

Bulgarian Cuisine

There is one thing foreigners find very strange and peculiar about Bulgarian cuisine – Bulgarians put cheese, yellow cheese and yogurt on almost every dish. Bulgarian yogurt and feta cheese are considered the country's pride and joy as they are produced using a special recipe and have become known worldwide for their profound nutrition qualities. If you want to feel at home in Bulgaria, you should learn to enjoy and cook the abundance of dishes containing these ingredients. I have placed some recipes for you all to try them out.

SOUPS:

Vegetable soup with Feta cheese

Ingredients: 1/2 Lbs green beans, 1 onion, 1/2 a medium-sized cabbage, 1 small cauliflower, 1/3 Lbs Bulgarian Feta cheese, parsley, 2 Tbsp sunflower (or corn) oil, salt. Serves 4-6

Preparation: Boil the beans in salt water and strain. Keep the water. Finely chop the onion, cabbage, and cauliflower and then cook them in oil and some water. Pour everything over the bean water and add more hot water. When cooked, add the bean mash and crushed cheese. Boil for another 10 minutes and serve with finely chopped parsley!

Tip: For more piquant flavor, add a little lemon juice before serving.

Cold yogurt soup "tarrattor"

Products: 1 lb. plain yogurt, 1 1/2 cups cold water, 1 peeled and finely chopped cucumber, 2 cloves garlic, pound up, 4 tbsp vegetable or olive oil, 1 tsp

salt, 2 tbsp fresh dill, 1/2 finely chopped walnuts (optional).



Preparation: In a large bowl mix yogurt and water until smooth. Add the rest of the ingredients, stir well. Serve. Makes 6-8 servings.

Tip: In hot summer days you can add 1 cube ice in each serving bowl.

DRINK:

Cold yogurt drink – 'airan'



Products: 1 lb. plain yogurt, 1 1/2 cups cold water, 1 tsp salt
Preparation: Mix all well in a jug and serve preferably cold.

APPETIZERS:

Bulgarian Feta Cheese Baked in Foil

Ingredients: 1 Lbs Bulgarian Feta cheese, 1/4 cup butter, 1 Tbsp paprika, black pepper or seasoning (optional). Serves 4

Preparation: Cut the Bulgarian Feta cheese into medium-thick slices and place on sheets of butter-lined foil. Place cubes of butter a top each cheese piece, sprinkle with paprika and wrap. Place in a tray and bake in a moderate oven. Serve wrapped in the foil.

Tip: Crushed garlic can be used to add more flavor. This deli-

cious appetizer is a great complement for red wine!

Feta Cheese with Paprika

Ingredients: 2/3 Lbs Bulgarian Feta Cheese, 1 medium onion, 1 tsp paprika, 3 Tbsp olive oil, 2 roasted red peppers (optional), 3-4 springs of fresh parsley. Serves 4-5

Preparation: Rinse the chunk of Feta cheese out with cold water. Let it drain for about 5 minutes and then cut it into medium-thick rectangle shaped slices. Arrange the cheese onto the serving dish and sprinkle it the very finely chopped onion. Top the appetizer with the olive oil and then sprinkle the paprika. Roasted red peppers are cut lengthwise and used for decoration of that platter. Olives are another alternative for a variety.

Tip: This is an excellent accom-



pany for a glass of red wine or any wine served in room temperature!

MEALS:

Shophe Style Cheese

Ingredients: 1 Lbs Bulgarian Feta cheese, 3Tbsp butter, 1-2 tomatoes, 1-2 green peppers, freshly ground black pepper, paprika, 5 eggs. Serves 5

Preparation: Cut the cheese into five equal slices and place into butter-lined (earthenware) bowls. Top with tomato slices, pepper rings and some of the butter. Bake in a preheated oven (375F) for about 5-6 min. Break one egg on top of each bowl and add the remaining butter with pepper and paprika. Bake until a thin crust is formed. Serve the

dish hot, garnished with slices of tomato, parsley or salsa, as desired.



Tip: Use French Onion soup bowls if available. This is a light vegetarian entrée.

Fried Yellow Cheese Kashkaval (Kashkaval Pane)

Ingredients: 12oz Yellow Cheese, Kashkaval, oil for deep frying, 2 eggs, flour seasoned with salt and freshly ground black pepper, bread crumbs, flat leaf parsley to garnish.

Serves 2-3

Preparation: Cut the yellow cheese into slices about 1/2 inch thick. Gently pat off any excess moisture with paper towels. Heat the oil until a small piece of bread sizzles as soon as it is dropped in. Beat the eggs in a shallow bowl, while the oil is heating. On one plate spread some seasoned flour and some bread crumbs on another plate. Start breading: press the yellow cheese slices into the flour, coating them evenly with a thin layer of flour, shaking off any excess flour. Dip them into the egg, then into the bread crumbs, then once more into the egg, then again into the bread crumbs, covering the whole slice. Fry immediately in the hot oil until golden brown. Drain on paper towels and serve hot, garnished with parsley.

Tip: Do not let the breaded yellow cheese wait for too long, or the bread crumb coating will separate from the cheese while it is being fried.