

Greek cuisine is characterized as Mediterranean, as it is based on dietary patterns that promote the use of fresh, seasonal ingredients and healthy cooking methods, which highlight the natural flavor of the products. The basic principles of the Mediterranean diet reflect a diet rich in antioxidants, vitamins and healthy fats. However, Greek cuisine, although it is part of the Mediterranean diet, also maintains special characteristics that make it unique, as it combines local traditions, cultural influences and unique cooking techniques that have been developed over the centuries. Greek cuisine is not limited only to everyday nutrition, but is also an element of social and cultural expression, connecting people in celebrations, religious ceremonies and family gatherings, based on traditional methods of food preparation, which are passed down from generation to generation.

Greek cuisine, despite being influenced by various cultures and peoples that have passed through the region, such as the Byzantines, the Romans, the Ottomans and the Venetians, manages to maintain its ancient roots, offering a unique combination of flavors and cooking techniques. Traditional recipes remain unchanged in many regions of the country, while, at the same time, modern Greek cuisine evolves and adapts to modern dietary trends and needs. Greek cuisine is distinguished by the wide use of basic food products, which incorporate elements from the rich natural production of the country. Olive oil occupies a central position, which is widely used in almost all preparations and is an integral part of the dietary culture of the Greeks. In addition to olive oil, basic ingredients of the Greek diet are cereals, pasta, meat, most famously the "[souvlaki](#)", vegetables, fruits and legumes, while special importance is given to fish and seafood, which are widely consumed due to Greece's geographical location and direct access to the Mediterranean Sea. A well-known and very tasty dish is "[vinegar octopus](#)", an invaluable appetizer that accompanies tsipouro or ouzo. In addition, important products of Greek gastronomy are olives, tomatoes, cheeses (such as feta and mizithra), with which the well-known "[village](#)" salad is made. Other vegetables used in Greek cuisine are eggplants, zucchini, onions, garlic, peppers and various herbs, which give a special taste and aroma to the dishes. Famous dishes of Greek cuisine, with legumes or vegetables are "[moussaka](#)", a dish with potatoes, eggplants and minced meat in layers, "[fava](#)" a type of mashed peeled lentils, "[black-eyed](#)" beans with wild greens. Yogurt, with its special texture and intense taste, is an integral part of the Greek diet, while lemon juice is often used to enhance the freshness of dishes. On the everyday Greek table, bread, but also traditional pies, also occupy a central place. Pies of all kinds, cheese pies, [vegetable pies](#), cabbage pies, meat pies.

Greek sweets are characterized by the use of nuts, honey and sesame. These ingredients are used to make the traditional sweet "[halvas](#)". Fruits, mainly seasonal, are often used to make the well-known "[spoon sweets](#)". These sweets are usually made with fresh fruit cooked in a syrup with sugar and honey, and are offered as a dessert or as a treat. Another important aspect of Greek cuisine and culture are mezedes, which are a collective name for a variety of small meals, which are usually served in social occasions, creating a special atmosphere of hospitality and camaraderie. Mezedes include a wide range of dishes, from traditional appetizers to more elaborate dishes, which are consumed in small quantities and combined with drinks such as wine, ouzo or "[tsipouro](#)". The culture of meze has deep roots in Greek society and is an integral part of everyday life, as well as social events. They are usually served in special establishments, such as meze restaurants, ouzo restaurants and tsipouradikas, which have been designed as social gathering places.