



RECIPE OF THE WEEK: 30/01/2023
Giouzlemedes me Feta ke Myzithra
(Pastries with Feta and Myzithra Cheese)

This is a simple but exceptional dish from Asia Minor which is served in many parts of Greece and islands such as Lesbos and Mytilini. The filling is made of feta or myzithra or a mixture of both and it gives off an aroma of fresh or dried mint. The dough has to be rolled as thin as possible to result in a crispy pastry when it is fried. The pastry is folded into a parcel which is similar to the shape of an envelope. The word giouzlemedes is Turkish. Its meaning portrays the special way in which the pastries are fried.

Ingredients
(Makes 20 parcels)

For the dough

500g plain flour
pinch of salt
1 tsp sugar
175ml tepid water and a little more if needed
75ml olive oil
1 tbsp white vinegar or lemon juice

For the filling

200g feta, crumbled
200g myzithra, crumbled
2 medium free-range eggs
a small bunch of fresh mint, finely chopped or 1 tbsp dried mint
freshly ground black pepper

For frying

olive oil or vegetable oil

For sprinkling

sesame seeds

To serve

Greek thyme honey (optional)



Method

1. Sieve the flour in a large, deep bowl and add the salt and sugar. Stir well with a large wooden spoon or mix with a whisk.
2. Pour the water into another bowl and with a whisk or fork, stir in the olive oil and vinegar or lemon juice for 1 minute. Add this wet mixture to the bowl of the dry ingredients. Knead the ingredients with your hands or use an electric hand mixer to combine until the dough is smooth and elastic. The dough is ready if it does not stick to your hands.
3. Cover the top of the bowl with cling film and leave it in the fridge to rest for at least one hour.

4. In another bowl, mix the feta, myzithra, eggs, mint and a generous amount of freshly ground black pepper. There is no need to add salt as the feta is salty. Mix using a spoon until the mixture is well combined.
5. Take the dough out of the fridge and place it onto a lightly floured surface or wooden board. Separate it into twenty small balls of equal size.
6. Using a rolling pin, flatten each dough ball to form square shapes approximately 10cmx20cm.
7. In the middle of each piece place 2 tablespoons of the feta and myzithra mixture. Starting from the right-hand side, fold the pastry into the centre of the square and do the same on the left, top and bottom to form a parcel. With a little water, brush the pastry parcels at the point where the sides join to ensure that they are well sealed.
8. Transfer the parcels onto a lightly floured tray and place a tea-towel over them to make sure they do not dry out.
9. Make twenty giouzlemedes following the same procedure.
10. If using, sprinkle some sesame seeds on the top of the parcels.
11. Pour olive oil or vegetable oil into a frying pan or casserole until it is 1/3 full. Heat until hot and to test to see if the oil is ready, drop a small piece of bread into it. If it floats to the top, it means it is hot enough. Fry the parcels in stages, 3-4 at a time for 2 minutes on each side until golden.
12. Take the parcels out the pan or casserole with a slotted spoon and place onto a platter, covered with kitchen towel to absorb the excess oil.
13. Another method is to brush the parcels with egg wash and bake in a pre-heated oven at 180°C/160°C fan/gas 4 for 20 minutes until they are crispy and golden-brown.
14. Serve hot with Greek thyme honey.