

COOKING IN
2017



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Chef from Greece

The following publication is an attempt to communicate some of the ideas I've been working on in the past months.

This is not a cookbook - although you will find a recipe - neither is it a handbook of "cool" modern techniques. It is mostly a visual stimulation of some food related senses.

Even though one could argue over the need of something like this in the days of #foodporn, with all these food pictures, celebrity chefs and cooking shows everywhere around us.

I feel that it is time for us to start filtering things and process them a little more, that way - maybe - we can realize that food is not a means of expressing kitch culture.

Cunterwise, it can even be a form of art if you treat it as such...



Goat kid terrine;
carrots, pea puree, silverskin onions and rosemary infused
olive oil



Gyros;
Marinated pork to

Galaktoboureko;
Beirut phyllo pastry, rice pudding po
and caramelized pineapple





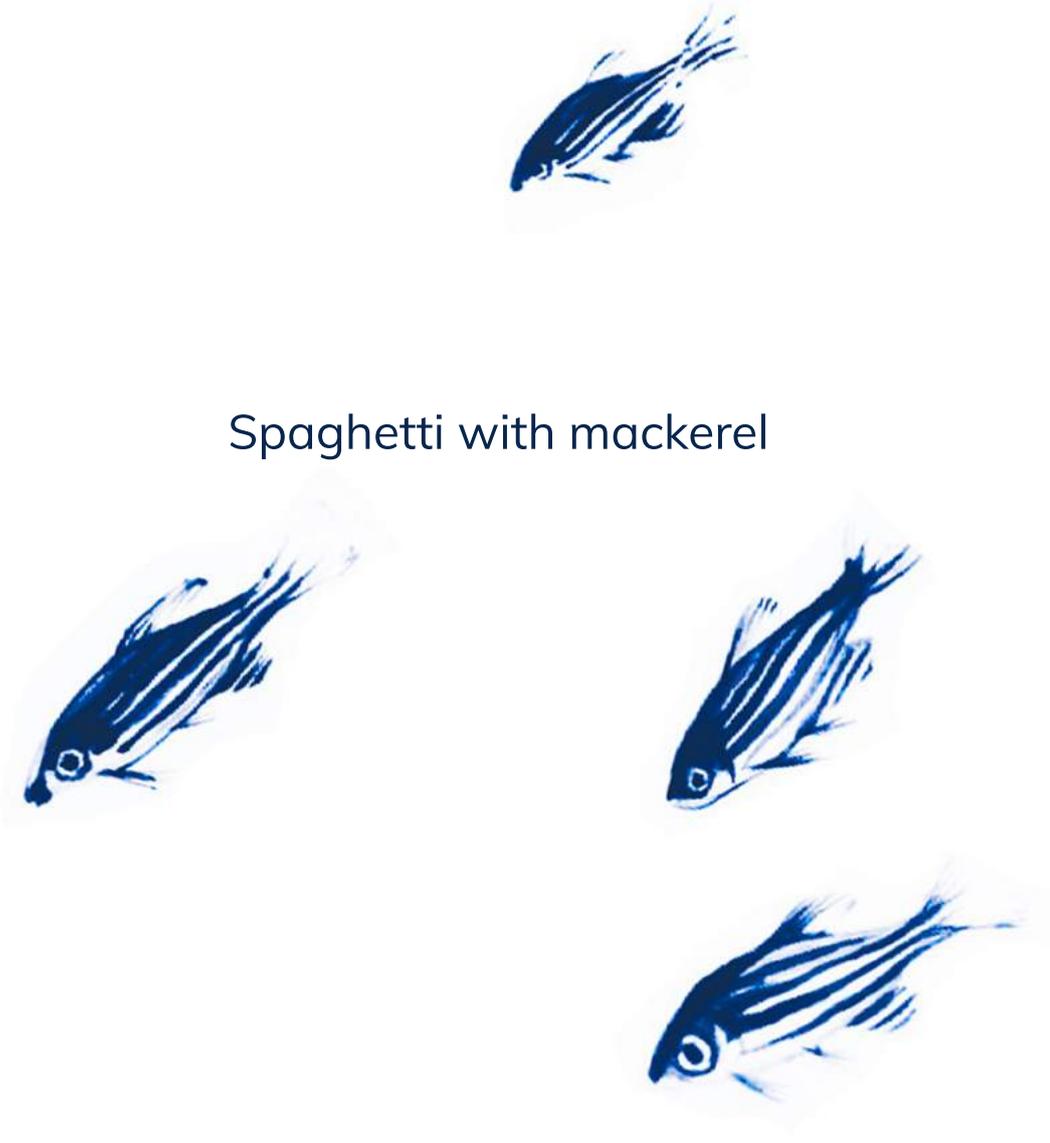
foie gras, potato balloons, charred onions and tzatziki

pastry cream



Greek salad;
Cherry tomatoes, cucumbers, capers, wild samphire,
dried Kalamata olives and feta foam

Spaghetti with mackerel



Cucina povera / Wise cuisine

There were times when people had not much choice on what to eat, which led them to improvise with whatever ingredients were available. I developed the following recipe not because I am in any kind of difficult situation but mostly because I feel some ingredients are underrated although they have a great potential in modern cookery. I will not hide the fact that canned fish is one of my favorites, which also happens to have a great nutritional value!

The recipe I present below is versatile and as you can see it follows the spirit of the cucina povera. I bet you can make it right now at home without the need of going out to buy anything! You can substitute virtually everything in this recipe, I will just give you some ideas that are coming to my mind in this particular moment:

No mackerel no problem, you have a tasty spaghetti al pomodoro fresco! No tomato? still good, spaghetti alle "vongole of the poor". Neither fish nor tomato? who would say no to a nice aglio e olio! Or you could substitute the mackerel with fresh shrimp or calamari or both, or just use the oil from the fish can for a more Roman approach! Change the stale bread for fresh parsley, or if you don't have pasta you can substitute it with boiled potatoes for a "fishermans" potato salad. Cucina povera is Wise Cuisine so be Creative!

Ingredients for 4 portions:

400g durum wheat spaghetti

80g organic cold press olive oil

6 large cloves of organic garlic

2 fresh sun ripened tomatoes

1 can of mackerel fillets in organic olive oil

150ml of good quality dry white wine

100g of stale white wheat bread

Recipe:

Peel the garlic and put it in a pot with the olive oil. Heat the oil and slowly cook the garlic cloves until they start becoming translucent, taking care not to burn it. After it is cooked process it lightly with a beamer and let it steep. Strain and reserve the infused oil.

Get a big pot of water to a rolling boil and season with salt as you would for cooking pasta.

Score the bottom of the tomatoes and place them in the boiling water for a few seconds. And afterwards peel them carefully. Optionally you can remove the seeds from the tomatoes before dicing them to the size you want.

Heat a large enough pan and add 60g of the garlic infused oil, the mackerel fillets and after a few seconds add the wine. Let the wine evaporate and add the tomatoes. Cook for 1 min. and add the spaghetti which has been cooked previously for 4 min. in the tomato blanching water. Stir and add some of the pasta water as necessary until the pasta is cooked al dente. Season to taste.

In another pan, toast the stale bread with the remaining garlic infused oil until you have a crumbly consistency. Serve the pasta and sprinkle the crumble on the top







Spaghetti with mackerel, tomato and garlic breadcrumbs

Octopus with Mavrodaphne wine and chickpea snow

For this dish I got inspired by one of the most usual ways octopus is prepared in Greece, “krasato”, meaning cooked in wine. The octopus is cooked slowly with onions, aromatics and red wine over an extended period of time to become tender. Although many would argue about the use of red wine with seafood, here it works splendidly.

Mavrodaphne is a protected designation of origin wine from the region of Achaea in northern Peloponnese. The wine bears its name from the grape it's made from, and it has a characteristic sweet flavor. Once the wine reaches a certain level of maturity, the fermentation is stopped by adding a distillate made from previous vintages. After this process, the wine, still containing residual sugar, is transferred to underground cellars to complete its maturation, where, it is "educated" by the contact with older wine using the solera method of serial blending.







Chocolate & Samos nectar tart;
almond sable, chocolate & nectar wine ganache



Gnocchi with smoked chestnuts & Sauternes;
Potato gnocchi, smoked chestnuts, sauternes and torched parmigiano

Chocolate risotto;
Chocolate risotto and oro



ange chantilly



Sweet cigar;
Cigar infused cream, chocolate ganache, hazelnut brittle



Rabbit Stifado

Γλυκόξινο(el), Agrodolce(it),
Aigre-doux(fr), Sweet & Sour(en)

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This is a traditional Greek dish, meat is stewed with a reduction sauce of Kokkari onions, vinegar, wine and various spices. Nobody can say with certainty where this dish originated but similar versions are known to exist from the easternmost to the westernmost areas of the Mediterranean.



Rabbit stifado



Pork fillet with muscat & sage

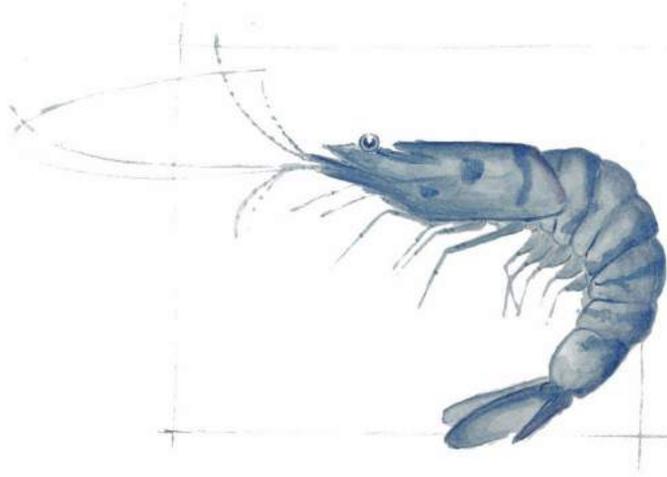


This dish has become one of my guest's favorite at my restaurant Almyra. It is the simplicity and the synergy of the local seasonal ingredients that captivates them.

+Pork
+Sage
+Samos muscat Vin doux

=delight!

The “new saganaki”



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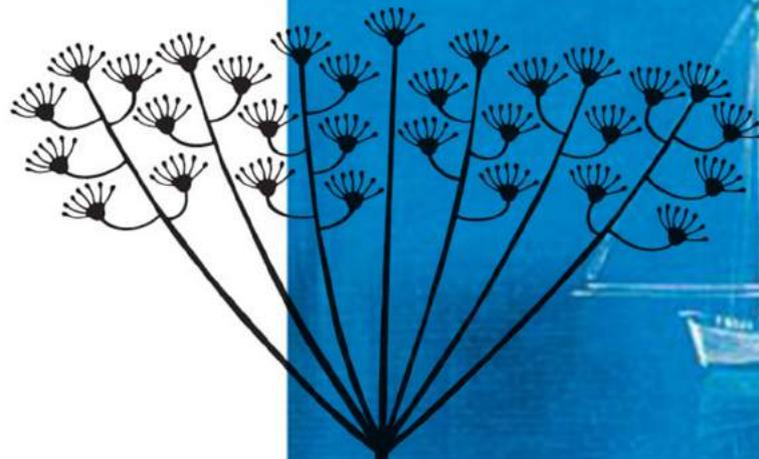
There are times when you improvise and may not get the results you were hoping for. As bad as this may sound it can also lead you to a new whole different path where you discover something new and your failure becomes inspiration for succes!

Saganaki is a Greek seafood dish and gets its name from the shallow pan in which it is cooked and served. It most probably originated in the Artaki region in Asia Minor, nowadays Erdek in the sea of Marmara, Turkey. These days it is considered a classic delicacy and can be found in almost every coastal taverna in Greece.

Saganaki is basically a seafood stew usually made with shrimps, tomato, onions, peppers, saffron and feta. Its flavor can vary from sweet to very spicy. It is usually eaten with white bread which is dipped in the flavorful sauce and is accompanied by a glass of ouzo.

While this is one of my very favorite dishes in its traditional version, I created a more modern version of it in my attempt to initially make something else. In the following page I present fried tiny shrimp from Symi island with confit tomatoes, ouzo gel and feta formed into a coral.





Pictures
Memories
Inspiration

Pimpinella anisum;
its seeds are used as the main aromatic in ouzo

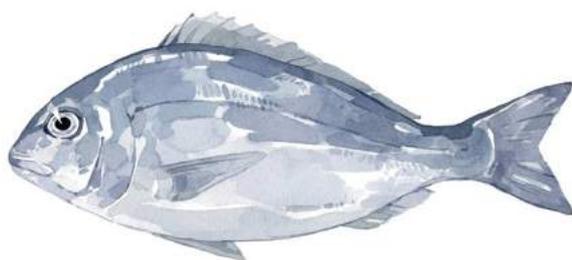


“Humans and boat”, Spyros Vasilios, 1972
A table full of meze next to the sea,
a summertime ritual and indispensable part of Greek culture





Sea bream fillet with summer vegetables



This is one of the dishes that truly showcase the essence of the Mediterranean cuisine. Vibrant colors and deep flavors, a feast for all the senses.

How can something be so powerful and subtle at the same time, how can it be rustic and at the same time have the greatest finesse is something that has yet to be answered.

One thing that becomes really obvious here -and that we the chefs tend to forget- is that when we are given such fresh ingredients the less we process them the better the end result. Because in Mediterranean cookery simplicity is the key.





Kakavia, Aegean fish soup;
langoustine, fish soup, saffron aioli and bee pollen
Crab ravioli;
Saffron bisque and ravioli stuffed with crab meat and lemon





Mousaka;
baked aubergine, potato puree and minced beef stew



Rosemary & early harvest olive oil gelato;
with caramelized white chocolate

