

**Arni Yiouvetsi
(Roast Lamb with Orzo)**

Yiouvetsi is a typical Greek dish of several taverns and restaurants as well as a speciality served at home. The dish takes its name from the dark red round terracotta dish which is used to bake it in. Some taverns serve yiouvetsi in small individual earthenware dishes, bringing it to the table straight from the oven. Somehow this adds to the taste of the dish. Yiouvetsi is flavoursome and satisfying especially in the cold winter months. The combination of the meat whether that may be lamb, veal, beef or goat with the pasta, tomatoes and stock that soaks the pasta makes this a very special dish. Pasta used is orzo which in Greek is called manestra or kritharaki which is a tear shaped pasta. This is a uniquely classic Greek dish which when baked in a pot, casserole dish or any other baking dish can be served from the casserole or turned out onto a large platter.

Ingredients**Serves 4**

1kg leg or shoulder lamb, boned, trimmed of fat, cut into large serving portions
2-3 garlic cloves, cut into slithers
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 small onion, finely chopped
50g butter
3tbsp extra- virgin olive oil
1 x 400g canned tomatoes or 500g ripe tomatoes, de skinned and de seeded, finely chopped
1tbsp dried oregano (rigani)
1.2ltrs hot meat or chicken stock or water
500g orzo, manestra, kritharaki, broken spaghetti or broken macaroni
50g grated kefalotyri, kasseri or parmesan

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 190°C /170°C fan/ gas mark 5
2. Place the lamb in a large roasting tin or shallow casserole dish. With a small sharp knife make slits in the lamb in different places and insert the slithers of garlic in the slits. Sprinkle the meat with salt and pepper, add the onion, butter and olive oil. Bake in a preheated oven to brown for about 20 minutes. Turn the pieces from time to time to brown evenly. Add the tomatoes, oregano and 600ml of boiling stock or water.
3. Continue baking the yiouvetsi for another 50 minutes stirring it from time to time until the meat is tender and the sauce thickens. When the 50 minutes are over add another 300ml of boiling stock or water and add the pasta into the dish. Season to taste.
4. Turn the heat down to 180°C/ 160°C fan/ gas mark 4 and bake covered for a further 30-40 minutes or until the pasta is tender and has absorbed all the liquid. Add a little water if necessary.
5. Serve immediately on a large platter sprinkle with the cheese.

Note:

You may use veal or beef instead of lamb but you may need to cook the beef longer.