

BORROWED RECIPES

Migrant Food Worlds in Ioannina

The Nodes and Routes

Ioannina has always been a network of trade routes between the east and the west, the north and the south of Europe, as well as Asia, Africa and Europe, along which merchants transported goods including leather, spices, metals and food for thousands of years, as well as a node and a meeting cross point. As the route network connected many ports, cities and villages, and travel happened in multiple directions, not only goods but also people, cultures, knowledge, languages, and technologies intersected along these Routes and Nodes — all of which profoundly shaped the history of the region and the city.



Food and Culture

Food preparation is recognised as “intangible cultural heritage” by UNESCO. Intangible cultural heritage refers to things like music, dance, and, yes, culinary traditions that are essential parts of culture to be celebrated and protected. Unlike tangible cultural property such as art objects or buildings, intangible cultural heritage is protected and preserved by people doing it, remembering it, teaching it, sharing it, and passing along the knowledge and skills related to it. Recipes and ways of preparing food transmit cultural knowledge and skills from one generation to the next, or from one community to another.

In memory of the late Ioannina Mayor Moises Elisaf, an intercultural meeting place and education space, the Mmm.... multicultural Cooking event took place in Ioannina on April 26th, 2023 at Pysinella mansion, organized by the Municipality.

Mixing flavors from Syria, Sierra Leone, Iraq, and Greece, as well as the Romaniote Jewish community in Ioannina, the event set and explored a range of questions.

What cultural knowledge did you hold in the form of recipes or ways of preparing food? What food-related cultural knowledge did you learn from others or pass along to others? What forms of cultural exchange did you participate in as a member of your local community/ies?

Food makers, migrants, refugees, and all residents of Ioannina discussed the roles of migration and exchange in culinary history, followed by tastings of dishes from the areas traversed by the ancient routes through and in Ioannina until today.



Romaniote Jewish community

Soup with Yogurt, Feta, and Paprika

This creamy garlic soup originally comes from the Ioannina Romaniote Jewish community. Romaniote Jews are the oldest Jewish community in Europe.

Ingredients

1 head garlic, cloves separated, peeled, and very thinly sliced

4 ½ cups water

2 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil

2 bay leaves

½ teaspoon dried oregano

1 cup plain yogurt

1 Tbsp unbleached white flour

Salt

Freshly ground black pepper

¼ lb crumbled feta cheese, for serving

2 medium eggs

Paprika, for dusting

For the croutons

2 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil

3 or 4 thick slices country bread, cut into cubes

Preparation

- Bring the water to a boil together with the garlic, 2 Tbsp olive oil, bay leaves, and oregano and simmer for 15 minutes.
- Beat the yogurt with 1 Tbsp unbleached white flour until it is smooth and free of lumps. Gradually add a ladleful of hot soup, then slowly pour the mixture back into the hot soup. Simmer for five minutes, but do not boil. Remove the bay leaves. Add the feta, simmer for two or three more minutes, then puree in a blender until smooth and creamy.
- In a bowl, beat the eggs until they are frothy. Slowly stir in a ladleful of hot soup, then pour the mixture back into the soup. Heat through, but do not boil, or the soup may curdle. Season with salt and black pepper. Pour the soup into four individual soup bowls, dust with paprika, and serve with fried croutons.

To make the croutons

- To make the croutons, heat 2 Tbsp olive oil in a frying pan and add the diced bread in a single layer. Cook over a moderately high heat until they are golden both sides. Remove from the frying pan and set aside.





Iraq - Chicken with rice and raisins

Ingredients: Chicken, rice, raisins, peas, angel hair pasta, carrots, onions, potatoes, oil, salt and pepper

Preparation

- Preheat oven to 350°F (175°C).
- Brown chicken in oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Remove from skillet and set aside.
- Sauté onions, carrots, and potatoes in the same skillet until slightly softened.
- Add rice, peas, and angel hair pasta to the skillet, stir well. Add enough water to cover the ingredients by about 1 inch.
- Bring mixture to a boil, then reduce heat to low. Add raisins and stir.
- Place chicken on top of the rice mixture, cover with a lid or foil. Bake in the preheated oven for 45-50 minutes or until chicken is fully cooked and rice is tender.
- Remove from the oven and let rest for 5-10 minutes before serving.

Sierra Leone - Cassava

Ingredients: Cassava leaves, chicken, onions, water, peanut butter, bouillon cubes, oil, salt and pepper, rice (optional)

Preparation

- Clean and chop cassava leaves, removing tough stems.
- Season chicken with salt and pepper.
- Brown chicken in oil in a large pot over medium-high heat. Remove from pot and set aside.
- Sauté onions in the same pot until translucent.
- Add cassava leaves and water to cover them. Bring to a boil.
- Crumble bouillon cubes into the pot and simmer for about 1 hour, stirring occasionally.
- In a separate bowl, mix peanut butter with water to create a smooth paste.
- Add peanut butter mixture to the pot and stir well. Simmer for another 15-20 minutes or until the sauce thickens and chicken is fully cooked.
- Serve cassava leaves with chicken and peanut butter over rice.



Syria - Molokhia with Chicken

Ingredients

Molokhia leaves, chicken (cut into pieces), bouillon cubes (chicken flavor), garlic, citric acid, oil, salt and pepper, rice, lemons, coriander powder, onions, cinnamon stick, bay leaf, dried lemon slices (loumi/loomi)

Preparation

- Sauté chicken in oil until browned, remove and set aside.
- Sauté onion and garlic, add cinnamon stick, bay leaf, coriander powder, bouillon cubes, and cook for 1-2 minutes.
- Add molokhia leaves and enough water to cover by 1 inch. Simmer for 30-40 minutes.
- Cook rice according to preferred method.
- Add chicken back to pot and cook for another 10-15 minutes.
- Add sliced lemons, citric acid, and dried lemon slices, and cook for 5-10 minutes.
- Serve molokhia with chicken over rice.

