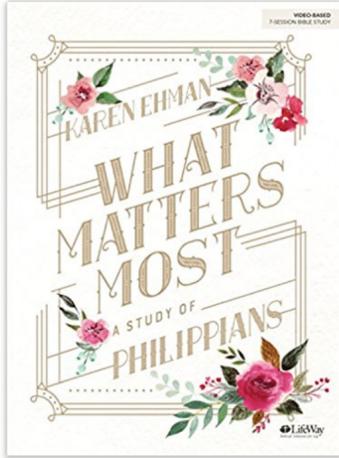


Macedonian Food Ideas and Recipes from Karen Ehman



To celebrate the release of my Bible study *What Matters Most: A Study of Philippians*, I thought I'd spice things up a bit (pun intended) by presenting some recipes from the Macedonian region where this church began centuries ago.

The ancient city of Philippi was located near the present municipality Filippi. This village is part of the region of East Macedonia and Thrace in Kavala, Greece. Popular foods of this region include potatoes, eggplant, ground meat, peppers, carrots, okra, rice and onion. Often dishes of this region are served with a side of plain yogurt. Pita bread (very thin flat bread) is also a common staple.

If you want to hold a Macedonian feast—maybe as you and some friends hold a study of my new book (hint, hint)—you could simply secure some store-bought Mediterranean foods to serve such as pita bread, hummus, dishes made with eggplant, Baklava (a Greek sweet pastry), or even Greek yogurt.

Or, kick it up a notch order some take-out from an authentic Greek restaurant.

Or, if you are willing to whip on an apron, you could also take a shot at whipping up some of the following regional recipes.

Enjoy!

Karen

Malidzano Eggplant Dip

Serve this unusual, but delicious spread with whole grain pita bread or crackers.

Ingredients:

3 medium-sized eggplant
3 T. olive oil
2/3 C. finely ground walnuts
1/2 t. salt
1/4 t. cracker black pepper
3 cloves fresh garlic, minced (or 3 t. fresh minced)
1/4 C. olive oil
2 cups crumbled feta cheese

Instructions:

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Wash and dry the eggplants and pierce them with a fork. Using a pastry brush, coat the eggplants with olive oil, place them on a cookie sheet that has been lined with parchment paper, and put them in the oven. Roast 30-35 minutes until the skins are lightly browned and the flesh of the eggplants are soft. Allow them to cool and then carefully peel them. Cut the flesh in chunks and place them in a colander to drain for 10-15 minutes.

Using a food processor, puree the eggplant along with the walnuts, garlic, feta cheese, and olive oil until nearly smooth with just slight chunks remaining. Transfer to a bowl. Stir in salt and pepper. Cover and cool in the refrigerator at least 4 hours.

Meat and Potato Gratin (Macedonian Moussaka)

Traditional Moussaka is made from either eggplant or potatoes. This one is a potato version that includes ground beef. Think of it as a Mediterranean casserole!

Ingredients:

3 T. olive oil
1 medium onion, peeled and chopped
1/2 C. red pepper, diced
2 cloves garlic, finely minced (or 2 t. minced, jarred fresh garlic)
1 pound lean ground beef
2 t. paprika
6 medium sized golden potatoes, peeled and sliced thin
1/2 t. salt
1/8 t. pepper
2 3/4 cups whole milk
3 eggs
1 1/2 C. grated 4 cheese blend (with Romano, Asiago, Parmesan, and Mozzarella)
Cooking spray

Instructions:

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Sauté onion, red pepper, and garlic for 3-5 minutes. Add ground beef and paprika and fry until beef is browned. Remove from heat, drain if needed, and set aside.

Spray a 13x9-inch baking dish with cooking spray. Layer half of the sliced potatoes and sprinkle with half the salt and pepper. Spread the ground beef mixture on top of the potatoes. Top with half of the cheese. Spread remaining potatoes over beef, and sprinkle with remaining salt and pepper. Top with remaining cheese. In a separate bowl, whisk the milk and eggs together until thoroughly combined. Pour the milk and egg mixture over the potatoes. Cover tightly with foil. Bake for 45 minutes, or until potatoes are tender. Remove foil and continue to bake until top is golden, about 20-30 minutes more. Serves 8.

Spanakopita (Greek Spinach and Cheese Pie)

One of the region's most famous dishes. Even people who usually don't care for spinach love this flaky and tasty pie. It's rich, so you just need a little square to give a lot of flavor. This recipe is from my niece Krystan whose family is Greek.

Ingredients:

2 1/2 pounds fresh spinach, chopped (or frozen chopped spinach, thawed and drained very well)
3/4 C. olive oil, divided
3 large onions, diced
1/2 C. chopped fresh parsley
1/2 C. chopped fresh dill (or 3 tablespoons dried dill weed)
1/4 t. ground nutmeg
1/2 t. salt
1/4 t. ground black pepper
12 ounces feta cheese, crumbled
4 large eggs, lightly beaten
12 ounces ricotta cheese
1/4 C. butter, melted
1 pound phyllo pastry sheets
Cooking spray

Instructions:

Wash and drain the chopped spinach very well, blotting with paper towel. In a large frying pan or Dutch oven, sauté the onions in 1/2 C. olive oil until tender. Add the spinach, parsley, and dill. Cook for 5 to 10 minutes until the spinach is heated well and wilted. Add the nutmeg, salt, and pepper. (If using frozen spinach, you will want to cook until excess moisture evaporates so the spinach is not over-wet.) Remove from heat and set aside to cool.

In a large mixing bowl, combine the feta, eggs, and ricotta cheese. Stir in the spinach mixture and mix well. Combine the 1/4 C. melted butter with the remaining 1/4 cup olive oil in a bowl. Coat two 9x13-inch rectangular pans with cooking spray. Gently remove the phyllo roll from the plastic sleeve. They are packaged in 12x18-inch sheets. Using a sharp knife, cut the sheets in half to make two stacks of 9x12-inch sheets. To prevent drying, cover one stack with wax paper and a damp paper towel while working with the other.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Brushing each sheet with the butter/olive oil mixture before placing in pans, layer about 10 sheets of phyllo in each pan. Add half of the spinach mixture to each pan and pack down well. Layer another 10 phyllo sheets on top of the spinach mixtures in each pan, making sure to brush each sheet well with butter/olive oil mixture. Before baking, lightly score the top layer of phyllo dough with a knife but do not cut into the spinach mixture. Bake until the pie turns a nice golden brown approximately 20-25 minutes. (NOTE: May be made ahead and frozen, wrapped tightly with foil before baking. If frozen, bake for a total of 40-45 minutes.) Serves 24.

Greek Honey Dumplings (Loukoumades)

This is another recipe my niece and her family enjoy. Well worth the time and effort to prepare.

Ingredients:

2 C. warm water (110-115 degrees)
2 1/2 T. sugar
2 packages dry yeast
1 C. lukewarm whole milk
2 T. vegetable oil
4 C. flour (or enough until a thick, pancake-like batter consistency is reached)
1/2 t. salt
Additional vegetable oil (for frying—peanut oil is best)
Cooking spray

Syrup:

1 C. honey
1/3 C. water
1/3 C. finely chopped walnuts

Garnish:

1 t. ground cinnamon
Sesame seeds

Instructions:

In a large mixing bowl, dissolve the yeast in the warm water along with the sugar. Let stand 5 minutes. Stir in milk and the 2 T. vegetable oil. Add flour and salt and mix well until a smooth batter is obtained. Cover with a towel and let the batter rise in a warm place until it doubles in volume, about 1 1/2 - 2 hours.

Heat oil for frying over medium high heat (about 325 degrees) in a deep saucepan (cast iron works best). Coat a tablespoon with cooking spray and spoon out a dough ball about 2-inches round and place into the hot oil.

Repeat until there are enough dumplings to comfortably fill the surface area of the saucepan, without overcrowding. Use a slotted spoon to turn them after 2 minutes and cook 1 minute longer. Watch them, as they burn easily. Drain on a paper towel. Transfer to a platter.

To make honey syrup, heat honey and water in a small saucepan over medium heat and skim off any foam that develops on top. Boil over medium heat for 5 minutes. Add walnuts. Cool slightly. Drizzle syrup over the dumplings and lightly dust with cinnamon and sprinkle with sesame seeds. Enjoy!

Palatschinke (Crepes) with Fruit and Chocolate-hazelnut Spread

A sweet and simple dessert. You can keep the crepes warm by placing them in a slow cooker on low heat and layering them with parchment paper between each crepe.

Palatschinke (Crepes)

Ingredients:

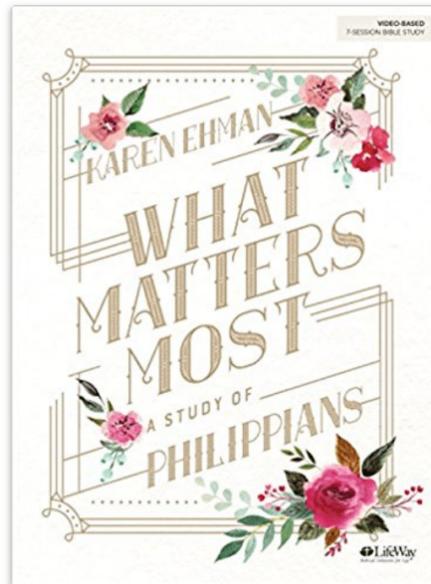
2 eggs
1/8 t. salt
2 t. sugar
2 cups of whole milk
4 cups all-purpose flour
1/3 cup plain sparkling mineral water
3 T. vegetable oil
Cooking spray

Filling Options:

Sliced bananas
Sliced strawberries
Mandarin oranges
Sliced, peeled kiwi
Chopped walnuts or pecans
Chocolate-hazelnut spread (such as Nutella brand)
Cream cheese frosting

Instructions:

Mix the eggs, salt, sugar and milk. Add flour and stir just until well incorporated. Stir in the mineral water and oil. Let the mixture rest for 15 minutes. Spray a medium hot griddle (350 degrees) with cooking spray. Ladle batter on hot griddle 1/4 cup at a time. Cook 2 minutes, or just until golden. Flip and cook 1 minute longer. To serve, spread with cream cheese frosting or chocolate-hazelnut spread and top with fruit or nuts. Roll up and enjoy!



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Over 7 sessions, study the ever-relevant Letter of Philippians to get to know Jesus on a deeper level, turn your worries into worship, and develop gospel-centered tools for navigating relational conflict and thriving in Christian love. Explore your vertical relationship with God while learning to adopt the mind of Christ.

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