

# Greek recipes have become family legacies

*Kathy Naftis of Colleyville, a parishioner at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in Dallas, says her recipe for Chicken Kapama has been in her family for 100 years.*

*Her mother, who came to the United States in 1940, "was born in the Peloponnesian area of Greece, near Olympia," Ms. Naftis says. "She learned the recipe from her mother, who was born in 1899."*

Chicken Kapama (also known in some regions as Kota Kapama or Kota Macaronada) was a special-occasion dish in her mother's family, always served on New Year's Day, at weddings and at other celebrations. The chicken and savory sauce was served over Greek pasta, or zymarika, and "my grandmother always made her own noodles," Ms. Naftis says. (Her father-in-law added cloves to the recipe.)

Today, a Greek-American cook probably would look for the Misko No. 2 brand of imported pasta, a long, tubular shape that's also used to make pastitsio, the Greek version of lasagna. If preferred, Chicken Kapama can be served over rice pilaf.

## CHICKEN KAPAMA (KOTA MACARONADA)

1 whole fryer chicken (about 3 pounds)  
Juice of 1 lemon  
Kosher salt  
Ground black pepper  
1 tablespoon butter  
1/2 cup olive oil  
2 onions, chopped medium-fine  
2 (29-ounce) cans tomato sauce  
1 cup red wine  
1/2 teaspoon chile flakes  
6 cloves  
4 cinnamon sticks  
1 pound tubular pasta

Cut chicken into 8 pieces. Remove and discard skin. Cover chicken pieces with lemon juice and sprinkle with salt and pepper.

In a large pot, melt 1 tablespoon butter in 1/2 cup olive oil. In batches, slightly brown chicken pieces on both sides and reserve. Add chopped onions to pot, and cook until translucent.

Add tomato sauce, wine, chile flakes, cloves and cinnamon sticks to pot, and stir well. Return chicken pieces to pot and simmer covered on low for 90 minutes. As chicken finishes simmering, cook a pound of tubular pasta according to directions. Drain pasta and have it ready to use when chicken is done. Discard cinnamon sticks when ready to serve. Pour chicken and sauce mixture over tubular pasta. Makes 8 servings.

**PER SERVING: Calories 640 (37% fat) Fat 26 g (7 g sat) Cholesterol 110 mg Sodium 1,452 mg Fiber 11 g Carbohydrates 57 g Protein 40 g**



*Kathy Naftis with chicken kapama (kota macaronada)*

## GALAKTOBOUREKO (GREEK CUSTARD)

Galaktoboureko, a traditional baked custard-in-pastry dessert, is "a recipe every Greek family has," says Marina Beasley of Fort Worth. "It's not particular to my family, although my mother did make it, and so did my grandmother. It's a special treat for the grandchildren.

"Yes, it's a little labor-intensive," Ms. Beasley adds. "But it's a labor of love when you make it for family and friends."

Layering the buttered phyllo dough takes the most time. Ms. Beasley recommends laying each large sheet of dough so that its width fits inside the length of a 9x13-inch glass baking dish, leaving half of the sheet lapping over the side of the dish. After brushing butter over the dough in the pan, lift the remaining width of the phyllo sheet, fold the layer over itself, and butter it, repeating 10 or 12 times for each of the top and bottom layers enclosing the custard.

This recipe is one that St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church in Fort Worth has used for many years under the expert supervision of Anna Panagopoulos. "It's her specialty," Ms. Beasley says. Galaktoboureko is baked daily at the church's Greek festival, which is in its 41st year. And it's so popular that "we can't keep it in the coffee shop," Ms. Beasley says.

## GALAKTOBOUREKO

Syrup (recipe follows)  
4 cups of milk  
1 cup of sugar  
1 cup of semolina cereal (Greek simigthali)  
1/2 stick of unsalted butter, softened  
4 eggs, beaten well  
3 tablespoons vanilla extract (or almond extract)  
1 pound phyllo dough sheets (see note)  
1 pound unsalted butter, melted, to brush on dough

Syrup: The morning you are going to bake, combine 4 cups sugar, 2 cups water, 1 cinnamon stick and 2 slices



*Marina Beasley (left) and Anna Panagopoulos with galaktoboureko*

lemon. Boil for 15 minutes. Remove from heat, remove cinnamon stick and lemon slices, and cool syrup completely. Also may be made a day in advance and refrigerated, covered.

When syrup is cooled, preheat oven to 350 F. Brush softened butter inside 9x13x2-inch glass baking dish.

For the filling, place milk, sugar, semolina, 1/2 stick softened butter, beaten eggs and extract in a heavy 4-quart pot over low heat, and mix. Stir continuously until the mixture becomes thicker than pudding consistency. Set aside to cool slightly.

To assemble, fold 10 to 12 pieces of phyllo into the buttered baking dish, lightly brushing each piece with melted butter as it is placed. Pour in warm custard filling. Layer 10 more phyllo pieces on top, buttering each layer. Score the top layer to form roughly 2x2-inch squares. Bake at 350 F for 30 to 45 minutes, or until lightly golden.

When removed from oven, pour cold syrup over hot Galaktoboureko (sizzling is normal) and allow it to cool to room temperature before serving, 45 minutes. Makes 24 servings.

Note: Cover waiting phyllo sheets with a clean, dampened dishcloth after each layer is peeled off to keep dough from drying before layering is completed.

## SPANAKOPITA (SPANAKOTIROPITA)

Spanakopita is a baked spinach-and-cheese dish served in most Greek restaurants. It's also popular in Greek-American home cooking, and when baked in a casserole, as it is here, it can be used as a side dish. Rolled and sliced, or cut into small triangles, Spanakopita also can serve as an appetizer.

"My family has a long tradition of great cooks," says attorney Louie Papaliadis of Fort Worth, a parishioner at St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church in Euless. According to village records, his entire family came from Mesta, on the island of Chios.

His mother, Georgia Papaliadis, came to the U.S. from Greece 40 years ago, knowing how to make only a

few dishes such as baklava. But she taught herself many more Greek specialties and "has become a spectacular cook," her son says. "Much better than any restaurant." This Spanakopita recipe is one that Mrs. Papaliadis got from a friend or relative. She isn't sure which one shared it.

By the way, Mr. Papaliadis explains that in Greek, spanaki means spinach, tiri means cheese and pita means pie. So, since this dish is a spinach and cheese pie, he says, it really should be called spanakotiropita.

## SPANAKOPITA

4 (10-ounce) boxes of chopped and frozen spinach (thawed and strained)  
1 bunch green onions, chopped  
1/2 cup chopped parsley  
1/4 cup chopped dill

1 (24-ounce) container whole large-curd cottage cheese

1 pound crumbled feta cheese

8 eggs, well-beaten

2 tablespoons olive oil

Black pepper to taste

1 pound country-style phyllo dough (thawed according to directions)

1 cup melted butter (for brushing phyllo)

Squeeze spinach dry between palms of hands and place in large bowl. Add chopped green onions, parsley, dill, cottage cheese and feta; add beaten eggs and mix together. Add olive oil. Add pepper to taste.

Lightly coat bottom of a 16x11x2-inch glass baking pan (roughly the size of a sheet of phyllo dough) with melted butter. Put 6 sheets of phyllo down, one on top of another, brushing each layer with melted butter as you go. Spread spinach filling evenly on top of phyllo dough base. Cover filling with remaining phyllo dough sheets, brushing each successive sheet with melted butter.

Fold overlapping edges of phyllo down and cut pie into 20 serving-size pieces. Do not remove pieces from pan. Bake at 350 F for one hour, or until the phyllo is golden-brown.

By JOYCE SAENZ HARRIS / The Dallas Morning News



*Georgia Papaliadis with her spanakopita*