jam.

Inside the town, there is a the **clock tower** from the beginning of the 19th century, which is an authentic spot for a memorable photo. Furthermore, there's an old bazaar, a place to have a stroll, and in that ambient, one would probably say with pleasure; "Some of your Prilep delicacies, please." And then, they will probably recommend meze (appezers), janii (stews), salads, grills, pasta, brandy, wines ... Nod your head for each. Bear in mind, "Shirden" is the meal that everyone links with the delicious food on offer in the town of Prilep.

Clock Tower



Janija is a Macedonian traditionally stewed meal made of different vegetables, potatoes, with or without meat. There is no creative limitation in this dish - everyone prepares it with whatever one has at home.

If there is oil, even a fern makes a stew

PRILEP JANIJA (STEW) WITH POTATO CHIPS

Ingredients: 1 chicken, 2-3 onions, 2-3 larger potatoes, 2-3 green peppers, oil, flour, black peppers grains, red pepper and salt

Cut the chicken into pieces and wash it well. Simmer the meat gently on oil.

When it browns, remove from the pan and fry the onions in the same oil. After that re-

turn the meat in the pan and fry together for a while, and add red pepper and some flour.

Pour some boiling water over the prepared meat and let it boil gently. In the meanwhile, fry the sliced potatoes. When the meat is cooked, add the fried potatoes and let it simmer for another ten minutes. If you prepare this meal in summer, you can add green peppers in the onions. Serve this stew with a salad.

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PRILEP RABBIT WITH RAISINS

Ingredients: 1 rabbit, oil, 1 glass of wine, 1 handful of raisins, black pepper grains and salt



Clean the rabbit, cut into pieces and pour boiling water 2-3 times. Heat some oil in a pan and put the pieces of meat in the hot oil. Fry for a while until the meat absorbs the oil, add the salt and the black pepper grains and continue to braise the meat and when the gravy is reduced add the wine and the raisins. Cook gently until the meat softens.



CHKETO

Ingredients: 1 lamb leg, 4 bunches of parsley, oil, 1-2 tablespoons of flour and salt

Wash the meat cut into pieces, add some salt and put in a saucepan to boil. Wash the parsley and chop it finely. When the meat is cooked, add the parsley and boil for a while. Make gravy from the oil and the flour, pour over the meat and cook gently for another 5 minutes.



STUFFED LAMB "SHIRDEN"

Ingredients: 5-6 shirideni (rennet-bags) ½ kg pork lean meat, ½ kg lamb lean meat, 3 onions, 1 cup rice, red pepper, black pepper and salt



Wash the rennet-bags well on the outside and turn them inside out. Clean them well with a knife from the inside on a cutting board, wash them well and then turn them inside out again.

Cut the meat in thin pieces. Fry the onion, add the chopped meat, fry a little and add the rice, the red pepper and the salt. Fill the rennet-bags with this mixture. Pour ½ cup of hot water in each and tie them with white thread. Arrange in a greasy pan, pour some water and roast in the oven.

The word "**shirden**" is derived from the Turkish word şirden, which denotes the fourth part of the stomach of the ruminants. For the Prilep "shiriden" recipe the inner organ of a young lamb is used.





Village Konjsko



KRUSHEVO. It is a unique, small town, located in the bosom of Busheva Mountain, the highest located town on the Balkans – it is over 1,350 m above the sea level. It is known for its traditional architecture, amphitheater located houses, cultural sites and the legacy of the great Ilinden uprising from 1903, the rebellion against the Ottoman domination. They say that Krushevo is a town-museum – an abundance of old monuments, distinctive museums, natural picnic places, localities, churches and monasteries. It is an attractive place for winter sports lovers, paragliders, mountaineers, but also for relaxation during the summer due to its fresh air, the mild surrounding slopes, the peace and the silence.

In the center of the town there is a bazaar, a chain of small craft shops and trade shops, where in the ambient of old Krusevo



houses one can enjoy the traditional irresistible meals typical for this region: meatballs in rice, "maznik"(pie) with beans, "pitulici" (doughnuts) with garlic , Vlach doughnuts, a stew with meatballs in onions, "shuto makalo", Krusevo pie, Krushevo "kukuruzi", Krusevo sausage.

It is said that the well-known Krushevo sausage gives a special taste to the beer. The local culinary masters reveal that they are prepared from pork and veal meat and many spices, which give the spicy hot taste to the sausages. In the grated or finely chopped meat, add leeks, hot dried pepper salt, black pepper, salt and dry spice herbs.



MEATBALLS IN ONION

Ingredients: 500g mixed minced meat (beef, pork), 1 kg onions, salt, black pepper, parsley, tomatoes or tomato sauce, 1 egg, 1 cup of rice, 1 slice of bread soaked in milk

Make a mixture for the meatballs from the meat, the egg, the drained bread, the parsley, the salt, the black pepper and some fried onions. Mix well and make meatballs of a medium size, roll them in bread crumbs or flour and put them aside. Fry the sliced onions in a roasting tray. When the onions turn golden yellow add the rice-washed and drained, the red pepper and pour some water. Put the meatballs on top, pour some oil over each meatball, add some sliced tomatoes or tomato sauce, add salt, sprinkle some flour and put them in the oven to roast. Serve with pickled vegetables.



VLACH "TIGANICI" (DOUGHNUTS)

Ingredients: ½ kg flour, 100g oil, 150g walnuts, salt and water



Mix the flour with water, make dough as for pancakes and add some salt. Fry the pancakes on both sides on a greased frying pan. Grill each pancake on a warm hob on both sides. When it is well done, wrap in a napkin. Repeat this procedure with all the pancakes until you use the mixture. Put the walnuts and some oil in ½ l of water. Add salt and boil. Put a layer of doughnuts in a pan, sprinkle some of the walnut mixture and continue with this until you have used it all. At the end, cut in cubes and pour over the rest of the walnut mixture. Cover with another pan and leave for 10 minutes before serving. (You can add 1-2 cloves of garlic in the water)



“Celuvki” and “lokum” with walnut are Krusevo’s traditional remarkably delicious desserts. Although they say that “lokum” is a combination of sugar, water, starch and citric acid, it is not easy to match the right amount of the ingredients and the process of baking; in addition fifteen days are needed for the mixture to form a crust.

The tradition of preparing **“lokum”** is still preserved in Krusevo. Just as in the past - it is served at various ceremonial events, and it is brought as a present when visiting friends. The lokum is generally served with coffee, which was a common tradition in every home in Macedonia 20-30 years ago.



CELUVKI SWEETS – (“kisses”)

Ingredients: 2 egg whites, 150g sugar, 1 spoon of lemon juice

Whisk the egg whites with the lemon juice adding sugar gradually. Put them in a blender until the mixture becomes very very thick. Form the celuvki sweets with cooking syringe and put them on a baking tray covered with baking paper. Dry in preheated oven at 130°C for one hour.

It is a tradition in Krushevo to bring kisses (celuvki) when you come to see the baby for the first time.





A still life composition featuring a wooden barrel overflowing with purple grapes. The barrel is made of dark wood and has three metal bands. In the foreground, there are several figs, one of which is cut open to reveal its red, seed-filled interior. There are also some green grapes and a glass of red wine visible on the right side. The background is a warm, textured surface.

THE VARDAR REGION



Vardar region is characterized by moderate continental climate, fertile soil and a bunch of sunny days. From Veles, to Kavadarci, Negotino, Demir Kapija until Gevgelija you are followed by vineyards and several wine oases (wineries) , which in their own way capture the Macedonian wine story. The "Wine Road" of Macedonia offers a unique experience and perfect blend of traditional Macedonian food, centuries-old wines, rich tradition and culture, untouched nature, localities and monuments.

The diversity of food is conditioned by the land one cultivates, and in this region simply everything can be grown, even the Japanese apple (harvested already). The granary of Ovche Pole, the fruits of Rosoman and Gradsko, the vine from the Tikvesh and Demir Kapija and the pastures with aromatic herbs are on the dining tables in these areas.



VELES. An old town located in the valley of the river Vardar's banks, mentioned in the 3rd century as Vila Zora ("a city-bridge"), as Kjupurli later, whereas the current name is given by the Slavs in the 7th century, from the Slavic "v les", which means "in the woods" (due to the dense surrounding forests). It was a home to many Macedonian revivalists, revolutionaries, writers and poets – it is one of the cradles of the Macedonian culture, witnessed by countless cultural and historical monuments, monasteries, churches and memorial houses.

You might be interested



City Clock

The City Clock is the symbol of the town. Built in the first half of the 16th century, the tower in the central town area of Veles served the Ottoman authorities for observation. Towards the end of the 18th century, in the period of the revival in Veles, the tower was converted into a city clock.

The memorial ossuary (chapel house). An imposing monument built in 1979 just above



Lake "Mladost"(Youth)

the entrance of the Veles town, a place where hundreds of Veles fighters, victims of the World War II, were killed.

The lake "Mladost" (Velesko Lake). An artificial accumulation at the town's exit - a place for sport fishing, fun-time at the shore, homemade specialties in the local facilities.

The archaeological site **"Stobi"** is an important Paionian, Macedonian and Roman town, which dates back to 197 AD when the Macedonian King Philip V defeated the Dardanian army at that place. It was a town that had an important trade and military position with a self-governing status.



Stobi

Veles is famous for its grill specialties, “pacha”-aspic, “kaplama” - a stew with liver and rice, “sarma” made of vine leaves and a moussaka with eggplants, “elbasan-tava”- made from a lamb meat, a soup known as chketo, yet the most famous Veles specialty is the pie “pastrmajlija”.

VELES PIE (PASTRMAJLIJA)

Ingredients: 1 kg of pork meat, 300 g of pastramas (dried sheep meat), pork fat and eggs as needed. **The dough:** 1 kg of flour, 50 ml oil, warm water (about 400-500 ml), 1 cube (40 g) fresh yeast, 1 teaspoon sugar and 1 tablespoon salt

Pastrma (dried meat) and pork are finely chopped and mixed. The meat is not salted because the pastrama is sufficiently salty. All the ingredients for the dough are stirred and medium thick dough is made. When the dough raises divide into 6 parts, cover with a cloth and leave for about 20 minutes to raise again. Spread each part of the dough in an oval form, then smear with pork fat and put the meat on top. The same procedure is repeated with the remaining parts of the dough. The pie is baked at 230°C for about 20 minutes until it becomes crusty brown. Take it out and add 1 to 2 scrambled eggs and bake for another 5 minutes.

(If you do not want too salty pie, put a little bit of the pastrama.)



Pacha (Piftija) – Aspic is a meal that proves the Macedonian saying “do not throw anything”. It is usually prepared from pork meat with less quality for example: head, knee and tendon, but there are variants where smoked meat is added. This type of food is recognizable on the Balkans. The aspic in Macedonia is also associated with the Christmas dinner table. It is a custom to make it on January 5th and to eat it at Christmas.

PACHA (ASPIC) MADE OF PIG TROTTERS

Ingredients: 1kg pig trotters, 3 l water, 2 bunches of carrots, 1 bunch of parsley, 1 bunch of celery, 5 grains of black pepper, 1 laurel leaf, ground black pepper, 4 cloves of garlic and salt

Clean the trotters and wash several times. Cut them and put in cold water to boil. When the water boils, add salt and ½ hour later add all the additional ingredients. Boil gently for about 4 hours, until the meat softens (completely) and begins to separate from the bones. Drain the soup and pour it in a bowl. Add the chopped meat, the crushed garlic, the black pepper and leave it in a cold place to thicken.



LIVER WITH RICE

Ingredients: ½ kg liver (pork, veal), 100 g rice, 2 onions, parsley, oil, black pepper and salt

Wash the liver, deiceit and fry in hot oil, then add the washed rice, the finely chopped onion, the black pepper, the salt and the parsley at the end. Mix everything well, fry for a while and put it in a tray. Cover it with hot water and roast it at 200°C for half an hour.



Moussaka is a traditional Macedonian dish of Ottoman origin. It is usually prepared with potatoes and minced meat, but using eggplants instead of potatoes simply raises the taste at a completely different level.

MOUSSAKA WITH EGGPLANTS

Ingredients: 4 large eggplants, 250g minced meat, 250 g pork fat, 500g milk, 6 eggs, 1 onion, 3 tomatoes, parsley, flour, black pepper and salt

Cut the eggplants in thin slices lengthwise, salt them and leave in a strainer for a while. Put a tablespoon of pork fat in a saucepan, add the finely chopped onion and fry, add the finely diced tomatoes and at the end add the meat, sprinkle some salt and mix-fry everything. Remove the pan from the heat and add the finely chopped parsley and the black pepper. Drain the eggplants and squeezing tem between your hands. Roll each slice in flour, then in eggs and flour again and fry them on a hot pork fat. Put one layer of the fried eggplants and one layer of the meat over in a roasting tray until you have used all the ingredients. The eggplants should be on top. Scramble the four remaining eggs with the milk and pour over the moussaka. Roast in a moderately heated oven until a crust is made on top. Serve with sour milk.



Lately, the traditional Veles "gjomleme" is becoming more popular than the most famous Veles Pastrmajlija (pie). However, the gjozleme is usually prepared during the winter period, due to its high calorie intake.

VELESHKO GJOZLEME

Ingredients: 700g flour, 1 yeast, 2 tablespoons oil, 1 teaspoon salt. **Filling:** 180 g pork fat, 400 gr pork meat (from the neck)



Prepare the meat first. Salt it and put in the fridge. Melt the pork fat. Prepare the yeast with lukewarm water and a little bit of sugar. Sift the flour and leave some for kneading. Add the salt, the oil, the yeast, lukewarm water and make soft dough. Leave it for about 15 minutes. Then divide the dough into 10 balls and leave them covered for another 10 minutes. Roll a thin layer from each ball with a rolling pin as wide as the baking tray. Put one dough layer on the greased baking tray. Add some melted pork fat on each layer and on each third one some meat. Repeat the procedure, leaving the top layer without anything. Firstly cut diamond shape pieces and on each piece put some meat. Press it and pour over some pork fat. Bake at 225°C for about 20 minutes, then lower the temperature and bake for another 20 minutes. When it is ready spread the "gjozlemee" with some more pork fat. It is served with red wine, yoghurt or sour milk.





Ovche Pole (Valley)

Ovche Pole or Ovchepolie is a fertile valley with mild climate, which has probably derived its name from the large number of flocks of sheep (ovca, Ovche) that used to spend winter in that valley. (This place is still a habitat to a large number of cattle herds and poultry). Ovche Pole is not only our second larger granary after Pelagonija, it also has salty pastures rich in aromatic herbs, pastures one of its kind on the Balkans and beyond. Hence, the uniqueness in taste of Ovchepole white cheese, the milk, the beaten cheese and the soft cheese with natural salinity are exceptional.

The largest populated place in this area is the town of **SVETI NIKOLE**. Where ever you are in the region of Sveti Nikole, you can taste the products of this fertile land. Try the Ovchopole white cheese and the meat delicatessen with a glass of rakija or a red wine, or try the elder juice, while waiting for the Ovche Pole divine specialty – the roast lamb.

ELDER JUICE

Ingredients: 40 elder flowers, 4 kg water, 50g lemon acid (or wine acid)

Wash the elder flowers well, put in a bowl with water, add the lemon acid and leave for 24 hours.

Strain the juice and put the sugar. Leave it like this for another 24 hours stirring occasionally. Put the juice in bottles, close them well with a cork and store in cold and dry place.



The **elder** is a homemade remedy from a long time ago. It was believed that the elder branches carried in a pocket protect against rheumatism. Otherwise, it contains vitamins A, B1, B2, C, essential oils, bitter substances, malic acid, sucrose, etc., which makes it an incredible prevention for many diseases.

The remedy is one coin, who doesn't know pays in gold

SVETI NIKOLE LAMB ROAST

Ingredients: 1kg lamb, 200g onions, 120g pork fat, 3 bunches of parsley, 200g tomatoes, 3 eggs, 50g milk, salt, black pepper and red pepper



Wash the meat, cut into pieces and fry in a pan together with the onion. Add some red pepper and fry until the meat softens. Peel the tomatoes, chop them and add them to the meat, after that put some parsley, the black pepper and sprinkle some salt. Mix well and cook for another 10 minutes, then cover with scrambled eggs and milk. Put the pan in the oven to roast.

In these parts, **bulgur** was often used as a substitute for rice. It is crushed wheat, boiled in a cauldron, after that dried and finally milled between two large stones. Milled wheat was stored in a clean white sack. The bulgur was boiled in a casserole with water cooked with ingredients like leeks, peppers and potatoes.

For the sake of someone, roast chicken is eaten



Let's make it crystal clear that in Macedonia, the wine has a status of a national pride. This is due to the centuries-old tradition of producing this drink in our region. **The Tikvesh region** is the wine heart of our country, undoubtedly a region acknowledged for an exceptional wine and extraordinary rakija-brandy through the ages. The largest populated place in this region is **KAVADARCI**, the center of the vineyards, followed by **NEGOTINO**. The two most important sort of grapes are Smederevka (white) and Kratoshija Vranec (red). In addition to these two, the most famous kinds of wine are Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Chardonnay. Dessert and table grape varieties such as cardinal, hamburg, afus ali, ribier and others are also grown on smaller areas.



Countless folk traditions praise the wine as an effective remedy for many health conditions, but not only do they say the wine gives a taste to the taste, but it also complements and improves the quality of eating.

Vine growing as a tradition has been preserved in the past centuries customs and in the daily life of the people in this region. A very old custom to own barrels, wine barrels, rakia (brandy) barrels and cauldrons



for producing rakija has still been preserved and cherished by every family.

There is an old century tradition activity kept on the religious holiday of St. Trifun, which say that precisely on that day, the wine-grower has to prune at least one vine branch. With a blessing for a fruitful year, the vine is “watered” with red wine and rakija; the ritual of the pruning is completed with a bunch of basil and a pie. The festive celebration continues with a song and a glass of wine or rakija.

The sweet grapes, the madjun and the rcheli prepared from grape juice (must), is a sweet irresistible delicacy of every house in the Tikvesh area. Guests who visit during the grape harvest time are always welcome by their hosts with good wine and sweet specialties prepared from grapes and musts.





How you wine and dine is a personal choice, yet, what follows are some unwritten, but well-experienced confirmed rules:

- Cold starter (meat delicatessen products, sausages, pâtés etc.) - dry white wines; light rose wines;
- Starter with eggs and meat; pasta with meat sauce - light red wines;
- Oysters, shells and cold crabs - dry sparkling wines; young and white wines;
- White fish - boiled and in sauce - mature white wines;
- Blue fish - roasted, fried, deep fried - mature white and light red wines;
- Barbecue fish - strong white and red wines;
- Light meat, white poultry - white wines;
- Dark meat, dark poultry - red wines;
- Game - heavy, strong red wines;
- White cheese and cheese dishes - old red wine;
- Cakes and ice cream - semi-dry sparkling wines; aromatic semi-dry and sweet wines;
- Fruits, nuts - semi-dry sparkling wines ; natural dessert wines.

In Macedonia, the traditional rakija is a brandy made of grapes (lozova rakija) with 40% to 60% of alcohol, usually consumed in company and always with meze (appetizer). Drinking rakija (as people say "na golo" (lit.-naked), on empty stomach without any food is not recommended, i.e. without any meze (appetizer) or only with water.

*The rakija in your head,
isn't calm as in the bottle.*





RCHELI (PUMPKIN JAM)

Ingredients: 2kg pumpkin, 2,6kg sugar, 1 lemon, 4l of whitewash water, 100g raisin

Peel the pumpkin and cut into pieces as you wish. Dip 500g of whitewash into 4l of water and leave to deposit. Drain and put into a deeper cooking saucepan. Leave the pumpkin pieces in this water at least 5 hours. Occasionally stir gently, because the whitewash deposits. After 5 hours spill the water, wash the pumpkin pieces several times and put them on a grid to drain. In another wider pot, put the sugar and pour the water (2 l) to cover the sugar 2cm. Cook the sorbet for about 10 minutes, then add the pumpkin into the pot and simmer for about 2.5 hours at a lower temperature. Do not stir the jam, but slightly press it to mix until the pumpkin is cooked. About 10 min. before the end, add the raisins and the sliced lemon pieces. The cooked jam is covered with a cloth napkin. Let it cool, and then fill the dry and clean jars with the jam. If you like, nuts can also be added.

Note: there are recipes where instead of water and sugar, must is used an unfermented squeezed grape which is boiled until it thickens.

MADJUN

Ingredients: 6 kg of black grapes (about 1 liter of madjun is produced)



The grapes are grinded and strained using several layers of gauze in a larger pot. Boil the strained juice on moderate temperature until it gets honey density. Constantly collect the foam from the juice surface using a tea strainer. Be careful not to burn it. Once it cools down, it is poured in sterilized jars or bottles.

The elders say that in the past people had no sugar in abundance like today. The poor longed for it, and they tried to hide it from their children; giving it as a treat from one holiday to another. Sweets and cookies were prepared with madjun.

Healthy delicacy in a Jar

TIKVESH PISHII (thick pancakes) WITH MADJUN

Ingredients: 1 kg of white flour, 1 cube of yeast, 2 teaspoons of salt, 1 teaspoon of sugar, 50 ml of oil, water as needed, 100 ml of grape honey (madjun)

Leave the yeast in a little lukewarm water and add 1 teaspoon of sugar to raise. When the yeast is ready knead a dough with the flour, the salt, the oil and about 300 ml of water and, if necessary, add more. Make soft dough and leave it again to raise for about 45 minutes to 1 hour. Divide the dough into 4 parts and form balls. Roll each ball and form the pishija. Leave the pishija to raise slightly, prick with a fork and fry in hot oil.

Serve the ready-made pishii with white cheese or with some homemade grape honey (Madjun).



Be a part of the century-old tradition and visit the wine regions, the neighborhood cafes, the ancient sites in the Tikvesh area, sail on the **Tikvesh Lake**, fish, visit a church or a monastery ... Taste wine in the nearby wineries and find out more about the spirit of these people who often forget to offer the guest with something else, but wine or rakija - brandy.



Tikvesh Lake

In 1860, only in Kavadarci more than 2 million okki grapes were harvested, which was an extremely large quantity. That was a fruitful year in the villages, too. A lot of grapes were yielded in the village of Resava in the Tikvesh region. The winegrowers sold one part of the grapes at the markets in Bitola, Prilep, Krusevo and Kichevo, and the other was left for production of wine and rakija-brandy. That year, the people from Resava filled all the cooking vessels, barrels, vats, troughs they had in the houses with wine. They sold most of the wine, but there was still wine in abundance. Some of the Resava winemakers had an idea to use the wine to make bricks (clay bricks) to prevent the wine turning sour, thinking that the bricks produced by wine instead by water will be harder and more durable. Even today, in Resava you can see the remains of the houses made by wine bricks, because of their burgundy - red colour.

DEMIR KAPIJA. ("Iron gate" or "iron door" in Turkish). It is a small town at the entrance of the impressive Demir Kapija gorge on the river Vardar. The fascinating gorge formed by Mesozoic limestone in the Jurassic and the Cretaceous period, is a paradise for alpinists, cyclists and kayakers.

Besides the wine an important symbol of this town, there are countless food specialties such as the Demirkapija goat white cheese, turli-tava under vrshnik, goatmeat under vrshnik, "taranenik" and the delicious "ravanija".

TARANENIK

Ingredients: 250g homemade tarana (dried pasta grains), 250g homemade jufki (tagliatelle) , 1 l water, salt, oil, white or yellow cheese

In a baking tray put a layer of jufki then a layer of tarana, and fill the tray alternately with jufki and tarana to the top. Put the tray in the oven to bake, to brown a little. In the meantime, heat some salted water in a saucepan. In another pan heat some cooking oil. When the "taranenik" is baked in the oven, pour the hot water over and than sprinkle it with the hot cooking oil. Leave it in the oven. The "taranenik" is ready when there is no more water in the tray. Remove the tray from the oven and add some white cheese or cheese if you want. Preferably serve with tomato sauce to enrich its juicy flavor.



RAVANIJA

Ingredients: 8 eggs 8 tablespoons sugar, 8 tablespoons of semolina, 4 tablespoons of flour; the sorbet: 1.5 l of water, 650 g of sugar

Whisk the egg whites. Then whisk the egg yolks with sugar, the semolina and the flour and at the end add the whisked egg whites. Mix everything well and put the mixture in a greased baking tray and bake for 10 minutes at a temperature of 200°C. When baked, let it cool. Cook the sorbet from sugar and water and pour the hot sorbet on the cold "ravanija". Bon Appetite.









THE SOUTHEASTERN REGION

Vividly picturesque valleys and clean rivers, amazing waterfalls, natural thermal waters, few mountains, archaeological sites, mild climate, an impressive dance of warm colors from the endless ,infinite pastures, greenhouses of cabbages, sunflowers, tomatoes, peppers, pomegranates, watermelons, vineyards, poppies and many more, a small warm healing lake and tiny towns with cordial people who are ready for a nice friendly chat and a tasty bite.

Whether you visit some of the archaeological sites near Valandovo, Gevgelija and Bogdanci, take an enjoying walk in the surrounding mountains Kozuv, Belasica, Ograzden, Plachkovica, decide to take a tour of the wonderful waterfalls - Koleshinski, Smolarski, Gabrovski or the waterfalls of the Mount Belasica , or you'd might like to heal your body and mind into the revitalizing thermal baths – it is all up to your personal preference. We will be waiting for you in one of the restaurants “for a nice chat and a fine bite”.



In the town of **RADOVISH**, the locals will welcome you with their homemade freshly baked bread, “baklava” and “samuni” baked over charcoal, the specific poppy salt, the madjun and the asure. Nevertheless, when a place cherish a festival “Em samun em tatlija”, they offer you the pride of the locals.

TATLIJA FROM RADOVISH

Ingredients: 1 kg of young unsalted white cheese, 5 eggs, 1 cup of semolina, 1 cup of sugar, half cup of oil, 1 bag of vanilla sugar, 1 bag of baking powder; for sorbet: 600 g of sugar, 500 ml of water

In a baking tray, crumble the cheese and add the eggs, the sugar, the semolina, the oil, the baking powder and the vanilla sugar. The ingredients are mixed by hands and the mixture is spread on the tray. Bake at 200 °C for about 30 minutes. After it gets brown, reduce the temperature to 160°C and bake for another 15 minutes. Once the “tatlija” is baked, pour with the previously prepared



sorbet. Cut in pieces and serve with ice cream or fruit.

SAZDRMA

Ingredients: 10 kg beef or lamb meat, 2 kg beef tallow or lamb mutton, 2l of water, bay leaf, oil, red pepper, salt and black pepper

Cook all the ingredients together for a long time. Once the meat is cooked, add the salt and the crushed black pepper, and before taking it out of the heat, add the red pepper. The mixture is poured into a casserole and left to stiffen. It is stored in a cool place, where it can stay and be used for more days - even over ten days.



Sazdrma is a delicacy that comes from the Turkish cuisine. It can be combined as desired – with soups, stews, roast dishes. The previously mentioned Radoviski samun is a kind of pastirmajlija (we leave this recipe to represent another town), only the main ingredient is sazdrma; Today, mixed “samuni” are made with sazdrma and a some cheese; or with mixed with one or two scrambled eggs on top.

It is interesting how the nature determines the way of life in a particular micro-region. Villages after Vasilevo are the main producers of leeks, a plant with a delicate taste, cylindrical shape and leafy tree - one of the most frequently used ingredients in the traditional cuisine. The tradition has drawn the diversity of "leek consummation" in form of appetizers, salads, and traditional pies – "zelnici", pies, pizzas, stews, roast dishes.



PALEZH

Ingredients: 15 pieces of dry hot peppers, 5 potatoes, 1 leek, oil and vinegar

Wash the dried peppers well and the unpeeled potatoes and put them to boil until soften. Then drain and peel the potatoes and peppers and grind them in a pestle adding salt to taste. Slice the leek and grind it together with the previous mixture. In the end, add vinegar and some oil. It is served as a cold starter and as a side dish at the main course meal.



LEEK WITH DRIED MEAT

Ingredients: 6 pieces leek, 3/4kg dried pork meat, 1 tablespoon pork fat, 1 tablespoon flour, sour cream



Clean the leek, wash it and cut it in the middle, then cut into 5 cm long pieces. Put the leeks in a bowl, rinse with boiling water and leave it aside. Cut the dried meat into pieces and put it to boil. In another pot, put a larger spoon of pork fat, and when the pork fat gets warm, add 1 tablespoon of flour. When the flour browns, add the meat and pour the boiling water. Now drain the leek and add it in the same pot with the meat and the gravy. Cook all together on a stove, and when it is soft, remove it from the stove and pour a plenty of sour cream or sour milk.



STRUMICA. In this part of Macedonia, this is the town which is a cultural, trade and political center. The settlement itself is from the pre-Slavic period; it is mentioned in 181 BC as Astranon (“The Town of the Stars”). There are several incredible “stars”: the Kolesino and the **Smolare Waterfalls**, the spa “Bansko”, which dates

back in the time of the Roman Emperor Karakala (11th century), the monasteries **Vodocha** (11th century) and “**Veljusa**” (11th century), **The Kings towers** (the 11th century, but also the findings from the early Eneolithic period), from where you can see the entire Strumica valley.

Strumica-Radovish valley gives high yield in early garden crops, which is why they are the most common in the daily diet of the people in this area.





Monastery Vodocha

The best and the original Macedonian “**mastika**” (kind of brandy) is traditionally produced in the Strumica region for more than 300 years. The rich scented drink is produced with a natural wine distillate, anise and acacia honey. Strumica’s “mastika” is used as an aperitif, but it can also be used for cocktails and mixed potions. (It is said that the moderate consumption helps in the helicobacter destruction.)

Hot cure on Hot wound

People from Strumica are gourmands. There are no summer or winter meals for them, lighter or heavier, sweet or salty, nor even rules in the combination of food. Each meal is easily transformed from appetizers to side dish or to a main course meal. Simply, the eating habits and the benefits of the food value of each meal were passed from generation to generation. And the nature gave them diversity in all food groups.



Strumica Carneval



Strumica's way of eating the watermelon. It is often eaten in combination with white cheese, which can also be fried. They say that many eat it with hot fried peppers ... And with this sweet-salty peculiar taste, bread is often eaten. The same way they eat the grapes, the melon. The sweet-salty taste is characteristic for the Strumica region, which makes many dishes pretty specific and heavenly delicious.

A pumpkin or watermelon will do the job

For the locals it is always time for baked peppers or zucchini with garlic and parsley, a juicy salad no lunch can be imagined without. It is a toothsome spicy salad that decorates every table in the evenings, when people rest in the yards and the terraces, and certainly enjoying cold "mastica". Only in Strumica you can eat stuffed spleen, stuffed scapula, "bobarnik", "dulma", "langidi" with white cheese and locum, "baklava" with sax (spice mastik), "sarlii", "pinirlii", "zerde", a pie with locum, "mlechnik" salty and sweet at the same time.

The **chalbur** is a very old, neglected dish from the Strumica-Dojran region; it is quick and simple to prepare and is especially convenient for the summer period. There are different recipes. What our grandmothers knew for a long time since past days, is now a trendy treat in the world cuisine.

POUCHED EGGS – CHALBUR WITH SOUR MILK

Ingredients: 4 eggs, 500g sour milk, 2 cloves of garlic, oil, salt, red pepper, bukovec (caynne) and parsley



The garlic and parsley are finely chopped (it is more delicious with grinded garlic if you have time) and mix with salt. Add this mixture to the sour milk into a deeper serving bowl, leaving some space for the eggs on top. Gently crash the egg shells and simmer the egg into hot water (as for frying) and pouch for a while for the yolk to be overeasy. Put gently on the sour milk. The tastiest is if the yolks are soft, but this is of your preference. Heat oil and put some red pepper and pour this mixture over the eggs and the sour milk. You can sprinkle "bukovec" on top.

“Imam bajaldi” is a vegetable stew which is used for generations in Strumica. (A recipe with minced meat can also be made.) In the past, it was also taken in the public ovens to roast. The story about the name is about a man who enjoyed eating it so immensely, that he fainted.

IMAM BAJALDI

Ingredients: 4 eggplants, 2 onions, 100 g oil, 4 peppers, 2 tomatoes, 1 hot pepper, 1 bunch of parsley and salt. **For the gravy:** 50g flour, 50g oil, 300g tomato sauce

Wash and clean the eggplants and cut them in several places lengthwise. Fry the finely chopped onion in oil, add the chopped peppers, the tomatoes and the hot peppers. At the end add the parsley and the salt and mix well. Fill the eggplants with this mixture. Fry in hot oil and when they soften add some water and roast them in the oven for about 30 minutes. Make gravy with oil and flour, and add the tomato sauce. Leave it simmer than pour the sauce over the roasted eggplants.





Koleshinski Waterfall







Dojran Lake. It is the smallest (43.1 km²) and the shallowest (10 m) tectonic lake in Macedonia. Surrounded by mountains on three sides, whereas the fourth is a plain that brings the smell of the Mediterranean climate influence. Warm and dry summers, mild and wet winters – ideal for growing pomegranates, almonds, figs and vineyards. This lake is known for its healing mud, for its muddy, yet “healing” water and the iodine scent that is released from the endemic algae in August. Moreover, it is also well-known for being the richest lake with fish in Europe, as well as for the peculiar traditional way of fishing with the help of the birds cormorant in reed fences, which are called “mandra”.

DOJRAN, a small town on the Dojran Lake shore (three times in history completely destroyed, but also renewed), where the locals turn whatever they catch/fish into a delicacy. People come here only for the fish and the wine. The preparation of the fish, as a basic food in the past has transferred into an aesthetic and visual art - fried, baked on a cane, roasted on ember, stew, “janija”, soup, or a pie (“banica”) etc. The most irresistibly delicious specialty is a “fish on a cane. Unless you have the right ingredients and conditions, the carp in a casserole can pretty much satisfy your gusto enjoyment.

CARP IN A CASSEROLE

Ingredients: 1 carp, 3-4 onions, 2-3 tomatoes, 2 eggs, 4 cloves of garlic, 50g walnuts, salt, black pepper, vinegar, oil and red pepper

Fry the finely chopped onions and the chopped tomatoes. Add salt, black pepper, red pepper and put this in a casserole. Clean the fish cut in several pieces and put in the casserole. Pour some oil over and roast in the oven. When the fish is half cooked, whisk the eggs, add the crushed garlic, the vinegar, the oil and the crushed walnuts and spread the mixture over the fish. Roast to brown crust.

For the sake of even deeper enjoyment, drink some white wine such as "smederevka" or "zhilavka" with this savory fish delicacy.





GEVGELIJA. A town located along the river Vardar, on the slopes of the mountain Kozuf around the healing waters, a number of testimonies of population in this region from the prehistoric times and, again an fabulous expansion of colors - figs, pomegranates, olives, oranges, lemons. The soils and the Mediterranean climate have provided favorable conditions for many agricultural products, but also for animal breeding.

Is there more enjoyable welcome than a cup of fresh coffee and a spoonful of sweet fig jam (for many the “Queen of Fruits”, although technically belongs to the category of flowers); who doesn’t know let them taste. (The fig jam is produced wherever fig is grown in our country - in Valandovo, Dojran and Gevgelija region - but the locals from Gevgelija will welcome you with it and they will send you home with a jar of jam of that noble fruit: (green, ripe, wild figs – they have “tamed” all kinds).

It is thought that the fig tree was the first food that people began to grow before the wheat and the barley, and hence it has been known for thousands of years as a useful healthy food. It is eaten in every form - fresh, dry, heat-treated. It is believed that the consumption of figs slows down the aging process; it is anti-wrinkle remedy, a "guard of the bones" and maintains the general health of people.



The health comes from the mouth



RIPPEN FIG JAM

Ingredients: 45 fresh slightly harder figs, 1 kg of sugar, 1.5 l of water, 1 lemon

Melt the sugar slowly with water in a wider pot and cook until the water begins to boil. Put the figs carefully in the pot and simmer for about 2 hours. It is s best to have the figs arranged in one row, so you need a broader pot. Do not mix, only occasionally shake the pot. Wash the lemon well and slice into thin pieces. Add the lemon in the pot and boil for another 30 minutes. Fill the warm heated jars with the hot jam. Close them well and store in a dark cool place.

In the past Gevgelian tradition, as a part of every wedding or a holiday, "pilav"(rice boiled in water) was served. Salty "pilav" as a side dish served with meat in the main course, and sweet as a dessert (it is eaten even today, but it is not necessary part of the festive menu). As an integral part of a happy or sad ceremony, a domestic "halva" and a "baklava" is served, called - "srlija" in that region. Mlechnik (kind of a pie), a symbol of the Christian holiday of St. Peter, a delicious savoury speciality which is a must at this festive holiday, – prepared and eaten "for the people to be sweet as milk".

MLECHNIK

Ingredients: 600g flour, 1 l of milk, 10 eggs, pork fat and salt

Mix the flour with the salt and the water as for an ordinary pie. Mix well and take 3 eggs-size parts from the dough. Use a rolling pin to make three thin crust layers and bake each crust on both sides. Put them in a napkin. Divide the rest of the dough into two parts. Divide each part into 5-6 balls, stretch them with the rolling pin a bit, apply some pork fat on each layers and put one over another. Stretch them into a dough layer in the size of the baking tray. Do the same with the second half of the dough. Place one of the crust layers on a pre-greased baking tray, crush the previously baked crusts, cover it with scrambled eggs with milk and salt as desired, then put the second crust on top of the first one. Press the ends. Sprinkle some melted pork fat on top and place in the oven to bake.



In Gevgelija, the same "rules" apply for in the entire southeast region; the variety of cultivated crops awakens the fantasy of various salads, fried or roasted vegetables with various kinds of white cheese, plenty of pies as appetizers. Meat - mixed grill, fish - as a main course meal. Dessert - from fruit to sweet – sorbeted cakes and candies. The specialty one must not miss is the Gevgelian sheep back.

GEVGELIJA SHEEP BACK

Ingredients: 800 g mutton, 120g fat, 3 eggplants, 300g tomatoes, 1 onion, 1 bunch of parsley, black peppers, 10 olives, garlic (if desired) and salt

Wash the meat cut in 4 pieces, dry with a napkin, roll in flour and fry in hot fat. When the meat is fried and gets a reddish color, pour some water to simmer into a juicy meat texture, so add water continually 5-6 times until the meat is ready. Chop finely the onion and fry in fat. Add the peeled and diced eggplants. Fry for a while and add the peeled and finely chopped tomatoes, add the parsley, the black pepper, the garlic and the salt. Remove the stones



from the olives and cut them in four pieces. Cover the meat with the vegetables; put the olives over the vegetables and cook for another 10 minutes before serving.

Finally, it is indeed unthinkable not to have homemade wine or "rakija"-brandy on the table that is traditionally produced in every home.

Furthermore, people from Gevgelija as well as those from Strumica prepare and eat a marvelous, healthy stew without meat, a recipe from Turkish time – "**amanbelbu**", a literal translation "I'll burst from eating." It is a stew that is made with all the vegetables that are available in this area: onions, pepper, tomato, eggplants, garlic.





Dojran Carp

THE NORTEASTERN REGION



It is worth visiting this mystical region because of its turbulent geological history; There are rocks nearly one billion years old (in the mountains Kozjak, German and Osogovo) and the remains of the former volcanic activity in this region - amazing formations. The configuration of the terrain in this region is interesting not only because of the natural attractions: the fields, the gorges and mountains, but also for outdoor activities. We highlight the most important sites.





Kokino

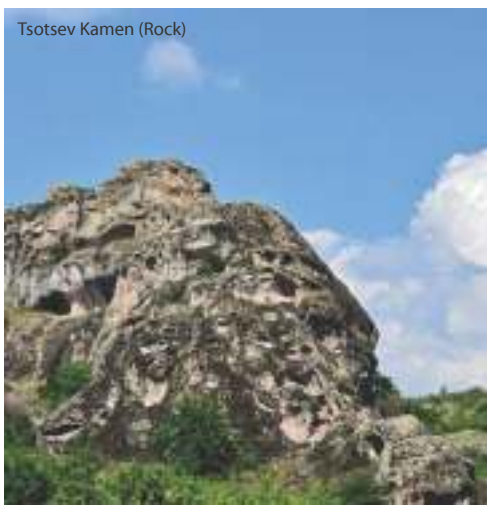
Kokino - a Megalithic Observatory from the early Bronze Age, one of the most valuable of this kind. (It is on a fourth place on the list of 15 observatories in the world).

Kuklica - stone figures higher than 10 meters, created 10 million years ago with vertical erosion of volcanic rocks. Parts of the stones are formed so they look like human figures, which is why this composition is called "Merry Wedding" by the locals.

Tsotsev Kamen - a spiritual sanctuary of a Neolithic settlement. It is an impressively remarkable archaeological site.



Kuklica



Tsotsev Kamen (Rock)



Kumanovo Fields

Due to the climate (moderate continental) and the terrain, the habits, the occupations, the influences from other nations, the changes brought in by the modern times, this region also has certain peculiarities in regards to the traditional nutrition. In this region, as well as throughout Macedonia, the Ottoman influence is mostly felt. Here, they say the cuisine has not undergone major changes in relation to its meagre choice. As a livestock region, different kinds of meat is on the menu, and the rest is food made of dough, dairy products, stews and some kinds of cakes made with locally produced ingredients. The meat was usually part of the stews, and it was served at the dining tables roasted only for special festive occasions.

One of the most famous “festive” dish of Kumanovo’s grandmothers is “mezalak”.



KUMANOVSKI MELZLACI (APPETIZERS)

Ingredients: 1 lamb lung, 1 lamb liver, 1 lamb tripe, lamb chitterlings, 1 onion, 1 glass sour milk, 1 teaspoon of red pepper, parsley, oil, black pepper and salt

Cut the lung and the liver in pieces 1 cm wide and 10 cm long. Make bundles from these slices and tie with the washed chitterlings turned inside out. Arrange the bundles in a pre-greased roasting tray, cover with the chopped onion and add the parsley, the red pepper and the black pepper. Sprinkle some salt, cover them with some lukewarm water and roast them in the oven.



“Mezalak” is served in an earthen pan. In the past it was served with white sheep cheese, and today different side dishes are offered, depending on one’s preference. This meal can be combined with salad - chopped pickle, cabbage with spices, pickled cucumbers, combined with tomato and cauliflower, and freshly baked homemade loaf of bread. Due to specific and strong taste of mezalak, some consume white wine, but the local people kept the tradition of drinking rakija with it.

“Turshija”- The pickle - fruits and vegetables conserved in vinegar – It is more than just a salad in Macedonia. It is a traditional delicacy recipe that is passed from generation to generation. It was usually prepared in autumn to compensate for the lack of fresh vegetables during the winter months. Before the production of artificial preservatives, as a substitute for the vinegar, especially in Kriva Palanka, the green plums called “junkies” were used. These plums were also used for making plum-rakija.







KRATOVO. An interesting town located in a volcanic depression that looks like a crater, which is a very rare sample in Europe and beyond. In its immediate surroundings there are remains of petrified lava, stone balls or volcanic bombs, stone pillars, and so on. The town also called the town of towers, the bridges, the Roman mines, the old bazaar, the city of beautiful churches and monasteries from the 14th century, lies at the foothills of the Osogovo Mountains, whose peak Ruen (2,252 m) is the highest point in this region. Due to the location itself, the amphitheatrically configuration of the houses is amazingly set.

Bread has always been the primary food in the everyday diet of the Macedonians. The differences were only in the selection of the



cereal crops, which were usually processed in mills, and from a semi-products, final products were made - bread, variety of delicious pies: "banici", "zelnici", pasta - "jufki" etc. Indeed, when a certain place such as Kratovo is well-known for the wheat, the barley and the potatoes, delicious combinations of food are also possible.

BREAD WITH POTATOES

Ingredients: 500 g of corn flour, 2-3 potatoes, salt, 1/2 yeast, 200 ml lukewarm water

The dough is made so that the boiled potatoes are cut into small pieces and mixed with the flour, the salt and the yeast in lukewarm water that is gradually added. The dough rests for about 20 minutes. Divide into 2 or 3 balls of dough, put in a pre-greased baking tray sprinkled with some flour. Bake in a heated oven at 250°C for about half an hour.



“ZELNIK” (PIE) WITH NETTLE

Ingredients: 250 g flour, oil, salt, 100 g margarine. **The filling:** 200 g slightly cooked nettle, 2 eggs

Knead dough from the flour, the yeast, the lukewarm water, the salt and the oil and split in as many pieces as the number of crust layers you want. First, a crust layer is rolled in the baking tray, while the rest are wrinkled over it. Spread the cooked nettle mixed with eggs on each crust layer. Bake the pie “zelnik” in a heated oven at 200°C for about 30 minutes.

“Zelnik-pie” is a legendary culinary classic art in our country. The term itself comes from the term “zelje”, which refers to the green plants used the pie. In spring time, housewives usually used nettle and sorrel, in summer - leaf of beets, leeks, fresh cabbage, and in winter – pickled cabbage. They baked it under “vrshnik”, and usually served it hot with sour milk or white cheese. They often made pies so-called “sweet pies – “zelnici”, usually made with pumpkin and in some regions made with apples.



Kratovo is known for the Kratovo potato, the yellow cheese and Kratovo “pastramajka”, but it is also well-known for one spice prepared from aromatic herbs collected from the Osogovo Mountains.

KCANA SOL (CRUSHED SALT)

To prepare this salt 10 aromatic herbs well dried, crushed and sieved are used, adding a type of corn called “carevka” and wet, raw sea salt from Italy, (optional – add wild and tame mint, basil, thyme, sweet clover, “povecherka” immortelle and dill, and if de-



sired savory can be added for a stronger smell or a Gypsy pepper that gives a hot chilly taste). These herbs are found in the meadows in June. First, the mixture is prepared in special iron vessels called “dibetzi”. The salt is put at the end and the grinding (ksanje) begins.

This salt is usually most often consumed with special homemade bread known as “peta”, that you can dip in the prepared aromatic salt.

Characteristic and familiar dishes from these regions is the “janija” which was made with a gravy prepared from a larger quantity of flour with red pepper. The recipe is always meat, depending on what they had available at the moment: lamb, goat meat, pork and chicken.



JANIJA

Ingredients: 300g beef meat, 1 onion, red tomato, pepper, potato, 2 tablespoon red pepper, salt, pepper, parsley, 1 tablespoon of flour, oil

Fry the chopped onions on a moderate temperature. Add the peppers and the tomatoes and mix well. Dice the meat is put in the same pan, gradually adding water. The meat is cooked until it softens. The peeled potatoes are chopped into small pieces and added to the meat. In another saucepan make the gravy with a lot of red pepper, flour and oil. Add it to the stew. When the mixture thickens, removed from the stove.

Macedonian housewives started using gravy to make the fat-free dishes more delicious.

KRATOVSKA PASTRMAJKA - PIE

Ingredients: 250g of flour. ½ fresh yeast, some oil, ¼ teaspoon of sugar. For the meat: 100g smoked bacon

Make the dough and leave aside. 4 balls are kneaded and "pastrmajlija" is rolled from each. Put the meat and one scrambled egg. Bake at 250°C until is browns. It is served with hot peppers and a glass of red wine.



"Pastrmajka" is a characteristic dish for the town of Kratovo. It differs from those from Veles, Stip and Radovish because this one is made with smoked meat. Usually it was prepared in winter, and for major winter festive holidays, when pigs were slaughtered for food. Housewives often carried the "pastrmajka" in the furnace; they brought only the meat from a salty barrel and the baking tray, and the baker made the dough and baked the "pastrmajka".

The pork meat was conserved by salting and pressing with a plate in a wooden barrel. After the religious holiday Prochka, the rest of the meat was put above the fireplace to smoke.

A characteristic drink for this region, besides the traditional rakija and wine, **"medovina"** - drink is prepared; a wine-like alcohol drink, obtained by fermenting honey with water.

Another dish that is typical for the Kratovo and Palanka region, which is influenced by the Turkish cuisine, is “mantii”. They ate them in spring when farmers brought sour milk to sell in the town, usually as lunch for the family.

MANTI (pie)

**Ingredients: 1kg flour, 1 egg, 4tablespoons of oil, 2 table-
spoons of vinegar, 2packs of margarine and salt. Filling:
300g white cheese, 2 eggs**

Make a dough mixing the flour with cold water and adding all the ingredients and knead it well to be harder than a usual pie dough. Mix the butter with 3 tablespoons of flour and divide the mixture in 3 parts. Roll out the dough, spread 1/3 of the margarine over it and roll as for puff pastry. Repeat this 2 more times with the rest 2/3 of the margarine. Roll the dough and cut pieces off sized 10x10 cm. Put 1 tablespoon of the filling in the middle, fold it diagonally and press along the edge. Spread a mixed egg over the “mantii” and bake them.









Monastery "St. Joakim Osogovski"

KRIVA PALANKA. The eastern gate of our country is a town located under the Osogovo Mountains, at the mouth of two rivers. In the immediate vicinity is the **Osogovo Monastery**, and the road above leads to a magnificent mountain.

What is interesting about this region is that even in the past, villagers in the mountain region bred sheep and goats and produced: fat, white cheese, milk, potatoes, while the villagers in the valleys bred pigs, sheep, poultry, seeded cereals, garden crops, and watermelon and produced all the dairy products.

For a long time Kriva Palanka was famous for the delicious delicacy **simit-pie**, one of the most popular products made of white flour, and today the symbol of town. It is a kind of "chickpea" cake, but in a special form that is only available here.



The women in the town used to make and still do, the famous and widely renowned “saramsaklii”; a kind of a pie in a special form peculiar for this type of food.



SARAMSAKLI

Ingredients: 700g of flour, 5 tablespoons animal fat, warm water, margarine, sour milk, 3-4 cloves of garlic

Mix the dough with the flour, the salt, the water and the fat. Knead well and split into 16 balls. Stretch each ball with a rolling pin and spread with margarine. Pile 8 piece one onto another, do the same with the other 8 pieces. Roll each part into rectangular shape and cut into three parts. Cover each part with margarine. Drag each corners of the dough to stick in the middle to make small “parcels”. Bake at 200°C, 30 minutes to get brownish crust. Remove the “saramsaklii” from the oven and pour with sour milk and garlic and putback to the oven for another 4-5 minutes. This tasty dressing enriches the sent of thesoft cruncy pastry and gives additional juiciness.

WHITE PAN

Ingredients: 2 chicken legs, two full cups of rice, chicken soup, oil, salt and red pepper

In a saucepan, put the chicken legs with the spices, add some water and leave to boil. The cooked chicken legs are put in a roasting pan. In a separate saucepan fry the rice in a preheated oil, gradually adding the chicken soup. The prepared rice is transferred into the pan with the chicken legs and 3 cups of the soup are added. Roast it in a pre heated oven at 200°C for 30 minutes.



Eggs took an important role in the diet both in the rural and the urban areas. A famous dish with eggs is a "jalova tava" that is made with rice without meat; whole eggs are put on the rice, instead of meat.

The Ottoman influence in these parts is most evident in the city environment by making a jam that is served to the guests together with water, tea and coffee. Coffee was only available to the rich. City housewives were known for making “saramsaklii”, “baklavi”, “mafishi”, “pandishpan”, “sutlias”, doughnuts, small cakes with animal oil. “Mafishi” are a kind of quick crunchy doughnuts that was traditionally done and carried as a present when a baby is born.

MAFISHI

Ingredients: 2 egg yolks, oil, salt, 200ml water or yoghurt, flour, ½ of yeast. Filling: 2 egg whites

Mix the dough, making 6 balls that are spread with oil and pile one onto another. Stretch a thin crust layer and cut into square shaped pieces. Whisk two egg whites, put some on each piece and fold it in a shape of a parcel. Deep fry in boiling oil and sprinkle with vanilla sugar.










THE EASTERN REGION

Berovo Lake



This region is predominantly mountainous and extends along the river of Bregalnica. Indeed, there are plenty of beauties that we can offer to the benevolent traveller: archaeological sites such as **Vinica Fortress** and **Bargala**, mineral springs and thermal waters - **Istibanja** and **Kezhovica**, adventurous climb up the mountain of Ponikva, a visit to the monasteries and a walk through the Osogovo, Maleshevski or Plachkovitsa Mountain. This is a region remembered by the Kocani rice fields, by the Lesnovski mill caves, by its name "little Swiss", by the tame mountains and by the most delicious Stip pastramaliya-pie.



SHTIP. We won't talk about the industry in this town, about its geothermal waters beneath, nor about Isar - the fortress of Shtip and the wonderful panorama. The question we are bound to clarify here, is the most often asked among Macedonians - whose pastmarmajlija-pie is the best, the Stip pastrmajlija, Radovish samun, the Veles pie, or the Kratovo pastramyka? Stip offers the last of the competition, so you decide which one is the best. The one from Kratovo with smoked meat, the Veles one with pork, sheep or goat salted meat called pastma and scrambled eggs on top, or the Radovish one with sazdrama.

Pastrmajlija is a Macedonian special type of pie made from dough and meat. The traditional pastramalija has a longitudinal shape made with chopped meat which is usually consumed during the winter period. The name comes from the word pastma, which means salty and dried meat from a sheep or a lamb.

SHTIP PASTRMAJLIJA - PIE

Ingredients: 1 kg flour, 30g yeast, 6 eggs, 800g pork lean meat, salt and animal fat

Mix the yeast with some lukewarm water to raise. Knead the flour with warm water and some salt, put the yeast and knead the pastry well to become medium soft. Leave it to rise. After that knead it again and divide in 8 pieces. Take one piece; flatten it with your hand so that the edges are thicker as piecrusts.

Dice the meat finely, add some salt and dip it in the pastry. Spread 1 teaspoon of fat over the meat and bake. When the pies are half-baked take them out of the oven and spread 1 egg over each. Put them back in the oven. After they are baked, wrap them in aluminium foil and then in a napkin to soften.



Serve with yoghurt. This specialty is tasty when is served with yoghurt, but it is also very tasty when it is “watered” with red wine.

Meatball (Kjofte) is a traditional dish of Turkish origin. It can have different shapes and sizes. Basically, it is prepared from minced meat, egg, bread and dried spices. There are many various recipes and even a vegetarian one. The meatballs are prepared as main meal course or as an appetizers.

SHTIP MEATBALLS

Ingredients: 500 g pork minced meat, 500 gr veal minced meat, 5 eggs, 100 g parboiled rice, black pepper, red pepper, parsley, oil, flour, 1 dry pepper, tomato sauce and salt



Mix the meat with the parboiled rice, add 2 eggs, black pepper, some red pepper, 2 tablespoons of oil, parsley and salt. Mix well and make bigger, a bit flattened meatballs from the mixture. Roll the meatballs in flour and then in 3 scrambled eggs and fry in hot oil. Put the fried meatballs in an enameled dish. Add 1 tablespoon of flour to the oil where the meatballs were fried and make gravy with some red pepper and water. Pour this sauce over the meatballs (they should be covered with it), add the pepper and 2-4 tablespoons of tomato sauce and put the dish in a preheated oven at 200°C. When the sauce thickens the meal is ready and can be served.









Rice Fields

KOCANI. A town that lies in a valley with the same name, which is the largest thermal basin of waters with high temperatures on the Balkans. The hydrographic network, along with the climate and the terrain is ideal for Kocani-rice, the Macedonian pride today. Yes, the first and the only thought that comes to mind are the Kocani rice fields - “Kocani’s white gold”.

Rice is one of the oldest cereals. It started to be cultivated in Macedonia in the 4th century BC for the first time, after Alexander the Great returned from the war conquests in India, and again towards the end of the 14th century by the Turks. It is one of the most popular ingredients in the Macedonian traditional cuisine. It is ideal for both salty and sweet tasty delicacies.

Lapa (gulp) is an old Macedonian meal, one of the few that is still eaten on the dinner table in Kocani. Lapa is made from ufak; crushed rice produced from the separation of rice from the husk. In this process, rice grains, the ufak, and the shell are produced. If you don’t have any crushed rice, ordinary white rice can be used. Lapa was usually eaten during the religious holidays when people were fasting. Thus instead of milk, the poppy seed was added to enrich this dish.

LAPA-SWALLOW

Ingredients: 250g ufak or white rice, 1 l water, 250 gr poppy seeds, 1 teaspoon salt. Each housewife determines the quantity of the ingredients according to the taste of the members of her family. The proportion of the ufak (rice) and water in this dish is 1: 4



In a pot, heat some lukewarm water. Add the poppy seeds and boil at moderate temperature for about 15 minutes. Then the ufak (rice) is added. Cook together until they thicken. Add salt to your preferenc. Some housewives prepare the lapa in reverse order, first they preboil the rice, and then add the poppy, but in that case the taste is different.

Lapa was formerly considered “food for the poor,” a meal served to the workers at rice fields. But over time, its healthy value grew and turned into a specialty; it was eaten after a meal.

When you eat lapa - there is no chewing, just swallowing. Hence, the name of this dish- Lapa-Swallow.

Previously, the dish known as rice-pan was a traditional Kocani weekend lunch; a day when everybody sat together at the dining table to eat. The experienced chefs say that the rice is not cooked with tap water, but with the soup the chicken meat was previously cooked.

KOCANI RICE-PAN

Ingredients: (for four people) chicken meat – usually legs, 400g rice, 100ml oil, tomato, bunch of parsley, onion, salt and black pepper



The meat is cooked for about 20 minutes in water with salt, bay leaf and black pepper grains. In a fireproof or earthen pan fry the finely chopped onions, add the rice, stir fry, and then pour the soup the chicken was boiled, in proportion rice / water 1: 3. Add chopped parsley, black pepper and spice-zachinal. Put in a pre heated oven to bake. When half cooked, add the pieces of meat and the chopped tomatoes. Return in the oven to roast until it's ready.

“Sutlijash” is one of the oldest desserts prepared from rice. It comes from the Turkish cuisine. It is prepared with milk,

but when there is no milk, prepare it with water, and then the dessert is called a “zerde”.



SUTLIJASH

Ingredients: rice, milk, sugar to taste, pack of vanilla sugar, chocolate for cooking and cinnamon

The proportion of the rice and the milk for this recipe is 1: 4. Instead of four parts milk, two parts milk and two parts water can be used. Put the milk (milk and water) and the sugar to boil in a pot, then add the rice and stir constantly until it thickens. Vanilla sugar is added at the end. When ready leave in the pot for a while. Pour into bowls, add the grated chocolate and sprinkle with cinnamon.

KOCHANI PILAFF

Ingredients: 1,2kg rice, 2 l. water, 120g animal fat, 300g oil, 150 gr matured sheep white cheese and salt

Boil some water with salt and margarine (or oil), then add the rice and boil on a low heat until the water completely evaporates. Brew the rice with some hot oil. If you want, grate some cheese and serve hot.

Alcoholic beverages are not recommended with this meal.





Berovo Monastery







BEROVO. Berovo is in Maleshevia region, it is our “little Switzerland”; in that region the air is with the highest concentration of oxygen in Macedonia. Below the slopes of the Malesevo Mountains, 800 meters above sea level, with its pearl - the Berovo Lake - this place is ideal for all natural beauty lovers, sports, recreation, excursions, hiking, walks, and relaxation. In addition, another bait for the visitors is the fact that the Pijanec-Malesevo region, due to the specific mountain climate, abounds with healthy foods,





forest juicy fruits, high quality white cheese and rich taste dairy products, delicious meat, excellent potatoes, the highest quality home-made honey.

In this region the tradition of delicious homemade bread is cherished, an irresistible crunchy dough baked in an oven in many different ways; here they have not forgotten the “vrshnik” and the cauldrons, which are immensely used for the preparation of these traditional dishes. There is a variety of the preparation of this recipe, from kneaded to stretched, from boiled to baked.



MONASTERY WHITE CHEESE

Ingredients: 600g white cheese, 80g melted butter, 8 cloves grated garlic, 20g cayenne pepper and 40 g fresh milk



Finely grate the white cheese; add the butter, the milk, the garlic and the pepper. Stir it with a beater until it smoothens. Serve on a piece of lettuce, fresh tomato, cucumber and decorate it as you wish.



MALESHEVO PIE (ZELNIK)

Ingredients: For the dough: 1kf flour, 1 tablespoon salt, 1 tablespoon sugar, water, oil for the crust layers. For the filling: leek, white cheese (spinach or fried leek with peppers and tomatoes can be used)

A cube of yeast is fermented with one tablespoon of sugar and one tablespoon of salt. Knead the mixture with 1 kg of flour, the yeast and water as needed. Once the dough is well mixed, leave it for 1 hour to raise. Then the dough is divided into 5 smaller and 1 larger part. All parts are rolled into a thin crust layer of 1mm with a rolling pin. Each crust is left on a sheet to dry, until each part of the dough is finished. The larger part is rolled thicker and put on baking tray. The white cheese is sprinkled on the smaller crust layers and poured with some oil. Roll the crusts and arranged them on the larger crust in the baking tray. The smaller crusts are wrapped with the edges of the larger crust. In the middle, put the fried leek with the white cheese and pour over some flour on top. Leave for an hour to raise, then put in the oven to bake at 250°C. When baked, remove from the oven and sprinkle 100 g of water with oil and put back into the oven for another 10 minutes.



It is combined with white Berovo cheese or with "bulamach".

“Bulamach” or “Milk winter preserves” is produced from an autochthonous sheep “Ovchepolka”, whose breed “pramenka” is bred in Malesevo region. The name comes from the ancient Turkish word “bulamach” which means porridge, thick mixture. It is prepared at the end of the summer, and eaten in the winter, as food rich in proteins and fats. It was mass produced in the sheepfolds on the mountains, where the shepherds left it for the next year, when they returned the sheep on the pastures in spring.

PORK MEAT WITH LEEK

Ingredients: 350 g pork, 4 leeks, 5-6 spring onions, oil as needed, 1 teaspoon mixed spice, 1 teaspoon salt and some black pepper

Chop the meat in smaller pieces and fry a bit. Spice the meat. Put the fried meat into a bowl. Finely chop the leek and the spring onions and fry to soften in the same pan and in the cooking oil where the meat was previously cooked. In the end, after the leek softens, return the meat into the pan and mix together. In small earthen pots pour the mixture and put in the oven to bake for about 20 minutes.



MALESHEVSKA TAVA (STEW)

Ingredients: 1 kg pork, 1/2 kg minced meat (walnut size meatballs), 100 g yellow cheese, 200-300 g of sliced smoked bacon, 500 g mushrooms, 4-5 dried peppers, 3-4 onions, 500 ml tomato puree, 200 ml red wine, the spices are added to taste (salt, black pepper and others, if desired)



Put the chopped pork meat, the minced meatballs (they can be mixed with some grated onion, garlic and yellow cheese), the smoked bacon, the mushrooms, the dried peppers and onions, in a pan and fry together. Add spices, tomato paste and wine, and stir gently. Put the pan in the preheated oven to roast at 180-200°C for about 1 hour. Before removing from the oven, add the grated cheese and leave it for another 5-10 min for the cheese to melt and brown.





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