

Gourmet Group Summer Menu 2019

A Taste of the Mediterranean

Appetizers

Antipasto Skewers
Hummus

First Course

Grilled Zucchini Boats
Lemon Chicken Soup

Main Course

Grilled Cod Pita with Tzatziki sauce
Mediterranean Salad
Lemon Rice

Dessert

Summer Fruit Compote

Wine

Prosecco, Riesling, Pinot Grigio, Tempranillo

Appetizers

Antipasto Skewers

Recipe from The Mediterranean Dish

Serves 10

Simple antipasto skewers with tomatoes, marinated vegetables, cured meat, and fresh herbs. A beautiful and festive appetizer to please a crowd. This recipe yields 10 skewers, you can easily double or triple it for a larger party.

Ingredients:

- 10 mini wooden skewers
- 10–20 flat-leaf parsley or basil leaves
- 10 pieces prosciutto di parma 2 inches in length each, rolled or folded
- 10 pieces preserved artichoke hearts
- 10 mini mozzarella cheese balls, or any firm enough mild cheese
- 10 pitted Kalamata olives
- 10 cherry tomatoes
- pinch dried oregano for garnish
- Drizzle extra virgin olive oil, optional

Instructions:

Soak mini wooden skewers in water for one hour. Pat dry before using.

Skewer the antipasto ingredients beginning perhaps with the basil or parsley, followed by the larger pieces like prosciutto or artichoke hearts. Place the Kalamata olive at the very top of the skewer. If you have more basil or parsley leaves, alternate them on the skewer.

Arrange skewers on a serving platter or slate board. If you like, finish with a sprinkle of dried oregano and drizzle of extra virgin olive oil. Serve cold or at room temperature.

Hummus

Recipe from The Mediterranean Dish

Serves 8

This is a plain, classic homemade hummus recipe. With a couple of tricks you will achieve the best hummus ever - thick, smooth, rich, and ultra creamy.

Ingredients:

- 3 cups (200 grams) cooked chickpeas, peeled (from 1 to 1 1/4 cup dry chickpeas or from quality canned chickpeas).
- 1 to 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 3 to 4 ice cubes
- 1/3 cup (79 grams) tahini paste
- 1/2 tsp kosher salt
- Juice of 1 lemon
- Hot water (if needed)
- Greek or Italian extra virgin olive oil
- Sumac

Instructions:

Add chickpeas and minced garlic to the bowl of a food processor. Puree until a smooth, powder-like mixture forms.

While processor is running, add ice cubes, tahini, salt, and lemon juice. Blend for about 4 minutes or so. Check, and if the consistency is thick still, run processor and slowly add a little hot water. Blend until you reach desired silky smooth consistency.

Spread in a serving bowl and add a generous drizzle of extra virgin olive oil. Add a few chickpeas to the middle, if you like. Sprinkle sumac on top. Enjoy with warm pita wedges and your favorite veggies.

Notes:

1. To cook dry chickpeas: soak chickpeas in plenty of water overnight (water needs to be at least doubled the volume of chickpeas). When ready, drain chickpeas and place them in a medium-sized heavy cooking pot. Cover with water by about 2 inches. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer for 1 1/2 to 2 hours.
2. If using canned chickpeas, make sure they are drained and rinsed.
3. To peel chickpeas (cooked or from a can): cover cooked chickpeas in hot water and add 1 1/2 tsp baking soda. Take a handful of chickpeas and rub under running water to remove the skins. Place peeled chickpeas in a bowl.

First Course

Grilled Zucchini Boats

Recipe from The Mediterranean Dish

Yields 6 zucchini boats

Ingredients:

- 3 zucchini, trimmed and sliced lengthwise into halves
- Extra virgin olive oil
- Salt and pepper, sprinkle to your liking
- Dried oregano, large sprinkle to your liking
- 6 oz/170.1 g cherry tomatoes, sliced in halves
- 3 green onions (both white and green parts), ends trimmed, chopped
- 1/2 cup/ 75 g crumbled feta cheese, more to your liking
- 6 to 10 fresh mint and parsley, chopped
- Zest of 1 lemon, plus a squeeze of lemon juice

Instructions:

If cooking on gas grill, lightly oil the grate and preheat grill to medium-low. (OR, heat a cast iron skillet or indoor griddle over medium heat.)

Brush zucchini generously with extra virgin olive oil on both sides. Season zucchini (particularly flesh side) with salt, freshly ground pepper, and oregano.

Place zucchini, flesh-side down, on the preheated grill (or indoor griddle). Grill for 3 to 5 minutes until soft and nicely charred, then turn on back side and grill for another 3 to 5 minutes until this side is also tender and gains some color. (If using an indoor skillet or griddle, you may need to adjust heat to medium-high.)

Remove zucchini from heat and let cool enough to handle.

To create zucchini boats, use a small spoon to scoop out the flesh into a small bowl (do not discard.) Squeeze all liquid out of zucchini flesh (you might use a linen kitchen towel or paper towel to do this.)

Now add zucchini flesh to a mixing bowl. Add the remaining ingredients (cherry tomatoes, green onions, feta, mint, parsley, lemon zest, and small splash of lemon juice). Sprinkle a little more oregano, if you like, and add a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil. Mix everything together to make the filling.

Spoon the filling mixture into the prepared zucchini boats and arrange on a serving platter. Enjoy!

Cook's Tips: You can cut the zucchini halves crosswise to create smaller "boats" that can be easily picked up by hand. This is ideal if you're serving a larger crowd as an appetizer (yields 12 instead of 6).

Cook's Tip: Grill zucchini until tender and nicely charred – this brings out the delicious flavor!

Cook's Tip: A drizzle of Greek Tzatziki sauce really seals the deal on these zucchini boats.

Make Ahead Option: You can grill the zucchini ahead of time, then when ready to serve, follow recipe from step #5.

Other Filling Options: You can change up the existing filling in this recipe by simply adding more vegetarian items like a handful baby spinach, olives, or marinated artichokes. Or turn this into Zucchini Boats Antipasti. Just give your filling a little Italian flare using baby mozzarella, fresh basil, and maybe a little cured meat like Prosciutto or salami.

Lemon Chicken Soup

Recipe from A Spicy Perspective

Serves 8

Ingredients:

- 10 cups chicken broth
- 3 tablespoon olive oil
- 8 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 sweet onion
- 1 large lemon, zested
- 2 boneless skinless chicken breasts
- 1 cup Israeli couscous (pearl)
- 1/2 teaspoons crushed red pepper
- 2 ounces crumbled feta
- 1/3 cup chopped chive
- Salt and pepper

Instructions:

Place the olive oil in a large 6-8 quart sauce pot over medium-low heat. Peel the onion. Then quarter it and slice into thin strips. Once the oil is hot, saute the onion and minced garlic for 3-4 minutes to soften.

Add the chicken broth, raw chicken breasts, lemon zest, and crushed red pepper to the pot. Raise the heat to high, cover, and bring to a boil. Once boiling, reduce the heat to medium, then simmer for 5 minutes.

Stir in the couscous, 1 teaspoon salt, and black pepper to taste. Simmer another 5 minutes. Then turn the heat off.

Using tongs, remove the two chicken breasts from the pot. Use a fork and the tongs to shred the chicken. Then place it back in the pot. Stir in the crumbled feta cheese and chopped chive. Taste and salt and pepper as needed. Serve warm.

Main Course

Grilled Cod, Gyro Style with Tzatziki Sauce

Recipe from The Mediterranean Dish

Serves 4

Mediterranean pan-grilled cod recipe with lemon basil sauce. Serve it with your favorite sides, or try it gyro-style wrapped in warm pita with Mediterranean favorites like tzatziki, olives and more!

Ingredients:

Spice Rub

- 1 1/2 tsp dried oregano
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1/2 tsp garlic powder (optional)
- 1/2 tsp sumac

For Fish

- Extra virgin olive oil
- 1.5 lb/ 680.4 g cod fillet (or another white fish fillet of your choice)
- Kosher salt
- Black pepper

Lemon Basil Sauce

- 1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1 large lemon, juice of
- 1 to 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 8 to 10 basil leaves, thinly chopped
- Salt and pepper

To Serve Gyro-Style

- Lemon Wedges
- Greek pita bread (or lettuce wraps for low-carb option)
- Tzatziki Sauce - Recipe follows
- Mediterranean Salad - Recipe follows
- Pitted marinated olives

Instructions:

In a small bowl, combine the spices to make the spice rub

Pat fish fillets dry and season well on both sides with kosher salt and black pepper, then rub all over with the spice rub. Set aside for now.

Prepare the lemon basil sauce. Simply combine all the ingredients for the sauce in a small bowl or mason jar. Whisk well together. Set aside.

Coat the bottom of a large cast iron skillet (or a non-stick skillet) with extra virgin olive oil. Warm skillet over medium-high heat until the oil is just shimmering but not smoking. Add fish fillets and grill on one side for about 3 minutes or so without moving it (the underside should look golden and crispy). Then, using a fish spatula, turn it over to the other side (it should release easily from the pan). Grill for another 3 minutes or until this side turns nice and crispy as well. (You'll know your fish is ready when it turns opaque all the way through and flake apart easily.)

Serve fish hot. Add a splash of fresh lemon juice on top and a generous drizzle of the lemon basil sauce.

To assemble grilled fish gyros, use 1 pita wrap (or large lettuce leaf) per person. Swipe a bit of tzatziki sauce over the pita, add the grilled fish and lemon basil sauce, then add a bit of the Mediterranean salad and olives to your liking. Wrap or fold pita and enjoy!

For Tzatziki Sauce:

Ingredients:

- 3/4 English cucumber, partially peeled (striped) and sliced
- 1 tsp kosher salt, divided
- 4 to 5 garlic cloves, peeled, finely grated or minced (you can use less if you prefer)
- 1 tsp white vinegar
- 1 tsp Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- 2 cups Greek yogurt (I used organic fat free Greek yogurt, but you can use 2% or whole milk Greek yogurt, if you like)
- 1/4 tsp ground white pepper
- Warm pita bread for serving
- Sliced vegetables for serving

Instructions:

Prep the cucumber. In a food processor, grate the cucumbers. Toss with 1/2 tsp kosher salt. Transfer to a fine mesh strainer over a deep bowl to drain. Spoon the grated cucumber into a cheesecloth or a double thickness napkin and squeeze dry. Set aside briefly.

In one large mixing bowl, place the garlic with remaining 1/2 tsp salt, white vinegar, and extra virgin olive oil. Mix to combine.

Combine and chill. Add the grated cucumber to the large bowl with the garlic mixture. Stir in the yogurt and white pepper. Combine thoroughly. Cover tightly and refrigerate for a couple of hours.

When ready to serve, stir the tzatziki sauce to refresh and transfer to serving bowl, drizzle with more extra virgin olive oil, if you like. Add a side of warm pita bread and your favorite vegetables. (also see notes for more ideas) Enjoy!

Mediterranean Salad

Serves 4-6

Ingredients:

- 6 Roma tomatoes, diced (about 3 cups diced tomatoes)
- 1 Large English cucumber (or hot-house cucumber), diced
- 1/2 to 3/4 packed cup/ 15 to 20 g chopped fresh parsley leaves
- salt, to taste
- 1/2 tsp black pepper
- 1 tsp ground Sumac
- 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 2 tsp freshly squeezed lemon juice

Instructions:

Place the diced tomatoes, cucumbers and parsley in a large salad bowl. Add salt and set aside for 4 minutes or so.

Add the remaining ingredients and give the salad a gentle toss. Allow the flavors a few minutes to meld before serving. Enjoy!

Lemon Rice

Serves up to 6

Ingredients:

- 2 cups long grain rice (uncooked)
- Extra virgin olive oil
- 1 medium yellow onion, chopped (just over 1 cup chopped onions)
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1/2 cup orzo pasta
- 2 lemons, juice of (PLUS zest of 1 lemon)
- 2 cups low sodium broth (chicken or vegetable broth will work)
- Pinch salt
- Large handful chopped fresh parsley
- 1 tsp dill weed (dry dill)

Instructions:

Wash rice well and then soak it for about 15 to 20 minutes in plenty of cold water (enough to cover the rice by 1 inch). You should be able to easily break a grain of rice by simply placing it between your thumb and index finger. Drain well.

Heat about 3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil in a large saucepan with a lid (like this one) until oil is shimmering but not smoking. Add onions and cook for about 3 to 4 minutes until translucent. Add garlic and orzo pasta. Toss around for a bit until the orzo has gained some color then stir in the rice. Toss to coat.

Now add lemon juice and broth. Bring liquid to a rolling boil (it should reduce a little), then turn heat to low. Cover and let cook for about 20 minutes or until rice is done (liquid should be fully absorbed and rice should be tender but not sticky.)

Remove rice from heat. For best results, leave it covered and do not disturb rice for about 10 minutes or so.

Uncover and stir in parsley, dill weed and lemon zest. If you like, add a few slices of lemon on top for garnish. Enjoy!

Dessert

Summer Fruit Compote with Honey Greek Yogurt

Recipe from The Mediterranean Dish

Serves 8-12

Ingredients:

- 1 lb peaches (3 to 4 peaches), halved, pitted, then thinly sliced
- 1 lb cherries, pitted and halved
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 2 cups red wine like an inexpensive Merlot
- 3/4 cup cane sugar
- 1 1/2 cup plain fat-free Greek yogurt
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- Quality honey, to your liking

Instructions:

Place sliced peaches and cherries in a large mixing bowl. Sprinkle with cinnamon. Toss. Set aside.

Combine wine and sugar in a saucepan. Heat on high for 5 minutes until sugar dissolves fully.

Pour hot wine syrup over fruit. Cover and set aside for 1 hour to cool. Discard a good portion of syrup, pouring a little in a cup for use later.

In a small bowl, combine the Greek yogurt, vanilla extract, and honey. Mix.

Serve wine-poached fruit with a little of the poaching syrup and a dollop of the honeyed Greek yogurt. Enjoy!

Wine Selection

Pinot Grigio

Moscato (sweet wine)

Riesling

Prosecco

Tempranillo

Bon Appétit!!

This menu has been prepared, tried and tested by Michelle Warrington