New Greek Cuisine

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Greek Salad (Granita)

Ingredients

- 500 g tomatoes, quartered
- 5 g capers
- 40 g calamata olives
- 120 g cucumbers
- 8 g salt
- 30 g extra virgin olive oil
- 40 g onion
- 100 g feta cheese
- 2 g dry oregano
- 50 g basic syrup

Method

1. Mix all ingredients together with a handheld blender until mixture becomes homogenized.
2. Put wet muslin on a strainer and empty the mixture into the strainer. Let it drip for 1 minute. Throw away the first water. Let it continue dripping in the fridge over a strainer lined with muslin for 4 h. Freeze this mixture in a Paco container.
3. Once frozen, pass it twice through a Pacojet. The result will be a white granita.

Cassoulet

Ingredients for duck confit

- 1 duck leg
- 10 g cooked duck skin
- 30 g demi glace
- 50 g onion, thinly sliced
- 30 g duck fat

FIGURE 109.1 Greek salad (granita).
(Photo: Katerina Avgerinou)
Ingredients for duck confit balls in white bean paste

- 150 g white beans (from previous method)
- 20 g extra virgin olive oil
- 25 g lemon juice
- 5 g salt
- 50 g flour
- 3 g baking powder

Method

1. Mix all ingredients in the thermomix to make a thick dough.
2. Take some bean paste, roll out on parchment paper to 4 mm thickness. Place atop the duck confit balls and cover them completely with the dough, forming round croquettes.
3. Keep in the fridge until needed.

Ingredients for white bean cream atop cassoulet

- 100 g sunflower oil
- 200 g beans, soaked overnight in water
- 200 g bacon, chopped
- 100 g duck sausage brunoise
- 10 g onion, chopped
- 5 g garlic, chopped
- 50 g white wine
- 70 g carrot, chopped
- 40 g leeks, chopped
- 50 g celery, chopped
- 60 g onion, chopped
- 10 g garlic, whole
- 10 g coriander seeds, toasted and whole
- 2 l water
- 180 g butter
- 300 g heavy cream
- 4 g white truffle oil
- 7 g salt, white pepper
- 5 g lemon juice
- 15 g xeres vinegar

Method

1. In a casserole, heat oil and sauté bacon and sausage until it renders some fat. Add onion, beans and garlic and sauté for a couple of minutes. Deglaze with the white wine until evaporated.
2. Empty the casserole with the bean mixture into a pressure cooker and add the water. Put all the remaining...
New Greek Cuisine

Ingredients (from the 70 g of carrot to the 10 g of coriander) in a muslin bag and place in the cooker.

3. Bring cooker to full pressure. Wait until it whistles and lower heat to 1. Cook for 45 minutes. Strain and keep the liquid.

4. In a pan, heat cream and butter until brought to boil.

5. Put the beans into the thermomix and add the cream mixture. Heat until smooth. Correct taste by adding salt, pepper, truffle oil, lemon juice and vinegar. Add some cooking liquid if needed. Strain and keep warm in a pastry bag.

Ingredient for pork crackling

- 200 g pork belly

Method

1. Cook the pork belly in a vacuum bag with some sunflower oil at 93 °C for 12 h.
2. Next day, shred the meat into fine strings and deep fry at 190 °C until golden brown. Season with salt and keep over kitchen paper in a dry place.

Ingredients for tomato jam

- 500 g tomato flesh, no seeds or skin
- 2 g garlic brunoise
- 60 g onion brunoise
- 100 g extra virgin olive oil
- 30 g sugar
- 4 g salt (or according to the taste of the tomatoes)

Method

1. In a pan, heat olive oil and saute onion and garlic without coloring.
2. Add the tomato flesh, salt and sugar and bring to the boil. Immediately reduce to low simmer and slowly cook for one to two hours until all liquids have evaporated.
3. Correct taste with salt and sugar. It needs to be quite sweet.

Ingredients for presentation

- tomato jam
- rolled duck confit balls
- pork sausage, cooked and cut brunoise.
- white bean puree
- mange tout beans, blanched for 30 seconds and julienned
- pork crackling
- thyme flowers, green cress

Method

1. Deep fry the duck confit balls at 170 °C until golden in color.
2. On a plate, spoon some tomato jam. Sprinkle some pork sausage brunoise and some julienned mange tout.
3. Place one fried duck confit ball and place some white bean puree on top.
4. Sprinkle with some pork crackling.
5. Decorate with green cress and thyme flowers.

Dolmas

For the crispy vine leaves

- 10 pieces of nice and whole vine leaves, preserved in brine
- 1 l simple syrup 1/1
- zest from 2 lemons

Method

1. Wash the vine leaves thoroughly until brine has been removed.
2. Put syrup in a big bowl and dip the vine leaves inside until covered with the syrup.
3. Take them out one by one and dry them very well on both sides on parchment paper. Sprinkle each leaf with lemon zest on one side only.
4. Put the leaves on dehydrator trays. Each tray should be wrapped with film.
5. Dehydrate at 55 °C for at least 12 h. Use directly from the dehydrator when needed.

For the dolmas mixture

- 75 g extra virgin olive oil
- 30 g ham fat, melted
- 200 g onion, brunoise
- 5 g garlic, minced
- 110 g scallions, minced
- 50 g vine leaves (finely chopped without stalks)
- 280 g quinoa blanched for 10 minutes
- 280 g chicken stock
- 10 g sea salt

Method

1. In a big pan, heat the olive oil and ham fat. Saute onions, scallions and garlic without coloring.
2. Add quinoa and saute.
3. Gradually add the chicken stock and salt.
4. Finish off by adding the vine leaves, stir and put mixture in a bowl over an ice bath.

To finish dolmas mixture with taste

- 1.2 g white pepper
- 4 g lemon zest
- 11 g mint
For the yoghurt lemon sauce

- 300 g egg and lemon sauce
- 75 g yoghurt
- 25 g syrup

Mix all the ingredients in a bowl with a whisk.

To serve each plate

1. On a plate put 50 g of quinoa mixture.
2. Put three dollops of yogurt on the quinoa.
3. Cover with a crispy vine leaf.

Soft Boiled Egg

For the vanilla microwave cake

- 100 g flour
- 100 g sugar
- 100 g whole eggs
- 100 g butter, melted
- 7 g baking powder
- 60 g milk
- 40 g vanilla essence

Method

1. Put eggs and sugar in the mixer and beat until smooth.
2. Mix flour and baking powder very well.
3. Mix butter, milk and vanilla essence very well.
4. Add the liquids to the egg mixture and mix. Then add the flour mixture and mix again. Keep mixture in the fridge.
New Greek Cuisine

For the mango yolk

- 300 g mango puree, strained
- 140 g passion fruit puree, strained
- 55 g Cointreau
- 7 g vanilla essence

Method

1. Mix all the ingredients together.
2. Empty mixture into 5 ml syringes.

For the coconut sorbet

- 500 g coconut puree, strained
- 165 g water
- 10 g glucose
- 30 g inverted sugar
- 4 g super neutrose

Method

1. Put water, glucose and inverted sugar into a pan.
2. When water mix reaches 45 °C, add super neutrose and mix until dissolved with a hand blender.
3. Bring to boil whisking constantly for 3 minutes.
4. Strain and put the mixture in an ice bath.
5. When it cools, mix with the coconut mixture and put it in a Pacojet overnight in the fridge.
6. On the following day, freeze completely. Spin in the Pacojet machine, set in plastic egg molds and freeze again.
7. Once set, scoop out a small portion of the coconut sorbet. Freeze again, and once set, adhere two pieces into one to make a whole egg.

For the chocolate butter

- 500 g cocoa butter
- 500 g Ivoire chocolate
- 70 g Jivara chocolate
- 0.2 g red color for chocolate

Method

1. Melt cocoa butter in the microwave.
2. Add the chocolates to the melted hot cocoa butter.
3. Let stand for 2 minutes and mix.
4. Add the color, mix with a whisk and heat the mixture again in the microwave for one minute.
5. Strain and set aside.
6. Hold the coconut “eggs” with a pin, dip into the chocolate butter twice and keep in the freezer.

To finish (for one egg)

- dehydrated coconut flakes for “salt”
- ground tonka beans for “pepper”
- 1 coconut egg
- one 5 ml syringe full of mango mixture
- vanilla cake
**Orange Explosion**

For the mixture
- 500 g orange juice, strained
- 80 g syrup
- 5 g Cointreau
- 10 g lemon juice
- 15 drops of orange essence

For the cocoa butter
- 200 g guanaja 70%
- 200 g cocoa butter

For the golden powder
- 15 g malto texturas
- 7 g gold powder

Method

1. Mix all ingredients from “For the mixture” and form into hemispheric molds. Freeze.
2. Once frozen, combine two pieces to make a sphere. Freeze again over dry ice.
3. Drop into cocoa butter mixture and leave in the fridge.
4. After an hour, pass through the mixture of gold powder and malto and leave in the fridge for 2 h to thaw.
5. Put dry ice in a bowl and cover with orange leaves. Place orange spheres on top. Add some boiling water infused with orange essence over the bowl and enjoy while it is still smoking.

A Few Words by the Chef(s)

**What Is Your Professional Background?**

We both studied Culinary Arts in Manhattan, New York in 2002. Ever since, we have worked in many different kitchens; the most notable was a stage that Georgianna completed in the famous El Bulli restaurant in Spain. Nikos has also worked in Amsterdam in different places. Then in 2007, we started a private cheffing business that evolved gradually into a restaurant. Funky Gourmet opened its doors as a restaurant in November 2009.

**How Would You Define Your Cooking Style?**

In Funky Gourmet, we create carefully designed degustation menus inspired by unique local products, captured at the peak of their seasonality and freshness. We aspire to introduce our guests to our own view of a refined Greek cuisine. It’s a combination of Funky and Gourmet – fine dining in an imaginative and exciting way!

**The Recipe(s) You Are the Proudest of?**

Every time is different, but for sure we love our “Greek salad”, which is a signature dish that is always present in all our degustation menus.

**What Ingredients Inspire You More Particularly?**

We get inspiration from many different ingredients! We love our local cheeses, the fresh buttermilk from Crete, which has a subtle flavor of sheep milk and grass! We love the lamb from...
the northern part of Greece, and at the same time we love Asian flavors like lime, ginger and lemongrass with their unique aromas and acidity. They go very well in Greek cooking.

**How to Be Creative and Keep “Fashion” in Cooking?**

This is a big challenge in our occupation! I believe that as in every form of art, you need to find yourself in a constant search for inspiration from everything, i.e. traveling, reading, trying, hard work, experimentation and documentation.

**What Do You Do Now That You Did Not Do Ten Years Ago?**

Ten years ago, we were just starting off our adventure in the restaurant business, introducing Funky Gourmet to the public. As is the case with every new endeavor, we were excited to show our work and ideas while at the same time, being anxious about the feedback we would receive. Over the years, and through hard work, we managed to create a team of highly accomplished professionals, which nowadays, after having successfully launched two accredited restaurants, “Funky Gourmet” in Athens and “Opso” in London, allows us to balance our time between the chef and entrepreneur roles. We have now embarked on our new endeavor, called “Pitta Bun”. The concept is a fast food but slowly cooked walk-in food joint where we aspire to give a different meaning to the fast food concept.

**What Would You Like to Be Able to Do in 10 Years That You Are Not Able to Do Now?**

A successful professional is someone who through his work is able to inspire others and promote his field to new levels. With this in mind, we hope that our hospitality group MGFG (www.moderngreekfoodgroup.com), which is already active in Greece and London, will be established as a worldwide hospitality company, offering a variety of services that span from fine dining to everyday food and helping others with our ideas through our consulting business “Horeca Consulting – Restaurants and beyond”.

**Do You Collaborate with Scientists? Other People (Artists, Designers, Engineers, …)?**

In order to build a successful business and produce quality results, you need to combine expertise from a number of fields, each one acting as a building block of the end result. We actually collaborate with a number of professionals, like architects for the internal design of our restaurants, graphic artists for the design of our marketing material, and artists and pottery makers for most of our plates and serving tools. Each of our establishments needs to welcome our customers and reflect the idea behind its existence. At the same time, our dishes are unique and deserve the right utensils to showcase them and bring out their uniqueness.

**What Is Your Strategy to Innovate/Create New Dishes?**

We believe that our dishes should create strong emotions in our guests, as if they were in a theatrical play, so we are vigilant to pay attention to every single detail. The starting point of every new dish is inspiration. Inspiration can be found everywhere; in art, nature, our childhood memories, during a walk through the city. Once we grasp the idea, we will work hard on arriving at the final flavor, texture, presentation and accompanying wine or drink that will become part of our degustation menu. Then we search for the ideal, and often custom-made, plate to serve it in, while at the same time we create a “story” to narrate to our guests, aiming to offer a comprehensive experience. This procedure may take from as long as one month to even a whole year to accomplish.