

Μαστίχα Χίου

Chios Mastiha ^{PDO}
More than 20 Great Recipes
for the World's Healthiest Spice



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VOYAGE TO THE EAST MEDITERRANEAN

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Chios Mastiha, a PDO Product

On 1992 the European Union enacted 2081/92 regulation (substituted by 510/2006) for the protection of the designation of origin of agricultural products.

“ Protected Designation of Origin – PDO ” is the name of a specific region or in extraordinary cases the name of a country, which is used in the description of an agricultural product or a food originating from this specified location or country. The quality or the characteristics of the above are mainly or exclusively due to the geographical environment, including the natural and human factors and the production, alteration and process which take place in the delimited geographical area.

Since 1997, Chios Mastiha has been identified as a **Protected Designation of Origin product (PDO)**, subject to No.123/1997 Regulation (L0224/24-1-97) of the European Union and has been registered in the relevant community list of the PDO products.

All protected designation of origin products bear the PDO mark. 

The PDO designation, for original agricultural products and food, allows to the growers to promote these products more easily and allows the consumer to buy quality products, the production, process and origination of which are guaranteed.

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Apart from the PDO products European Union has enacted PGI (Protected Geographical Indication) and TSG (Traditional Speciality Guaranteed) products. More specifically:

“Protected Geographical Indication – PGI ” is the name of a specific region or in extraordinary cases the name of a country, which is used in the description of an agricultural product or a food originating from this specified location or country. The quality, fame or other characteristic of the above is due to this geographical origin and the production and / or alteration and/or process of which take place in the delimited geographical area.

“Traditional Speciality Guaranteed Products – TSG ” are the alteration products which are characterized by their composition or their mode of preparation. The composition and the mode of preparation of these products have not been changed for ages and integrate the history, the customs and the tradition of the people who produce such products. They are based on the tradition and the alimentary culture of the European citizens while they bear and present those special characteristics which are due to the soil-climatic conditions of the cultivation area and to the special production and alteration conditions.



About Chios Mastiha

Of all the exotic, aromatic spices in the world, none is quite like Chios Mastiha, the resinous, crystal granules that come from splicing open a particular tree, *Pistacia lentiscus*, at specific times of the year and letting its sap flow like slow-motion tears to the ground, to be collected, sorted, cleaned, and sold the world over.

Chios Mastiha, which most people might know as gum mastic, is a unique, appellation-of-origin product that is produced only on the island of Chios, in the eastern Aegean.

It is a spice with a dual personality: Since antiquity it has been renowned for its therapeutic values; recent scientific research has corroborated what Greek folk medicine has always held true, that Chios Mastiha is salutary for all sorts of stomach ailments, including ulcers, and that chewing it (it is, after all, a natural gum) is good for the gums and teeth. Chios Mastiha, of course, is also a spice and has always been used as such, from ancient Greek cooking to modern times.

In the traditional Greek kitchen it is a subtle, mysterious addition to breads, pastries, cream-based desserts and puddings, and ice creams. It has long been used to flavor distilled alcoholic beverages.

In the contemporary Greek kitchen it is an ingredient that has captured chefs' imaginations in a big way, in tomato-based sauces, with fish, poultry, lamb, pork and more, in wine sauces, paired with chocolate, lemon, other citrus, berries, and more. Chios Mastiha, in other words, is not only used in the medicine chest but also in the kitchen cupboard, an extremely versatile, unusual, exotic spice that enhances just about everything it seasons.

Production

The Mastiha tree grows in other parts of Greece and the Mediterranean, but it only "cries" in Chios, as the locals sometimes call the slitting-tearing process the tree must undergo in order to produce its resinous spice. Mastiha is produced in 24 specific Mastiha villages, *Mastihohoria*, in the southern, coastal area of Chios.

The process begins each year in June as workers prepare the ground beneath the trees, clearing it for the harvest. The trees' trunks are then slit, several times over the next six weeks or so, in such a way that allows the sap to seep out like tear drops, falling to the ground in various sizes, which are then collected. Actual harvesting takes place between early August and mid September.

It takes about five years for the Mastiha tree to begin producing resin, and even then, quantities are painstakingly small. One average tree produces about 150 – 200 grams (5 - 7 ounces) of Mastiha a year.

The size of the crystals determines the spice's ultimate use. The smallest crystals, about the size of large lentils, have the least amount of surface area and are hence the driest. These are packed almost exclusively as a spice, which still has to be pounded in a mortar with a pestle or in a spice grinder, for it to be practical in cooking. The small crystals don't stick together as much as larger ones, and so are conducive to pounding. The medium sized crystals are sold both as a spice and as a natural gum - they are big enough to chew on without sticking to one's teeth (the small crystals are not) and still small enough to be pounded into granules like ground glass and used in baking and cooking. The large crystals, which are referred to as *pita*, are often used in the drinks industry, especially in the production of distilled alcoholic beverages. These, with their large surface area, impart the most flavor and are softest and stickiest.

Various Forms

Chios Mastiha is sold in many different forms. When used as a spice, it is probably best to buy the crystals, which keep their flavor as all whole spices do, and grind them according to need.

Mastiha also comes already pounded into a fine powder, which can be substituted in equal amounts with the freshly ground spice. This product is usually cut with malt dextrin (in a ratio of 60% Mastiha-40% malt dextrin), which keeps it from caking up and sticking in the jar. Mastiha powder, whether freshly ground or commercially produced, must be used with care; a small quantity will go a long way.

There are liquid forms of Mastiha, too. The essential oil *mastihelaio* is extremely potent. A few drops will go a long way in the kitchen. There is also distilled Mastiha water, akin to rose and orange blossom water, which has a much more subtle, infusive flavor than the whole crystals, the powder or the essential oil. Mastiha-flavored distilled drinks also abound, and these can be used the way one uses other alcoholic beverages in cooking and baking.

How to Pound the Crystals

The crystals need to be pounded in a mortar with a pestle or spice grinder, but always with the addition of either a little salt (for savory foods) or a little sugar (for sweets). Half a teaspoon of ground Mastiha, whether commercial or freshly ground, usually goes a pretty long way in cooking and baking.

How Much to Use

The best guide for using Chios Mastiha in recipes is your own palate. Because the spice is so robust, a small quantity will go far. It is better to start with little and to increase the amount as desired rather than to add too much at the start of a recipe and then be unable to retract it. Too much can leave a bitter aftertaste.

Versatility in the Kitchen

Chios Mastiha is one of the oldest spices known to the Mediterranean, and yet one of the least understood in the modern larder. In the last decade or so, however, contemporary Greek chefs have rediscovered the spice and have used their creativity to rethink its uses in the kitchen. Mastiha traditionally was brought out of the cupboard on Christmas and Easter, to be pounded and used as a seasoning in holiday breads and biscuits. In some parts of Greece, mainly in the Aegean, the spice is sometimes used to season sweet cheese fillings for Easter phyllo pastries. In the northern part of the country, it also is used in patisserie, especially in the making of Mastiha-scented cream desserts and an ice cream called kaimaki, which acquires a delicious, chewy texture thanks to the addition of Chios Mastiha. But contemporary Greek chefs have done for Chios Mastiha what French and continental chefs did, say, for truffle oil a decade ago. They have shown that the spice, with its unique, musky, woody, slightly piney, incense-like, exotic flavor can be paired with almost anything, from tomatoes in a hearty sauce, to white wine and lemon in more delicate sauces, to chocolate, with which it goes divinely. We've asked some of the country's top chefs to share their recipes with us. Inspired by Chios Mastiha, they use the spice in its pure crystal form, pounded in a mortar; already pulverized to a powder (see above); in an infused olive oil; as an essential oil; and even as flavored water and eau de vie.



Olive Oil Infused with Chios Mastiha

1 Tbsp. Chios Mastiha crystals
250 ml extra-virgin Greek olive oil

Greek chefs have long been making infused olive oils, which they use as condiments in all sorts of dishes. Chios Mastiha-infused olive oil has a subtle flavor and a large range of uses in the kitchen. It is, however, used differently than the Mastiha oil called for in several recipes. The latter is an essential oil, potent and robust, to be used in minute quantities.

Heat 80 ml (about $\frac{3}{4}$ cup) of olive oil and the Chios Mastiha in a nonstick skillet over low heat. Pour into a bottle, let cool, and add the remaining olive oil. Use immediately or store in a cool, dark place. Shake before using.

*Note: Chios Mastiha shop sells ready-to-use essential Chios Mastiha oil.





Olives in a Glass with Yogurt, Chios Mastiha, and Honey

Makes 6 servings

**25 gr. (about 1 heaping Tbsp.) minced
red onion**

**20 gr. (about 1 1/3 Tbsp.) Greek extra-
virgin olive oil**

**50 gr. Greek olives, either small black
olives or wrinkled black**

Grated zest from half an orange

5 mint leaves, finely chopped

Freshly ground black pepper

130 gr. strained Greek yogurt

70 gr. sheep's milk yogurt

2 Tbsp. Greek honey

3-4 drops essential Chios Mastiha oil or

**2 tsp. home-made Mastiha-infused
Greek olive oil**

6 mint leaves for garnish

This unusual combination of ingredients works together as both a starter and a dessert.

1. In a small skillet over very low heat, sweat the onions in the olive oil for five minutes. Remove from heat and add the olives, orange zest, and chopped mint. Season lightly with a little pepper.
2. Mix together the two yogurts, honey, and Mastiha oil in a separate bowl.
3. To serve: Divide the olive-onion mixture evenly in 6 small glass serving plates or glasses and top with even amounts of the yogurt mixture. Garnish with mint and serve.





Beet, Yogurt, and Apple Salad with Chios Mastiha

Makes 6 servings

3 whole green apples, peeled and cored

Juice of half a lemon

2-3 Tbsp. Greek extra-virgin olive oil

**900 gr. (about 2 pounds) beets, boiled,
peeled, and diced**

250 gr. (1 1/4 cup) sheep's milk yogurt

15 gr. (1 Tbsp.) honey

1 garlic clove, minced

2-3 drops essential Chios Mastiha oil or

**2-3 tsp. Mastiha-infused olive oil (see
recipe page 10)**

1/2 bunch fresh chives, finely chopped

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

You can garnish this lovely, colorful salad with a few Chios Mastiha crystals. It's a great first course all year round.

1. Cut the apples on a mandolin or professional meat slicer into very thin strips and toss with lemon juice and olive oil. Season with salt and pepper. Set aside, covered and refrigerated, until ready to use.
2. In a medium bowl, mix together the beets, yogurt, honey, garlic, chives, Chios Mastiha oil, salt and pepper.
3. To serve the salad: Place a few strips of marinated green apple in a concentric circle in the center of each plate. Place a dollop of the tossed beet salad on top. Drizzle with a little more olive oil if desired and serve immediately.





Pan-Fried Manouri Cheese with Figs and Chios Mastiha Sauce

Makes 4-6 first-course servings

For the sauce:

**4 medium fresh figs, cut into 4
wedges each**

500 ml dry red wine

200 ml Mavrodafni wine

1 Tbsp. Greek honey

1/3 Tbsp. Green peppercorns

**1/2 tsp. ground Chios Mastiha or 1/3
cup commercially infused
Chios Mastiha water**

For the pan-fried cheese:

**280 gr. (10 oz.) manouri cheese, cut
into 4 half-circles***

**1/2 cup all-purpose flour for dredging, or
more as needed**

100 ml olive oil for sautéing

This recipe is essentially a variation of the classic Greek pan-fried cheese called Saganaki. Here, a mild, buttery, pressed sheep's milk cheese called manouri is used. If you can't find it, you may substitute ricotta salata.

1. Bring the wines, honey, peppercorns to a boil in a medium saucepan. Reduce heat add the fig wedges and simmer until the sauce is reduced by two-thirds. Skim the foam off the top of the sauce as it forms and discard. Add the Chios Mastiha water and continue simmering for one minute. Remove from heat.

2. Fill a shallow bowl with cold water and empty the flour into another, second, bowl. Heat the oil in a nonstick skillet over medium heat. Dip the cheese pieces first into the cold water then into the flour and pan-fry, two at a time, flipping once, until golden on both sides. Drain on kitchen paper and continue until all the cheese is sautéed.

3. Serve the cheese pieces on individual plates or on a large platter, surrounded by the fig sauce.





Chios Mastiha-Scented Greek Cheese Mousse with Basil and Sweet Tomato

Makes 8 servings

- 100 gr. (3 ounces) medium-soft Feta**
- 100 ml (1/2 cup) strained Greek yogurt**
- 150 gr. (5 oz.) Greek Anthotyro, fresh myzithra or any other soft, mild curd cheese, such as ricotta**
- 50 gr. (1 1/2 oz.) Xynomyzithra cheese from Crete, or other sharp, sour soft cheese, such as quark or Chevre**
- 1/2 tsp. ground Chios Mastiha**
- 4 Tbsp. commercially prepared Greek tomato spoon sweet or tomato jam or confit**

For the basil oil:

- 1/2 cup fresh basil leaves**
- 60 ml extra-virgin Greek olive oil**

This makes a great first course. You can substitute any sharp, soft, white cheeses in the mix, taking care to drain them if they are runny. In lieu of the Greek tomato spoon sweet, try this with other preserves or even chutney.

1. Grate the feta and combine with the yogurt, Anthotyro, myzithra, and Chios Mastiha in a food processor. Blend until smooth. Place in eight 3-inch (8 or 9cm) ring molds or 1/2-cup ramekins, cover and refrigerate for 2 to 4 hours to set.
2. Blanch the basil leaves for 10 seconds in boiling water, remove with a slotted spoon and drop in an ice bath. Drain and pat dry. Pulse together with the olive oil in a food processor. Filter through a fine-mesh sieve and set aside.
3. Remove the cheese mousses from the ring molds or serve directly in the ramekins, garnished with half a tablespoon of tomato spoon sweet and a drizzling of basil oil.





Warm Vegetable Taboule Seasoned with Chios Mastiha

Makes 4 servings

**200 gr. (6 2/3 oz.) medium-grain
bulgur wheat**

2 cups water

**40 gr. (1 1/3 oz.) extra-virgin
Greek olive oil**

1 Tbsp. Zucchini, finely diced

1 Tbsp. Carrot, finely diced

1 Tbsp. Red pepper, finely diced

1 Tbsp. Green pepper, finely diced

1 Tbsp. Yellow pepper, finely diced

1 Tbsp. White mushrooms finely diced

200 ml water or stock

1/2 tomato, finely diced(about 1/2 cup)

3 drops of essential Chios Mastiha oil or

**1 Tbsp. Chios Mastiha-infused olive oil
(see recipe on page 10)**

Salt and pepper

**Greek Extra-Virgin Olive Oil and chopped
parsley for serving**

This is a filling first course or accompaniment to meat, poultry and fish. It can also double as a hearty vegetarian main course.

1. Soak the bulgur in cold water for about 2 hours, until the water is absorbed and the bulgur soft and fluffy.
2. Sauté all the small cut vegetables in the olive oil for about 2 minutes. Add the tomatoes, water or stock, and season with salt and pepper.
3. As soon as the pot juices have cooked down add the Chios Mastiha oil and the bulgur. Stir well. Serve hot, drizzled with a little olive oil and sprinkled with finely chopped fresh parsley.





Orzo Pilaf with Snails and Chios Mastiha Oil

Makes 4 servings

1/3 cup Greek extra-virgin olive oil

1/2 cup coarsely chopped onion

1/2 tsp. ground coriander seeds

1 cup large orzo

1/2 cup dry white wine

1/2 cup fresh tomato juice

**250 gr. (about 1/2 pound) sea snails,
cleaned**

3 Tbsp. mandarin or tangerine juice

**Salt and freshly ground black pepper,
to taste**

**1/4 cup Chios Mastiha-infused olive oil
(see recipe on page 10) or 3-4 drops
commercial Chios Mastiha oil**

Snails are a popular ingredient in Greek island cooking, especially that of the southern Aegean. Orzo, called kritharaki in Greek, is often paired with sea food and meats, to make hearty, satiny, country-style dishes. This recipe hails from Rhodes.

1. Heat the olive oil over medium flame in a large, wide pot or deep skillet and sauté the onion, coriander seeds, and orzo until the orzo is lightly browned. Pour in the wine and stir. When it steams off add the tomato juice. When that is absorbed, add two cups water. Reduce heat and simmer, stirring frequently, until the orzo is soft but al dente.

2. Add the snails, tangerine juice, salt and pepper and continue stirring gently until the orzo is almost the consistency of risotto. Remove from heat, stir in the Mastiha oil and serve.





Gilthead Bream Carpaccio Spiced with Chios Mastiha

Makes 6-8 meze servings

1 kilo (2.2 pounds) gilthead bream

80 ml fresh strained lemon juice

60 ml white wine vinegar

600 ml Greek extra-virgin olive oil

3 Tbsp. crushed coriander seeds

2 Tbsp. crushed fennel seeds

1 Tbsp. sumac

3 green cardamom pods, lightly crushed

3 pieces star anise

1/2 tsp. freshly ground Chios Mastiha

3 strips dried orange zest

Marinated fish is both a traditional and a modern Greek dish. All sorts of fish, especially tender, white-fleshed fish, are marinated. Here, the marinade includes a bevy of aromatic spices; Chios Mastiha lends its own undertones, which are earthy but subtle.

1. Wash and clean the fish: Remove its scales and viscera and rinse thoroughly. Fillet the fish and cut each fillet into 5-cm- (2-inch-) wide strips.
2. Whisk together the lemon juice, vinegar, olive oil, and spices. Place the fish in overlapping layers inside a container and pour over the marinade. Marinate, unrefrigerated, for 3 hours. Serve.

Note: The fish may be stored in its marinade in the refrigerator. Bring to room temperature before serving.





Nut-Crusted Salmon with Chios Mastiha Sauce

Makes 4 servings

Salt and pepper

**1 kilo (2.2 pounds) thick
salmon fillets, cut into slices**

1/4 cup extra-virgin Greek olive oil

2 Tbsp. fresh, strained lemon juice

150 ml dry white wine

1/3 cup finely chopped fresh parsley

**5 spring onions, whites and tender
greens only, finely chopped**

4 Tbsp. pine nuts

100 gr. (3 oz.) toasted breadcrumbs

20 pink peppercorns

For the sauce:

50 gr. (1 2/3 oz.) unsalted butter

1/2 Tbsp. all-purpose flour

150 ml dry white wine

2 Tbsp. fresh, strained lemon juice

**1 scant tsp. finely ground
Chios Mastiha**

2 egg yolks, lightly beaten

Parsley for garnish

The pine-like, almost astringent quality of Chios Mastiha pairs very well with crisp white wine in sauces, especially for rich fish such as salmon.

1. Pre-heat the oven to 180 C (350 F).

2. Season the salmon slices with salt and pepper and place in a baking tray.

3. Whisk together the olive oil, lemon juice, and dry white wine. Mix in the parsley, scallions, pine nuts, bread crumbs and peppercorns. Spread the mixture evenly over each of the fish pieces. Bake, covered, until the fish is fork tender. Uncover for the last few minutes or place briefly under a salamander or broiler, to color the crust.

4. Prepare the sauce: In a medium saucepan, heat the butter over low flame and slowly add the flour, whisking so it doesn't clump. Cook the flour, stirring, until it colors slightly. Slowly pour in the wine and lemon juice. Whisk until the sauce is creamy. Remove from heat and vigorously whisk in the beaten egg yolks and Chios Mastiha powder. Serve the fish with a little sauce poured on top and garnish with chopped fresh parsley.





Oven-Poached Filet of Sole with Chios Mastiha Liqueur

Makes 4 servings

For the sauce:

- 150 ml extra-virgin Greek olive oil**
- 2 large red onions, finely chopped**
- 3 small leeks, trimmed and finely chopped**
- 1 large fennel bulb, trimmed and finely chopped**
- 1 cup finely chopped wild fennel or fennel fronds or dill**
- 1/2 tsp. freshly ground Chios Mastiha**
- 1/2 cup Chios Mastiha liqueur**
- 2 1/2 quarts(liters) fish stock**
- Salt and pepper**
- 1/2 cup fresh, strained lemon juice**

For the fish:

- 80 ml extra-virgin Greek olive oil**
- 80 ml fish stock**
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- 4 large filets of sole, rinsed and patted dry**
- 60 ml from the above sauce, for garnish**
- Fennel fronds for garnish**

Cool white bulb vegetables, such as fennel and leek, are a perfect match for Chios Mastiha. This is a delicate, elegant dish.

1. Heat the olive oil in a wide pot and sweat the onions and leeks over medium-low heat. Add the fennel bulb and continue for 4-5 minutes. Add the fennel fronds or dill. As soon as they wilt, pull the pot away from the heat and pour in to Chios Mastiha liqueur. Do this carefully, away from face and hands, because the alcohol will ignite.
2. Place back on the stove and let the alcohol cook off. Add the fish stock. Raise heat and reduce the mixture by half. A few minutes before removing from heat, stir in the Chios Mastiha powder.
3. Place the mixture in a high-speed blender or food processor and puree to a smooth cream. Filter it through a chinois or fine-mesh sieve. Place the strained mixture back in the pot over medium-low heat. Taste and season accordingly with salt, pepper and lemon juice. You will need about 60 ml of this sauce for the fish; reserve the rest for another use. It may be kept in the refrigerator for a few days or frozen and used at will later.
4. Preheat oven to 190 C (400F). Whisk together the 80 ml of olive oil, 80 ml of fish stock, salt and pepper. Dip the filets in this mixture, place in an oiled baking pan in one layer, and pour the oil-stock mixture on top. Bake for 4-6 minutes.
5. To serve: Cut each filet lengthwise into two strips and place crosswise on a plate. Pour over the pan juices and a little of the sauce. Garnish with fennel fronds and serve.





Home Salted Cod Fritters with Foamed Chios Mastiha Skordalia

Makes 12 meze servings
or 6 main courses

For the Foam

13 gr. (4 1/2 ounces) gelatin sheets

700 ml fresh whole milk

300 ml almond oil

5 ml red wine vinegar

1 garlic clove

2 drops essential Chios Mastiha oil

Salt and pepper to taste

**1 fresh cod, about 3 kilos
(7 pounds), filleted**

1 kilo (2.2 pounds) coarse salt

For the Batter

150 gr. (5 ounces) flour

75 gr. (2 1/2 ounces) cornstarch

30 gr. (1 ounce) baking powder

330 ml beer

Pinch of salt

Oil for frying

Cod fritters, one of the standard dishes on Greek taverna menus for decades, if not longer, gets a decidedly up market transformation in the following dish. The cod is salted, but subtly; and the typically garlic-laden skordalia that traditionally accompanies it is here a light and airy concoction, easy on the garlic so that all the other flavor agents shine forth.

1. For the skordalia foam: Soak the gelatin sheets in cold water for five minutes. Heat 100 ml milk in a medium saucepan and dilute the soaked sheets. Mix in the remaining milk. In the bowl of a food processor or strong blender whip together the milk mixture and gelatin. Pulse for one minute at high speed. Add the almond oil, vinegar, Chios Mastiha oil, garlic, salt and pepper. Pulse for another few seconds to combine very well. Strain the mixture and place in a whipped cream canister. Place two gas ampoules in the canister and refrigerate for 4 hours or until the mixture is very cold and set.

2. Place the cod fillets in the salt, covering completely, for one hour. Remove, rinse and soak in plain water for 30 minutes. Dry with paper towels and cut into pieces or strips, each about 100 gr. (3 ounces). Set aside.

3. Mix together all the dry ingredients for the batter. Add the beer a little a time and mix until a thick batter forms.

4. Heat the oil in the deep fryer. Dip the cod into the batter, shaking off excess. Deep fry in hot oil until golden. Serve with a dollop of foam on each plate or spray the skordalia foam into separate small cups or glasses and serve next to the cod.



Braised Rabbit with Chios Mastiha and Sun-Dried Tomatoes

Makes 4 servings

1 rabbit, about 2 kilos (4 pounds), cut into serving chunks

Flour for dusting

1/2 cup extra-virgin Greek olive oil

Salt and pepper

2 cups sweet red wine

3 ripe tomatoes, peeled and diced

500 gr. (2 1/4 pounds) sun-dried tomatoes, cut into small pieces

3-4 bay leaves, cracked

1 cinnamon stick

1 scant tsp. freshly ground Chios Mastiha

Rabbit, which is delicate and lean, is a great match for the subtle aromatics of Chios Mastiha. The spice melds into the background in the tomato sauce.

1. Season the flour and the rabbit with salt and pepper. Dust the rabbit pieces with a little flour, shaking off the excess.
2. Heat the olive oil in a large, wide pot and brown the rabbit in the oil. Pour in the wine, raise the heat to medium-high and bring the wine to a boil. Reduce heat, add the tomatoes and sun-dried tomato, and cook for 5 minutes. Add the fresh and sun-dried tomatoes, bay leaves and cinnamon and simmer, covered, over low heat for 40 minutes, or until the rabbit is very tender and almost falling off the bone. About 10 minutes before removing from heat, add the Chios Mastiha. Add a little water during the duration of the cooking, if necessary, to keep the sauce moist. Remove, cool slightly, and serve.





Braised Rabbit with Mushrooms and Chios Mastiha

Makes 4 servings

**1 rabbit, about 2 kilos (4 pounds) cut
into 4 portions**

Salt and pepper

**1/2 - 1 tsp. (to taste) freshly ground or
commercially ground Chios Mastiha**

1 onion, finely chopped

**400 gr. (14 oz.) carrots,
pared and chopped**

1 bunch of celery leaves, chopped

2 cups red wine

Flour for dusting

1 large bay leaf, cracked

1/2 cup, plus 2 Tbsp. Greek olive oil

2 1/2 pounds (500 gr.) mushrooms

2 spring onions, chopped

This otherwise hearty, country-style braised rabbit, perfect for a fall meal, benefits from a touch of understated flavor with the addition of Chios Mastiha.

1. Season the rabbit pieces with salt and pepper and place in a bowl. Dust with half the amount of Chios Mastiha . Add the onion, carrots, celery, and wine to the bowl and marinated, covered and refrigerated, for 4 – 5 hours.
2. Remove the rabbit pieces with a slotted spoon and blot dry with paper towels. Reserve the marinade. Dust the rabbit with flour.
3. Heat half the olive oil in a large wide pot, and brown the meat on all sides. Pour in the reserved marinade, and add the bay leaf and enough water to come about 2/3 the way up the contents of the pot. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, cover, and simmer for about 1 hour, or until the rabbit is very tender.
4. In a separate skillet, heat the remaining olive oil and sauté the mushrooms and spring onions until wilted but al dente. Add to the meat, together with the remaining Chios Mastiha, and simmer for a few minutes before removing from heat. Let cool slightly and serve.





Braised Goat with Chios Mastiha, Tomatoes, and Trahana

Makes 4 servings

1 kilo (2.2 pounds) lean goat meat

10 gr. (1/3 oz.) Chios Mastiha crystals

½ cup Greek extra-virgin olive oil

2 bay leaves, cracked

2 garlic cloves, crushed

10 caraway seeds

60 ml tomato juice

1 1/2 Tbsp. tomato paste

1/2 cup water

2 cups chicken stock

1 kilo (2.2 pounds) plum tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and finely chopped

2 medium onions

2 celery stalks

2 medium carrots, pared

200 gr. (7 oz.) sour trahana

Salt and freshly ground pepper

1/2 -1 tsp. (to taste) ground Mastiha crystals

Trahana is an earthy, rich, highly flavorful traditional Greek pasta product. It's the size of small pebbles and comes in "sweet" and "sour" versions. The latter, which is called for here, is made with either buttermilk or yogurt and has a delicious, tangy flavor. The sweet version, also the size of small pebbles, is made with whole milk.

In this dish, the use of Chios Mastiha is especially interesting because the spice, despite its delicate nature, holds its own against the robust flavors of the trahana, the typical gaminess of goat, and the heartiness of the tomato sauce.

1. Marinate the meat from the day before: Place in a bowl together with the Chios Mastiha crystals, half the olive oil, bay leaves, one garlic clove, and the caraway seeds.
2. Heat the remaining olive oil in a large, wide pot and brown the meat on all sides. Pour in the tomato juice and paste. Add the water, stock, onions, celery, carrots, and plum tomatoes. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, cover, and simmer for 2 – 3 hours, adding more water as needed during cooking. There should be about 5-6 cups of liquid in the pot at all times.
3. When the meat is tender remove pot from heat. Remove meat with a slotted spoon and strain the pot juices through a chinois or fine-mesh sieve.
4. Pour half the strained juices, about three cups, into another saucepan. Bring to a boil and add the trahana. Simmer until tender, stirring frequently, for about 10-14 minutes. Pour the remaining strained juices back into the original pot, together with the meat. Season to taste with salt, freshly ground pepper, and Chios Mastiha powder. Simmer until the sauce is reduced and thick, about 10 minutes.
5. Serve the meat over the trahana and drizzle with a little raw olive oil.





Fillet Mignon with Sweet Wine and Chios Mastiha

Makes 4 servings

4 pieces fillet mignon, or other tender beef cut, about 250 gr. (8-9 oz.) each

1 Tbsp. Greek extra-virgin olive oil

4 Tbsp. white wine vinegar

2 Tbsp. brown sugar

1 cup Muscat of Alexandria wine, or other sweet Muscat

1/2 level tsp. freshly ground Chios Mastiha or commercial Chios Mastiha powder

Salt, freshly ground pepper

Here is a perfect illustration of the chameleon-like versatility of Chios Mastiha. We've seen it paired with delicate white wines, with red wines, with lemon, and more. Here, it imparts its musk-like incense to a sweet and sour wine sauce and pairs perfectly with a tender steak.

1. Brush a large, non-stick skillet with the olive oil and heat over high flame. Sear the meat in the skillet, one or two pieces at a time, as necessary. Cook for 4 minutes per side for rare, or longer, as desired. Season to taste with salt and pepper, remove from heat, and tent to keep warm.

2. In the same skillet, pour in the vinegar and sugar, reduce heat to medium, stir, and cook for 3 minutes. Pour in the wine. Add the Chios Mastiha powder, salt, and pepper. Let the sauce simmer for about 3-4 minutes for the flavors to meld. Remove from heat. Serve the steaks on individual plates and pour the sauce over them.





Chios Mastiha Semifreddo

Makes 4-6 servings

2 gelatin sheets, 7 gr. (1/4 oz.) each

1 cup whole milk

1/2 tsp. freshly ground Chios Mastiha or commercial powder

180 gr. (6 oz.) sugar

150 gr. (5 oz.) egg yolks

400 ml (14 oz.) heavy cream

Mastiha's original place in the Greek kitchen was traditionally in the pastry kitchen, especially in ice cream (called kaimaki) and in breads and cookies. Taking its cue from its role as a flavoring and texture enhancer in ice cream, it is here used to aromatize a delicious semifreddo. You can serve this with a drizzling of Greek honey or a small dollop of any number of Greek spoon sweets.

1. Soak the gelatin in cold water to soften.
2. Heat the milk together with the Chios Mastiha powder and remove from heat as soon as the milk begins to boil. Strain the gelatin into the milk, stirring constantly. Cool slightly.
3. In the bowl of an electric mixer with a whisk attachment beat the egg yolks and sugar together at high speed until they are creamy and frothy. Pour the milk very slowly into the egg mixture, while beating at high speed. Place the bowl in an ice bath and continue beating until the mixture gets very frothy.
4. Whip the cream until stiff peaks form and fold it carefully into the egg-milk mixture. Pour the mixture into a bowl or into a loaf pan lined with plastic wrap and freeze.
5. Serve the semifreddo as is, or accompanied by Greek walnut spoon sweet.





“Submarine” Martini with Chios Mastiha Sugar Paste

Makes 1 serving

1 teaspoon Chios Mastiha
Sugar Paste*

Crushed ice

1/4 cup Chios Mastiha liqueur

2 Tbsp. dry vermouth

*You can find the Chios Mastiha-scented sugar paste in Greek specialty food shops.

The term submarine in the Greek kitchen has nothing to do with the mammoth-sized sandwiches that go by the same name in North America. In Greece a “submarine” is a spoonful of flavored sugar paste, as white as marble but soft and chewy. It gets its unusual name because it is literally submerged in water, a cool glassful at that, and enjoyed slowly. Here, the idea is the same, but instead of water a full-blown martini is the pool of choice.

1. Place 1 teaspoon of the sugar paste in a martini glass filled with crushed ice.
2. Pour the Chios Mastiha liqueur and vermouth in a shaker, shake 4 times and pour into the martini glass. Serve.





Cooked Cream with Chios Mastiha and Pistachios

Makes 8 servings

2 sheets gelatin, 7 gr. (1/4 oz.) each

500 ml (2 cups) fresh milk

500 ml (2 cups) heavy cream

80 gr. (2 2/3 oz.) sugar

1 Tbsp. ground Chios Mastiha

1 cup shelled Aegina pistachios,
finely chopped

This dish, for all intents and purposes, is a variation of the traditional Italian *pana cotta*. It's the Chios Mastiha that makes all the difference, lending something decidedly exotic to the cream. This is a lovely, year-round dessert, easy to make and elegant.

1. Soak the gelatin in cold water for 10 minutes.
2. In a large pot, heat the milk, cream, and sugar to just before the boiling point. Add the Chios Mastiha.
3. Strain the gelatin in a fine sieve and add it to the cream, stirring continuously over low heat. As soon as the mixture starts to simmer, remove from heat and add the pistachios.
4. Pour equal amounts of the cooked Chios Mastiha cream into 8 Martini glasses or small bowls. Let cool at room temperature and then chill in the refrigerator for at least four hours. Serve, if desired, with caramel syrup and garnish with chopped, unsalted pistachios.





Chios Mastiha Cheesecake

Makes 6-8 servings

3 egg yolks

100 gr. (3 oz.) sugar

4 oz. Chios Mastiha liqueur

**2 gelatin sheets, 7 gr. (1/4 oz.) each,
soaked in water to soften**

420 gr. (14 oz.) cream cheese

2 Tbsp. strained Greek yogurt

8 fresh mint leaves, finely chopped

**300 ml (10 oz.) heavy cream,
whipped stiff**

Fresh strawberries for garnish

**4-6 Tbsp. strawberry sauce or coulis,
for garnish**

2 tsp. balsamic vinegar

Chios Mastiha traditionally was used in breads, ice creams, and in some island cheesecakes, small parcels of delicate pastry filled with fresh sheep's milk cheese that were and still are a regional and seasonal-Easter-specialty in many of the Aegean islands. Here, with the advent of Greek yogurt, which is widely available all over the world, and classic cream cheese, the traditional Greek-island cheesecake gets a modern spin.

Chios Mastiha liqueur is used in the dish below. It is subtler and lighter in flavor than either powder or crystals, but every brand of the liqueur is slightly different; some have a strong and marked Mastiha presence, while in others the spice is understated, sometimes even combined with anise to make a more complex flavor profile.

1. Beat the egg yolks, sugar, and Chios Mastiha liqueur in a double boiler until the mixture is creamy and pale.
2. Melt the gelatin in a little water over low heat in a small sauce pan and beat it into the egg mixture. Add the cream cheese, yogurt, and mint leaves.
3. Whip the cream to stiff peaks and fold it gently into the mixture. Pour into individual molds and chill for at least four hours before serving. To serve, turn onto a plate and decorate with a few strawberries, strawberry sauce, and balsamic vinegar.





Mastiha-flavored Semolina and Yogurt Cake

Makes 8 servings

For the pie:

3 cups coarse semolina

1 1/3 cups sugar

3 cups yogurt

1 cup milk

1 Tbsp. baking soda

Grated zest of 1 lemon

1/2 tsp. freshly ground Chios Mastiha or commercial Chios Mastiha powder

100 gr. (3 oz.) blanched sliced almond

For the syrup:

3 cups water

2 cups sugar

1 cinnamon stick

Rind of a lemon

Kaimaki or vanilla ice cream

Strawberry sauce for garnish

Custard pies, made with milk and semolina, are traditional sweets all over Greece. This recipe differs because it calls for yogurt, and, of course, for Mastiha.

1. Preheat the oven to 170°C (340°F).
2. In the bowl of an electric mixer, beat together at medium speed the semolina, sugar, and yogurt. Dissolve the baking soda into the milk and add this to the mixture, beating all the while. Beat in the lemon zest. Add the Chios Mastiha and beat at medium-high for 5 minutes until the mixture is creamy.
3. Lightly butter a large baking pan and pour in the batter. Bake for about 1 to 1 ½ hours or until set and lightly golden. If the custard browns before it sets, cover the pan with aluminum foil and continue baking.
4. Make the syrup: In a medium pot, bring all the ingredients to a boil over medium heat. Reduce heat and simmer until the syrup is viscous but runny, about 12 minutes. Remove and cool immediately in an ice bath. (Alternatively, you can make the syrup first and let it cool while you prepare and bake the pie.)
5. As soon as you remove the pie from the oven, pour over the cooled syrup. Sprinkle with the almond slivers and cut into small pieces. Serve each piece of pie with a ball of kaimaki or vanilla ice cream and drizzle with strawberry sauce.





Bitter Chocolate Cake with Chios Mastiha

Makes 4-6 servings

For the biscuit base:

**210 gr. (7 1/2 oz.) couverture
chocolate (70%)**

110 gr. (4 oz.) unsalted butter

5 egg yolks

7 egg whites

110 gr. (7 1/2 oz.) sugar

35 gr. (1 1/4 oz.) all-purpose flour

For the filling:

**400 gr. (14 1/2 oz.) couverture
chocolate (70%)**

1/2 tsp. ground mastic

**500 ml heavy cream,
whipped to stiff peaks**

50 ml glucose or corn syrup

50 gr. (1.8 oz.) sugar

50 ml water

For the chocolate glaze:

**500 gr. (18 oz.) couverture
chocolate (70%)**

400 ml heavy cream

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F (180°C). Prepare the base: Melt the chocolate and butter together in a double boiler. Remove from heat and vigorously whisk in the egg yolks.

2. In an electric mixer with a wire whisk attachment, beat the egg whites and sugar to form stiff peaks (meringue). Add the meringue to the chocolate bit by bit, folding in well after each addition. Fold in the flour. Spread the mixture onto a sheet pan lined with parchment paper. The mixture should be spread to a thickness of about 1 cm (1/3 inch). Bake for 15 minutes, or until set. Remove and cool.

3. Melt the chocolate for the filling in a double boiler. In a separate small pot, over medium heat bring the water, sugar, glucose, and Chios Mastiha to a boil. Remove immediately and stir into melted chocolate. Mix in the cream.

4. Have 4 or 6 ring molds ready. Cut the biscuit base to the shape and size of each ring mold. Place the ring molds on a sheet pan and fit enough biscuit base at the bottom of each to cover the surface. Fill evenly with the chocolate mixture. Cool to room temperature and chill in the refrigerator.

5. When the cake is set, make the glaze: In a double boiler melt the chocolate and stir in the cream. Cool slightly and pour over the chilled cake. Place back in the refrigerator so that the glaze hardens. Serve.





Frozen Chocolate Parfait with Chios Mastiha

Makes 6 servings

200 gr. (7 oz.) sugar

100 ml water

2 tsp. lemon juice

1/2 tsp. freshly ground Chios Mastiha or commercial powder

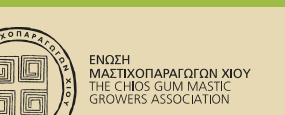
10 egg yolks

500 gr. (18 oz.) unsweetened chocolate, cut into small pieces

500 ml heavy cream

1. Place sugar, water, lemon juice, and Chios Mastiha powder in a saucepan and heat over medium flame until the syrup reaches 115 C (239 F).
2. Whisk the egg yolks in an electric mixer until creamy and light yellow.
3. Melt the chocolate in a double boiler. In a slow, steady trickle, whisking all the while, add the hot syrup to beaten egg yolks. Slowly add the melted chocolate and whisk vigorously another 10 minutes over low heat.
4. Pour in the cream and stir lightly to combine. Let the mixture cool to room temperature and place in a metal or plastic container in the freezer. Freeze overnight and serve.





Campaign financed with aid from
the European Union and Greece



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