

Chef Jim Botsacos offers a hortopita recipe

Chef Jim Botsacos – author of “The New Greek Cuisine” – offers this recipe for hortopita, a wild greens pie.

Hortopita (wild greens pie)

INGREDIENTS

- 1 1/2 cups extra-virgin olive oil (about)
- 2 cups finely diced onion
- Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper
- 1 1/2 cups finely diced white part of leek
- 2 cups tightly packed blanched black kale (also called cavolo nero or dinosaur kale), chard, or escarole, chopped
- 1 1/2 cups tightly packed blanched fresh dandelion, mustard, or other bitter greens, chopped
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 1 cup freshly brewed herb tea
- 1/4 cup sliced scallion
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh dill
- 6 sheets frozen #10 phyllo dough, thawed as directed on package

DIRECTIONS

1. Heat 3 tablespoons of the olive oil in a 4-quart saucepan over low heat. Add the onion and leek along with a pinch of salt. Cover and cook, stirring occasionally, for about 10 minutes, or until very soft and translucent.

2. Raise the heat to medium-high and add another tablespoon of the olive oil. Add the kale and cook for 2 minutes. Add the dandelion greens and season with salt and pepper to taste. Add the lemon juice, herb tea, and 2 tablespoons of the remaining olive oil. Lower the heat to medium and cook for 15 to 18 minutes, or until all of the liquid has evaporated. Remove from the heat and transfer to a baking sheet to cool.

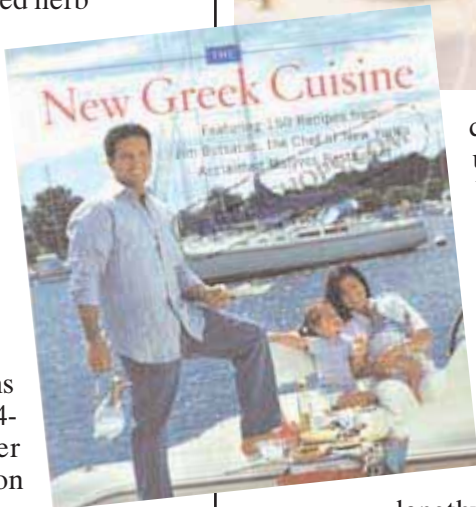
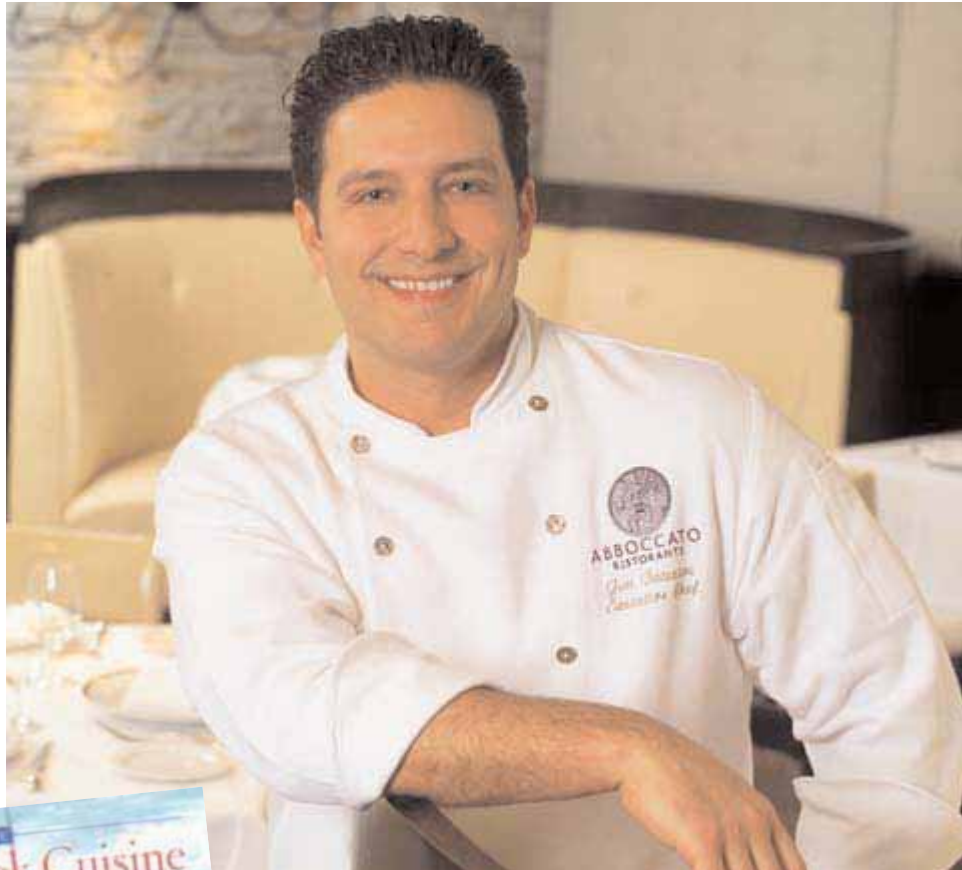
3. When cool, stir in the scallion and dill and drizzle with 1 tablespoon of the remaining olive oil. Set aside.

4. Preheat the oven to 375° F.

5. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and place a wire rack large enough to hold the molds on it. Set aside.

6. Hold the phyllo, as directed below.

7. Lay one sheet of phyllo dough on a



clean surface and using a pastry brush, lightly coat it with a bit of the remaining olive oil. Using a sharp knife, cut the phyllo down the center lengthwise into 2 equal pieces. Then cut each piece

lengthwise into 2 equal pieces so that you now have 4 pieces of equal size. Repeat the process to give you 8 strips, each approximately 1 inch wide. Work with just one piece of phyllo at a time because, if prepared in advance, the dough will dry out and be

unusable.

8. Working with one mold at a time, lay one phyllo strip over the top of a mold. Gently press the phyllo down into the mold, letting the excess dough hang down over the outside of the mold. Lay a second strip of dough across the mold, slightly overlapping the first strip, and press it down into the mold as before. Using two more strips, continue to line the mold.

9. Taste the cooled greens mixture and, if necessary, season with additional salt and pepper. Spoon enough of the mixture into the mold to fill it about three-quarters full once packed down into the mold.

10. Fold the overhanging phyllo up and over the filling to enclose it completely. Using kitchen scissors, trim off any excess dough. Using a small, sharp knife, make 4 small slits in the top of the dough. Lightly brush with olive oil.

11. Continue making layered phyllo, lining and finishing the molds until you have completed 12.

12. Place the filled molds on the prepared baking sheet. Place in the preheated oven and bake for 15 to 20 minutes, or until golden brown. Remove from the oven and set aside for 3 minutes.

13. Working with one at a time, invert the molds to remove the pies. Serve hot, as is or on top of a lightly dressed tossed green salad.

TIPS

Note: Here's how to hold the phyllo:

Keep the phyllo dough moist while working with it. To do this, place a sheet of parchment (or wax) paper on a baking sheet. Carefully unroll the entire package of phyllo dough (or the number of sheets required for your recipe) out on the parchment-lined baking sheet. Cover with another piece of parchment (or wax) paper and then cover the entire stack with a slightly damp, clean kitchen towel. Make sure that the towel is not too wet or it will render the dough soggy and unusable. When removing a sheet of dough, roll back the towel and top piece of parchment. Remove a sheet of phyllo dough, then re-roll the towel and parchment back over the remaining sheets to keep them pliable until ready to use.

The Taste of Europe

WHETHER your tastes are sweet or savoury, the Athens cake shop and coffee lounge, Maroubra Junction, offers a chance to sample delicious Greek cakes and pastries and ward off the cooler weather with a hot coffee.

Decked out in black and white, the cafe has a delightful European ambience which goes perfectly with the food. It aims to provide five star customer service, quality cakes and coffee.

The shop's designer, Lydia Kim of 3D connection, travelled to Melbourne to study Greek aesthetics and interiors in order to give it an authentic feel when the present owner took over the business six years ago.

The menu offers something for everyone with delicious sweets such as semolina-based milk custard and galaktoboureko; savoury treats such as the mouth-watering spanakopitas filled with spinach and feta cheese and tiropitas: delectable buttery dough

with a cheese filling.

There are also scrumptious vegetarian quiches, haloumi, breads and various types of cakes.

The shop is located close to free public parking on Anzac Parade, is in the middle of Maroubra's shopping strip and is perfect for those who want a break from retail therapy or window shopping.

Outdoor seating has recently been added while the indoors area is airconditioned, making the place comfortable year round. The Athens cake shop has also been praised by locals for its delicious coffees, a relatively new feature. The shop is available for birthday party bookings and small functions.

Address: 924 Anzac Parade
Maroubra Junction
Trading hours: 8am-7pm Sun-Wed
8 am-8pm Thurs-Sat
Phone: 9349 5910

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