



Department of Agriculture

Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment

# Gastronomy in Cyprus





(Protected Geographical Indication)



(Protected Destination of Origin)

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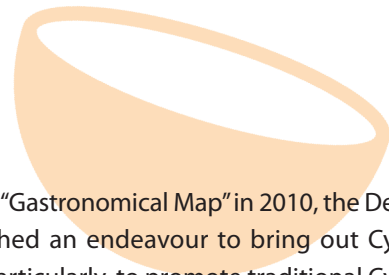




A country's gastronomical tradition is one of the foremost aspects that forges its collective identity. Cyprus is known for its rich variety of gastronomic choices. Through the centuries, different conquerors have left their mark on the island. This fusion has been combined with the ability of the locals to overcome adversity, for instance the lack of refrigerators and the need to preserve food for months on end, while making the best of meagre means at their disposal. Demonstrating considerable acumen, the Cypriots have been able to exploit precious, at times limited, raw materials such as meat and milk but also agricultural products generously yielded by the fertile Cypriot countryside such as wheat, fruit and vegetables. These are the factors that have contributed to putting together a versatile gastronomical tradition.








Following the publication of the “Gastronomical Map” in 2010, the Department of Agriculture has launched an endeavour to bring out Cyprus’ traditional gastronomy; more particularly, to promote traditional Cypriot goods and food stuffs that have been handed down from one generation to the next. The current publication marks the continuation of this endeavour: it is the fruit of extensive research through historical sources, books and dictionaries that explore the island’s traditional products, its history and tradition.

The selection of the goods and food products included in this publication was made according to their connection with specific geographical areas (Pafos Cheese, Loukoumi Geroskipou) or, in some cases, to the whole of Cyprus (Halloumi, Trahanas). It is precisely from the link of the products to their area of origin that their distinctive features are drawn. This link may pertain both to human factors, namely production know-how or the reputation of the product, and to environmental parameters such as the vegetation, climate and morphology of each geographical area.

The following pages aim to present and promote Cyprus’ local agricultural products and food stuffs to foreign visitors while encouraging the younger generations of locals to have a taste of the island’s gastronomical tradition.







Halloumi

Rs. 200 / 100 g





## Halloumi



*Halloumi* (fresh and mature) is a type of cheese produced from sheep or goat milk or a mixture of the two, with or without cow milk.

**History:** Halloumi production has been known in Cyprus since the old days. Duke Leonardo Dona, who lived on the island, makes reference to “calumi” in one of his manuscripts in 1556. Travelers John Heyman (1720) and Richard Pococke (1738) also mention Halloumi, suggesting that Halloumi made from goat milk was renowned and sought after in neighbouring Syria, and that it was the only “good” cheese one could find in those areas. A later reference on Halloumi is made by Archimandrite Kyprianos in 1788. The importance of Halloumi in the life of the Cypriots is exhibited through art as well as through agricultural exhibitions (Village

of Lysi, 1915 / 1938). The link between the product and Cypriots also presents itself through family names such as “Halloumas”, “Hallouma”, “Halloumakis”, “Halloumis”, which derive from the word halloumi.

Halloumi-making was a complex process, mostly performed by women, that required dexterity and experience handed down from one generation to the next. Women, within an established system of helping one another and practising social solidarity, obtained the raw material, namely milk, and made Halloumi in groups, prioritizing the needs of every household in the community. Halloumi is registered as a PDO since 13/4/2021.

**Production method:** The milk is heated at coagulation temperature or pasteurized at a temperature higher than 65°C

and then cooled. After milk coagulation with rennet, the curd ("drosinon") is cut and reheated while stirring to 40°C. The curd is placed into special moulds ("talaria") and pressed. After the removal of "Anari" cheese, the pieces of curd are placed in the whey and heated at a temperature higher than 90°C for at least 30 minutes. The curd pieces are removed from the whey and salted on the surface. Leaves of fresh or dried mint are added.

The pieces of Halloumi are folded and, once cooled, placed in salt whey for 1-3 days before being packed. Mature Halloumi can be kept in salt whey for at least 40 days at 15-20°C.

**Gastronomy:** The particularity of Halloumi not to melt at high temperatures allows it to be consumed both as it is as well as fried, grilled etc. Furthermore, Halloumi is consumed in soups (e.g. Trahanas), it complements watermelon, or is grated onto pasta. It is also used as an ingredient in various baked goods (e.g. Halloumi pies).







the whey (“noros”) continues whilst stirring. Stirring is intended to keep any leftover curd grains from turning into lumps. The whey is given a mild heat treatment prior to adding a small quantity of fresh milk, namely the “prosgalo” or “anarogalo”. As whey is brought to a boil, Anari starts rising to the surface. From the surface, it is carefully collected with a slotted spoon and placed in moulds or “talaria” containers where it is drained from the whey by pressing. Then it may either be salted and dried in a desiccator under controlled conditions or be served either as fresh salted Anari or as a fresh unsalted product.

## Anari

*Anari* is a soft whey cheese, a by-product derived from the production of Halloumi. Made all year round, it is available as both fresh and dried cheese, either salted or unsalted.

**History:** A halloumi by-product, Anari has been typically linked to the history of Halloumi. It is, nevertheless, a separate product, which holds a special place in the daily life of the Cypriots from days of old. It is also closely linked to the

religious feasts celebrated by the island’s inhabitants, for instance the “Tyrini” Cheese Week which precedes the cheese-eating Sunday of “Tyrofagos”. Significant historical references on Anari are found in several written records, for example by Archimandrite Kyprianos (1788), Magda Richter (1913) W. Bevan (1919) etc.

**Production method:** The production of Anari is essentially part of the Halloumi-making process. After removing the “drosino” (Halloumi curd), the heating of

**Gastronomy:** Fresh Anari may be served as part of a cheese platter and be consumed as such. Unsalted Anari may be paired with honey, carob honey, epsima or sugar for breakfast or as an afternoon dessert. It may also be used for the production of sweet desserts such as bourekia, Anari-pie etc. Salted dry Anari is used as grated cheese for pasta.





## Trahanas

*Trahanas* is a dried fermented product produced during the summer from sour sheep and/or goat milk and wheat. The soup obtained from the heating of the dried product with water is also called *Trahanas*.

**History:** According to W. W. Weaver, *Trahanas* is “a national dish of Cyprus”, directly linked to the Cypriot identity (2002). Because of its rough texture, the word “*Trahanas*” most probably originates from the word “*trahonas*”, meaning rough-textured soil. Apparently, the earliest written reference to “*Trahanas*” is made in a 1553 request by the Holy Monastery of Kykkos to the Venetian Authorities for a hundred moddi of wheat. Wheat was used mostly in the making of *Trahanas*. Also, in 1554, historian Florio Bustron informs us that *Halloumi* was produced throughout March, and *Trahanas* in July.

**Production method:** A small amount of sour milk with salt is added to the milk. The milk is left for about 7 days at room temperature until a pH reduction occurs. The sour milk is heated for 30-40 minutes and at 95- 100°C the heat is lowered. Crushed wheat is gradually

added at a ratio of roughly 1:2 (wheat: milk). The mixture is stirred until a viscous mass is formed. The cooked mass is left to cool for at least 12 hours, kneaded, and finally allowed to “rest” for 2-3 hours. The mass is cut into small pieces (cutting method and shape depending on the geographical region). The pieces are left under the sun to dry for at least 8 days. *Trahanas* is preserved throughout the year when stored under suitable conditions.

**Gastronomy:** Consumed as a soup, especially during winter, *Trahanas* is often cooked in chicken broth with the addition of *Halloumi*.

## Cyprus table olives (*Kypriaki epitrapezia elia*)

*Cyprus table olives* are produced by the processing of the Cypriot local variety which is cultivated throughout the island. The fruit of the Cypriot variety is intended both to be consumed as it is and for the production of olive oil.

**History:** The story of olive cultivation in Cyprus begins a long time ago. Archaeological excavations have brought to light olive stones in settlements of the Neolithic Age. There are countless indications of exports of table olives from the island in antiquity. Studies carried



out by two Greek professors of Genetics at the Agricultural University of Athens have shown that “Cyprus is the most ancient area in the world linked to olive cultivation; specifically, the village of Filia in the Morphou area”. According to the two geneticists, oil cultivation in Filia began in 4800 BC.

**Production method:** Harvesting olives for table consumption by way of hand-picking begins in the end of September for green olives and usually by the end of December of each production year for black olives. Green olives are slightly cut with special blades before being immersed in brine (to remove bitterness). At home, green olives used to be partly crushed with the sudden strike of a stone (these olives are called “Tsakistes”). Black olives, after being debittered, are kept in salted water or vinegar diluted in water, dry salt or olive oil.

**Gastronomy:** Cyprus table olives are part of the daily diet of the Cypriots. They are served as part of breakfast, as a side dish, as a constituent in salads, appetizers and dips, while black olives may even be consumed baked. They are also used in pastry and confectionery.

## Cyprus extra virgin olive oil

(Kypriako extra partheno ekolado)

Cyprus olive oil is extra-virgin oil produced by the processing of the Cypriot local variety. It has a distinctly fine aroma and a pleasant taste. Olive-producing areas are scattered throughout the island up to an altitude of about 700 m., while the main production zones are found in lowlands and semi-mountainous areas of the Lefkosia and Larnaka districts.

**History:** Archaeological excavations have unearthed the ruins of an ancient stone olive press from the Late Bronze Age and the Hellenistic Period. Indications of Cypriot olive oil exports in antiquity can be traced across various archaeological evidence. The olive tree and its products have always been used in various expressions of the life of the Cypriots: either as part of their usual diet or in religious rituals; also, for personal care as well as for the production of practical medicines used in earlier times or even today as a remedy for minor or major health problems.



The wood of the olive tree has been used for making utility items but also works of art. Of note is the fact that the name “Elia” (olive) appears in several areas throughout the island, further evidencing its importance.

**Production method:** Olive harvesting is done by hand-picking or via mechanical harvesting. Usually the best time to harvest is when 2/3 of the olive have turned black. The fruit is transferred within one or two days in shallow plastic containers to olive mills where it is processed. Cyprus olive oil is usually consumed 3 months after extraction. When stored under optimum conditions, it has a shelf life of at least 12-18 months.

**Gastronomy:** Used in appetizers, salads, as a spread on bread, for frying and also to marinate meat. It is also used in various foods and sweets.





## Cyprus blossom honey

(Kypriako meli anthemon)

Honey is a food item produced by bees as they collect nectar or honeydew from the live parts of plants, carry it, enrich it and store it in their honeycombs until maturation – which is how it is distinguished between blossom honey and honeydew honey. The Cypriot honey exclusively denotes blossom honey. Thyme, citrus fruit, wild rosemary etc. are considered important bee-friendly plants.

**History:** Cypriot honey has a long history, its fine quality being renowned since days of old. References on Cypriot honey are found in *De re rustica eclogae* (known as *Geoponica*) by Cassianus Bassus (6th c. AD) whence the “Chytrion Meli”, namely honey produced in the area of Chytri (present-day occupied Kythrea). Cassianus Bassus had drawn this information from written records by Diophanes (1st c. BC). Pliny (*Naturalis Historia* 11:33) also writes about Cyprus’ profusion of honey. Reports by foreign travelers such as Russian monk Vassili Barski, rank honey among Cypriot exportable products. The significance of apiculture on the island is also evi-

denced by archaeological excavations that have brought to life two golden coins with representations of bees, dated to the Cypro-Archaic and Cypro-Classical periods. In fact, it is highly likely that an Association of Apiculturists was in operation in Cyprus in 1879. It should be pointed out that traditional honey production in Cyprus was made in "tzivertia," cylindrical containers made of tree barks or clay or clay and straw.

**Gastronomy:** Honey is part and parcel of the Cypriot gastronomical tradition. It may be consumed paired with other desserts such as yoghurt, fresh Anari, roasted Halloumi etc. It can also be used as a sweetener in beverages or as a spread on bread. Honey is also used in cooking and pastry, for instance in a variety of traditional syrup sweets such as anari-pie, tsippopitta, dahtyla and pites-tis-satzis but also to impart a sweet taste to various food products.



### Spoon sweets (Glyka tou koutaliou)

Spoon sweets are made from almost every fresh fruit and vegetable, preserved in thick syrup. The sweets maintain the flavour and fragrance of the product from which they are made. Their name derives from the way in which they are served: in earlier times, on occasion, spoon sweets were served in a dish surrounded by teaspoons. Each guest would use a teaspoon to collect the dessert, wishing the hostess "geia sta cheria sou" ("bless your hands") and drinking cool water. On other occasions, spoon sweets were offered separately to each guest in a small dish with the teaspoon placed upon a glass of cold water.

**History:** Spoon sweets were traditionally the main dessert that visitors and guests were treated to. Every housewife in Cyprus would make spoon sweets depending on the fruit and vegetable that thrived in the region where she lived. Spoon-sweet making appears to have become part of the lives of the Cypriots when sugarcane cultivation and sugar production were introduced to the island during Frankish Rule (N. Patapiou, *The nutrition of the Cypriots during French and Venetian Rule*). In earlier years, molasses, carob honey and honey were used as sweeteners, therefore the "retzelia", baked fruit or vegetables preserved in grape, are considered precursors to spoon sweets.

**Production method:** Spoon sweets are made from both ripened and un-ripe fruit (figs, nuts, apples, quinces, cherries, grapes, apricots etc.) but also from the peel of fruit such as water-melon, Seville orange, bergamot etc. Sweets are also made from certain vegetables (aubergines, zucchinis) as well as from flowers petals (i.e. *Rosa damascena*) and tree blossoms (i.e. bitter orange tree). The fruit must be healthy, smooth and as fresh as possible. The making of each spoon sweet differs in terms of time and baking process. Some types of fruit and vegetables such as walnuts, watermelons and baby aubergines must be soaked for some time in water and cooking lime before being boiled with sugar. Small secrets for the recipe of each spoon sweet are bequeathed from one generation to the next, especially on how to preserve the special features of the initial product (fragrance, flavour, crispiness etc.).

**Gastronomy:** Spoon sweets are consumed on their own as desserts and they are also offered as treats to guests or used in pastry-making.



## Traditional pastries

Cypriot gastronomy includes a rich collection of baked food made of flour (dough). This is due to the fact that since antiquity wheat and barley were primary agricultural and exportable products. The Cypriots, essentially a rural population that lived from agriculture, recognizing the nutritional value of wheat, adapted their dietary habits and needs around it, elevating wheat and its byproducts to the foremost elements of their daily diet. Necessary for survival, these products were on several occasions rich in symbolism too, connected as they were to religious celebrations, social events

and other aspects of the daily life of the Cypriots. The following are the most distinctive products:

**Spit pasta (*Makaronia tis smilas*) or holey pasta (*Trypita*) or rovanata:** Traditional pasta with a hole running through the centre. Its name derives from the tool used for making it, namely the spit made of cane or "sklinidjin", around which dough was wrapped. When the spit was removed, it left behind a hole, which explains the name "holey". Pasta-on-a-spit was mainly a festive food item made and consumed during weddings or during the Carnival period ["Sikoses"] or Sunday lunch. When intended for a social event such as a wedding it was made collectively by the women of the village.



**Production method:** Pasta-on-a-spit was produced with plain dough made of flour or semolina and water. In some areas, some oil or butter from sheep milk was added to the dough. The dough was cut into small pieces, each of them then wrapped around a spit and pressed on a board of wood with circular motions until it was stamped into the shape of a thin noodle. When the spit was removed, it left behind a hole. Pasta was then placed on a shallow basket ("tsestos" in the Cypriot dialect) to dry out naturally or be consumed fresh.

**Gastronomy:** Pasta-on-a-spit is made in the traditional way to this day. It is also available for purchase and consumed like any other type of pasta.



**"Tertziellouthkia" or "koulourouthkia" or "loullouthkia":** Traditional pastries consumed mainly as sweet desserts. Their name derives from the way they were stamped into shape by housewives ("tertzeili" denotes a small bagel, a flower) which varied according to the region. They were made and consumed mostly during fasting as well as on other occasions such as carob harvesting etc.

**Production method:** The "tertziellouthkia" were made of dough consisting of flour and water. The dough is stamped into fine strings which are then cut into a suitable size for the intended shape of the pastry. Once stamped into shape, the "tertziellouthkia" are usually placed in a shallow basket ("tsestos" in the Cypriot dialect) to dry out naturally or be consumed fresh. The "tertziellouthkia" are served baked in honey, carob honey or epsima, thinned with water.

**Gastronomy:** The "tertziellouthkia" are also offered for sale in the retail trade. They may be consumed as dessert once baked in water-thinned honey, molasses or carob honey. They are served in a deep dish with some of the sweet broil in which they are baked.

**"Glydjista":** A type of dessert made from dough, its shape varies across

regions: it can either resemble a rhombus, a “baklava” or a bow. The “*glydjista*” (from the Greek word *glyko*=sweet, which denotes their sweet flavour) were mostly associated with landmark events such as a wedding (they were collectively made at the house of the lady of honours, and offered to the newlyweds on Monday after the wedding to foreshadow a “sweet” life), a birth and religious holidays. Also, during the Carnival period, every family would traditionally make its own “*glydjista*”. Of note is the fact that since 2017 the “*glytzista*” of Koilani village have been included in the Cypriot UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

**Production methods:** The “*glydjista*” are made with dough consisting of flour, water and oil. The dough is pressed down into a disk which is then stamped into the intended shape. They are fried and, depending on the region, either drizzled with syrup and garnished with ground almonds or served with sugar, cinnamon and ground almonds. In some regions, sesame is used instead of almonds.

**Gastronomy:** Today, the “*glydjista*” are served as a sweet dessert at various events or local celebrations.

## Flaouna

*Flaouna* is a baked good, its main ingredients being flaouna cheese and eggs. It is produced during Easter throughout Cyprus. Flaouna has a square, triangular or round shape and can be either sweet or salty. In the villages of the Pafos

district, *Paskies* are produced – round, palm-sized flaouna containing small pieces of fried meat with herbs.

**History:** According to Cypriot researchers, the precursor to flaouna is “*palathi*”, an ancient Greek pie with figs. The equivalent Roman word was “*fladonis*”, while later the Anglo-Saxons named it “*flaon*”, today’s “*flan*” (Hadjioannou, 1993). For Cypriots, flaouna is



a resurrection symbol linked with various Easter customs. During Easter days, housewives used to bid guests farewell by giving them flaounas to take with them or to exchange flaounas with friends and relatives. This is why the women made more flaounas than those required for the needs of their household.

**Production method:** First, the filling of flaouna (called “foukos”) is made. Grated cheese is mixed with eggs and leaven and some semolina is added. Various herbs (such as nutmeg, mastic, peppermint and cinnamon) are included; raisins can also be added. The “foukos” is left overnight to “swell”. The next day, the dough is prepared, opened up into small pies and filled with “foukos”. After that, the edges of the pie are folded in on the sides. Flaouna is finally daubed with an egg and sesame mixture before baking.

**Gastronomy:** Consumed either warm or cold, accompanying various beverages.



## Zalatina

*Zalatina (brawn)* is a traditional Cypriot delicacy made of small pieces of boiled pork in light semi-set jelly of an off-white colour. Zalatina, of a pleasantly sour taste, is also called “tremoura”, meaning “shaky”, because of the trembling impression it gives when held with a fork.

**History:** A Glossary by Georgios Loukas, dated 1865, includes a reference on zalatina, from where we can see that the

way it is made is preserved to this day unaltered. In days of old, when there were no refrigerants, the making of zalatina was a way to preserve meat for long periods of time. Like other meat delicacies (kapnista, “kounmiasta”, krasata), it was made during the pig-slaughters of the winter months almost in every rural household. During this small ritual that had as participants the entire family, each part of the pig was intended for a specific delicacy. The



head, legs and tail were used for the zalatina, which was a required dish on the Sunday of Apokria (before the beginning of Lent).

**Production method:** The parts of the animal used for the making of zalatina are primarily the head, legs, tail and small pieces of fatless meat. The latter three used to be necessary for the making of zalatina because, as they were brought to a boil, they released jelly which was required for the zalatina to set. The pieces of meat are put into a large pot to boil almost until melting. Then, the bones are removed, the meat is sliced into small pieces and left to cool. In the meantime, the broth is sieved and keeps boiling until it sets. Lemon juice and bitter orange juice is added while boiling. Towards the end, salt, vinegar and, preferably, peppercorns and pieces of red hot pepper are added. The meat is then distributed into individual receptacles, sparsely arranged, broth is poured over it to the brim and then some rosemary is added on top. Within a few hours, zalatina sets.

**Gastronomy:** Zalatina is served as a type of meze, mostly during winter months, especially during the period before Lent, consumed as it is.



## Soutzioukkos, Ppabuzes, Kkiofterka, Epsima, Portos

These five traditional sweets are made from grape juice across all wine-growing areas of Cyprus.

**History:** Production dates back to the end of the 19th century, when grapes were plentiful in mountainous/semi-mountainous areas, especially Marathasa and Pitsilia. Initially, these products were the staple dry food consumed by farmers while working. They were later consumed as a dessert, especially during the winter, as their high-calorie density kept farmers warm; or they were offered as a treat in the place of spoon-sweets in exceptional cases, for instance to wedding guests or even during memorials.

Therefore, each family made these sweets to meet their own needs and preserved them throughout the year in small jugs. A group of farmers used to manufacture these products and sell them in various festive fairs across Cyprus.

**Production method:** Grapes are pressed and the derived juice is filtered and boiled. Special white soil is added as a cleaning agent. Once cooled, the juice is re-heated and flour is gradually added. The flour – grape juice mixture is stirred until viscous. Rose water or rose geranium is added. Depending on further treatment of the mixture,





Soutzioukkos, Ppalouzes and Kkiofterka are produced.

**Soutzioukkos:** Almonds or walnuts are kneaded on threads with a needle and the two edges of each thread are tied to a tree branch (V shape). The threads are immersed in the mixture and hung to cool and dry. This immersion / hanging procedure is repeated 4–5 times until enough of the mixture sticks around the nuts in layers.

**Ppalouzes:** The mixture is placed in trays to cool down. Crushed almonds or walnuts are sprinkled on the surface.

**Kkiofterka:** These are small square or rectangular pieces of Ppalouzes, that are left under the sun to dry.

**Epsima:** The grape juice is left to boil without stirring until very viscous.

**Portos:** Crushed wheat is added to the hot grape juice. With constant stirring and warming, Portos is formed. Roasted sesame can be added.

**Gastronomy:** Soutzioukkos/Ppalouzes/Kkiofterka are often served with drinks, especially Zivania. Ppalouzes is also consumed either cold or warm as a dessert. Epsima is used for the production of various sweets or as a substitute to honey and sugar. Portos belongs to the category of marmalades.







## Pafos peanuts

(Pafitiko fystiki)

*Pafos peanuts* are the edible seed of the plant *Arachis hypogaea*, commonly known as Arabian peanut or “fistouki” in the Cypriot dialect. Its fruit, grown underground, is a pod that looks like soft straw; when pressed between the fingers, it is cracked open to reveal edible seeds (peanuts).

**History:** Written sources show that systematic cultivation of the peanut in Cyprus began after 1919. Due to high demand for this product and to the scarcity of vegetable oils in Cyprus, the Department of Agriculture succeeded in promoting the local cultivation and production of peanut, in light of the fact that the island had the proper soil for it. The Cypriot peanut is not only considered comparable to the Egyptian peanut, imported to the island until

then, but even better in terms of shape, size and taste. In 1926 production was equivalent to 4,000 okas (5.12 tons) which in 1954 rose to approximately 217,000 okas (277.76 tones) with Lefkosia, Keryneia and Pafos as the main areas of production. Today, peanuts are mostly grown in the coastal lowlands of Pafos, more specifically in the villages of Acheleia, Anarita, Geroskipou, Kouklia, Mandria, Nikokleia, Timi while production is equivalent to roughly 250-300 tons yearly.

**Production method:** Peanut is a summer annual herbaceous plant. Planting takes place in the spring (late March, early April) with harvesting in late September and early October. Harvesting entails pulling the plant up from the ground, as fruits grow beneath the soil.

**Gastronomy:** Pafos peanuts are mostly consumed roasted and salted, paired with alcoholic drinks. They are also used in confectionery. A quite unique usage would be their combination with carob honey or honey for the production of “pasteli” with dried nuts (“kounnes”) or “pastelaki” as is known in Cyprus.

## Pafos gum (Pafitiki pissa)

*Pafos gum* is produced from the resin of tremithos tree (*Pistacia atlantica* subsp. *Cypricola*) which is considered endemic in Cyprus. It is hard, with the distinctively strong taste of resin.

**History:** The fruit of tremithos, the mastic-producing tree, has been traced in prehistorical settlements of the 6th, 3rd and 2nd millennium BC (i.e. in Kissonerga). Also, Dioskourides, (1st c. AD) refers to the Cypriot resin, as well as to

the “terminthos” tree. According to a traveler of more recent years, Giovanni Mariti, who had lived on the island between 1760-1767 AD, during that particular period Cyprus’ tremithos-gum was collected mainly in Pafos and was highly regarded, especially in Venice. Lemba, that used to be a Turkish-Cypriot village, was the production centre for Pafos gum. It was also produced in the neighbouring villages of Tala and Kissonerga, where the tremithos tree grew. The main gum producers were Turkish Cypriots. After the intercommunal problems of 1963, the Turkish

Cypriots’ departure from these villages, in combination with the reduction in the number of tremithos trees, caused gum production in the area to cease. Today, resin is imported. The production centre for Pafos gum is Geroskipou, where one can find small factories still largely following the traditional production method.

**Production method:** After resin is collected from the trees, it is filtered very slowly (1–2 days) through thyme branches and the “trimintina” is collected. The trimintina is heated until liquefied and is again filtered through a cloth into a container with cold water, so as to cool and allow manual handling.

Afterwards, the trimintina is manually treated piece by piece, stretched and folded for about half an hour, until it turns from yellow to white. The gum pieces are then placed on a clean cloth for 24 hours to cool and dry and are wrapped in paper (Rizopoulou-Igoumenidou, 2008).



**Gastronomy:** Used exclusively for chewing.



## Pafos cheese (Pafitiko tyri)

*Pafos cheese* is produced during Easter in the Pafos district. It is made of sheep or goat milk or a mixture of the two, and has a hard and yellowish outer texture with the characteristic imprints of the “talari” (the container in which it is cooked).

**History:** “Excellent cheeses of the villages of Pafos” (Archimandrite Kyprianos, 1788). From ancient times until

today, Pafos cheese is produced from February to April when there is an abundance of milk. Also, it is strongly linked to the production of Easter Flaouna.

**Production method:** The milk is heated, rennet is added and, after coagulation, the curd is cut and stirred for 5-10 minutes. Subsequently, the curd is gradually reheated while stirring for 30-45 min, transferred to “talaria” made of “sklinitzi” (an intertwined container made from bushes found in marshes) and pressed manually until the talaria

are filled. When strained, the talaria are placed in hot whey for 30 minutes in order for the cheese to cook. The talaria are removed from the whey, the cheese is turned 1-2 times and salted. Finally, the cheese is left to dry for 4-5 days.

**Gastronomy:** Consumed with bread, but mainly used for the making of flaouna (therefore, sometimes called flaouna cheese).



## Pafitiko Loukaniko



The name *Pafitiko Loukaniko* has been registered as Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) since 20/10/2015. This specific name identifies the tasty cured meat of Cyprus, made in the communities of the Pafos district from minced pork meat which is matured in red dry wine of the region, then salted, seasoned and dried in suitable conditions.

**History:** Sausages, together with other meat products, was a staple food for rural families. The absence of refrigerators led to the need of finding preservation methods to ensure meat



consumption throughout the year. According to Xioutas (2001), “dried sausages used to be eaten raw too (and are very tasty) in Pafos”.

**Production method:** Salt is added to the minced meat and the meat is kept in red wine for 3-4 days. Then, various herbs are added to the mixture, which is then ready to be fed into clean pork intestines. Threads of 6-10 sausages (“teratsia”) are subsequently arranged by way of knots. The sausages are left to dry in controlled conditions.

**Gastronomy:** Served cooked in various ways (e.g. fried, grilled etc.) and often in combination with tomato, cucumber and bread. It may also make part of platters of cured meat or sausages and accompany fine wine, zivania, beer etc.

## Koufeta Amygdalou Geroskipou



The name *Koufeta Amygdalou Geroskipou* has been registered as Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) since 3/3/2012. They are white-coloured and rough-textured roasted sugared almonds, produced in the Municipality of Geroskipou in the Pafos district.

**History:** The production of “Koufeta Amygdalou Geroskipou” started in 1895 in the village of Geroskipou by Sofocles Athanasiou. The production know-how was passed down from one generation to the next and remains

unchanged. The product has been named after its place of origin but also after its specific making process which ensures a soft-chew product of a rough texture. Koufeta Amygdalou Geroskipou, mainly sold in fairs (Aristidou & Vakis, 1992), have been awarded a prize at a special exhibition hosted in Stroumpi village in 1937. They have always been a special treat offered during weddings/christenings.

**Production method:** Deshelled almonds are roasted for about 30 minutes and placed in the “koufetiera” (special rotating vessel). Syrup (sugar dissolved in water) is gradually poured in the rotating vessel, until the almonds are totally enveloped.

**Gastronomy:** Consumed as a sweet.









## Loukoumi Geroskipou, loukoumi Lefkaron, loukoumi Foiniou



*Loukoumi* is a confectionery product, sugar being the main ingredient. The name *Loukoumi Geroskipou* is the first Cypriot name to be registered as a Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) in the European Union on 15/12/2007. Loukoumia are also produced in the villages of Lefkara (Loukoumia Lefkaron) and Foini (Loukoumia Foiniou).

**History:** The production of Loukoumi Geroskipou dates back to the 19th century, specifically to 1895, when Sofocles Athanasiou launched its production. The initial recipe for Loukoumi Geroskipou, applying the local know-how, has been passed on from one generation to the next and is used within the same geographical area until today. Similarly, both Loukoumi Lefkaron and Loukoumi Foiniou each have their own history, which dates back many years.

**Production method:** Loukoumia produced in different areas are quite distinct from each other, especially in terms of taste, texture and appearance. This is mainly due to the production method, which differs across certain stages (e.g. heating conditions of the mixture). In general lines: raw materials (sugar, citric acid, starch) are added to hot water. After heating and while stirring, flavour additive and/or almonds are added. Depending on the desired taste, colouring may be added too. The viscous mixture is gradually poured into moulds. Once the final gelatinous structure is obtained, it is left to cool and is cut into small pieces which are packed, usually coated with caster sugar.

**Gastronomy:** Consumed as a sweet.

## Halitzia Tillyrias

*Halitzia Tillyrias* is a type of soft white cheese with holes and a slightly sour aftertaste. It is manufactured in the Tillyria region from raw sheep or goat milk or a mixture of the two.

**History:** According to written sources (K. Savva, 2002) “halitzia” were also made in the Tsakkistra region; they are one of



the products of nomadic herding from the period of British rule. However, to this day no other references attest to the historical period that marked the beginning of the production of this specific product. According to local producers in the Tillyria region, its production know-how has been passed down from one generation to the next.

**Production method:** Raw milk is filtered through a cloth immediately after milking. Rennet is added and the milk is left for about 40 minutes to coagulate. The curd is then placed into special containers (“talaria”) and left to dry on its own without pressing. It is then removed from the talaria, cut into pieces and salted. After it cools down, it is placed in salted whey (“noros”) where it will be kept until maturity. At low temperatures, up to 40 days are required for cheese maturation, while at higher temperatures maturation occurs sooner.

**Gastronomy:** Sprinkled with olive oil and oregano, consumed in salads or with bread.



## Maxilles Lysou

*Maxilles Lysou* is a kind of dried fig produced in the Lysos village of Pafos district.

**History:** According to K. Giaggoulis, *Maxilles* are named after the Latin word “maxilla”, which means “premature fig”. Furthermore, according to R. Papaggelou (2001), the word is derived from the Latin word “macilentus”, which means “thin”. *Maxilles* used to be a wintertime sweet for the people of Lysos.

**Production method:** The figs, while still on the tree, are daubed with olive oil

at the edge using a straw to bring about the simultaneous maturation of the fruits. After about 7 days, the fruits mature and are collected. The figs are placed on pine needles on the ground for 1-2 days to wilt. Afterwards, they are cut in half and left for 3-4 additional days to dry. They are placed in warm water with fennel for 1-2 minutes, strained and left to cool/dry (Ioannidou M., 2007, Documentary: The bridge across our traditional tastes).

**Gastronomy:** Consumed as a sweet or with walnuts.







## Dried figs of Tylliria (Pasta sika Tyllirias)

*Dried figs of Tylliria* are smoked via the burning of sulphur and then sun-dried. They are small in size, white, soft, sweet in taste, and produced between July and September.

**History:** No historical references on this product have been found so far. According to locals, the production know-how for this product has been passed down from one generation to the next. Th. Kyprianou (2000) suggests that figs of the variety “koutsina” which are cultivated primarily in the Tillyria region, are considered the best, and from these, “pastosyka” are manufactured in Tillyria.

**Production method:** The local fig variety found in Tillyria, called “koutsino” is used. The figs are allowed to over-mature, are collected and placed in special rooms or containers, where they are smoked with the burning of sulphur for about 24 hours. Subsequently, the smoked figs are dried in the sun for 7 – 10 days and then immersed in hot water to be washed. They are left to dry and then packaged.

**Gastronomy:** Consumed as a sweet. They are also used for making sykoppita (fig pie).





## Haroupomelo and Pasteli Anogyras

*Haroupomelo* (carob honey) is produced from carobs ("Black Gold of Cyprus"). It is viscous with a deep-red color. *Pasteli Anogyras* is a sweet made from carob honey.

**History:** Historical references on carob honey can be found since days of old. "From carobs, carob honey is extracted" (Sakellarios, 1885). "A special and very sweet syrup is produced from carob, named carob honey" (Richter, 1913). As far as pasteli is concerned, it is mentioned in Assizes as a taxed product. The word "pasteli" originates from French (pastel) and was established by the Franks, who also taught locals the art of its production (Clerides, 1961). The



Pasteli Festival is organized in the village of Anogyra every September. Before the Turkish invasion of 1974, the region of Kazafani was considered the most important region for pasteli production (Parides, 2006).

**Production method:** Carobs are collected, washed and, once dried, milled. They are left to soak in water for about 20 hours before being transferred into special containers ("kofinia"), where the fruit juice called "sierepetti" gradually seeps out and is collected. The juice is boiled with constant stirring for about 7 hours, yielding the viscous liquid, that is the carob honey. Constant stirring of carob honey for about 4 hours creates a

black, amorphous mass. This mass is left to cool before being manually handled. About 1 – 2 kg at a time is cut and, using a wooden stick fixed on the wall, it is kneaded in a specific manner until it takes on a fair, golden colour. This is called pasteli Anogyras.

**Gastronomy:** Carob honey is used for pasteli production and other traditional foods e.g. "tertzellouthkia", ground sesame puree with carob honey, etc. It can also be used as a spread on bread or mixed with olive oil and eaten with warm bread. Pasteli Anogyras is consumed as a sweet.

## Arkatena Omodous

Arkatena is a type of "koulouri" (circular bread) made with leaven, using the foam produced from chickpea fermentation (called "Arkatis"). They are produced mainly in the villages of Omodos and Koilani of the Lemesos district.

**History:** Ohnefalsch – Richter (1913), describing the mores and customs of the island, reports that "while kneading, housewives used to make rusks too, in various ways". [...] "At a specific location in the mountains, "paximadia of the workman" were baked from a mixture of cereals, beans and chickpea flour" (Richter, 1913). "Arkatena" rusks were first made in Omodos around 1880. The recipe for the "arkatis", the secret for the rusk, was brought to Omodos from Smyrna by Hadjistasou, who settled in the village after her marriage. The name "Arkateno" is most probably derived from the Greek word "ergatis" (meaning "workman"), due to the time-consuming production method of "Arkatis". In the past, Arkatena were offered at christenings and weddings.





**Production method:** Milled chickpeas and ginger are immersed in hot water in the morning; by late evening, foam starts rising to the surface. This foam ("Arkatis") is gradually collected overnight and covered with flour. The foam is left to "swell" and then kneaded with flour and various herbs, such as mastic, nutmeg, etc. The dough is then shaped into "koulouria", baked in a

pre-heated oven. After baking, soft "koulouria" can be re-baked (after first cooling) for 5-6 hours to harden ("paximades" rusks).

**Gastronomy:** Consumed either in their soft form or as bread ("pan-nishides"), or in the form of rusks.







## Almond sweet

(*glyko amygdalou*)

Almond sweet is a traditional sweet of the Kouris-Xilourikos region with almonds as the main ingredient. It contains sugar as well as various flavours.

**History:** No historical references on this product have been found so far. The Kouris-Xylourikos region, and specifically the villages around the village of Limnatis, boast the largest almond production in Cyprus. Almonds were the main ingredients for the production of this local sweet. Every year, at the village of Limnatis, "The blossomed almond tree" fair is organised, and the production method of this almond sweet is exhibited to the public.

**Production method:** The almonds are deshelled and milled. Syrup (water, sugar, mastic, rosewater, lemon) is prepared and gradually added to the milled almonds, until a homogeneous mass is formed. The sweet is stored into glass jars.

**Gastronomy:** Consumed as a sweet.

## Glyko Triantafyllo Agrou



*Glyko Triantafyllo Agrou* (Agros Rose Sweet) is a homogeneous mixture of rose petals in syrup. It has a viscous texture and sweet flavour with a strong rose scent of a colour that is dark purple to brown. Rose sweets are made in various areas of Cyprus. In 2016 the “Agros Sweet Rose” was listed under the Protected Designation of Origin scheme in the general regime on the use of Protected Designations of Origin (PDO) and Protected Geographical Indications (PGI) of the European Commission.

**History:** Rose sweet was very popular since days of old as a treat for guests but also as a cure for constipation. Accounts by foreign visitors to the island (19th century) report that rose sweet was one of the spoon sweets with which housewives treated their guests.

**Production method:** Rose sweet is made from the petals of *Rosa Damascena*, the Damask rose. From the plant's flowers only the petals are taken, then



sieved and washed to remove the pollen and foreign substances. The petals are then boiled with some water and sugar, before more sugar, water and lemon juice are added until brought to a boil. Initially, the mixture boils with the lid on in order to capture the fragrance

of the rose; later, the lid is removed to allow the mixture to thicken.

**Gastronomy:** It is consumed as a spoon sweet. It can also be paired with creamy confections, yoghurt and ice cream.





## Tsamarella – Apohitin

Traditional meze dishes made from goat meat, with a strong salty taste.

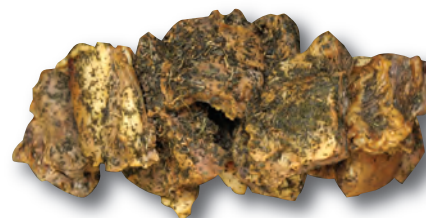
**History:** Initially, these products were produced at the villages of Marathasa and Pafos for the purposes of meat preservation practiced in Cyprus from the very old days. The persistent use of these methods through the centuries has ensured their survival to this day.

These meat preservation methods are now part of our cultural and folk heritage. Today, *Tsamarella* is also produced in the Pitsilia region. *Tsamarella* is registered as “Presidium” by the Slow Food Foundation.

### Production method:

**Tsamarella:** Goat meat from the round and fore-shank is mainly used (bone removed). The meat is cut into big pieces, which are bladed with a knife and

salted. The salted meat pieces are pressed and left overnight to absorb the salt water. The following day, they are placed in the sun to dry for 5–10 days (depending on the weather). The pieces are daily turned and moved as required to be “cooked” evenly. *Tsamarella* is then immersed in hot water several times for 2–3 minutes. Sprinkled with oregano, it is again placed under the sun for one more day.



**Apohitin:** Its production method is similar to *Tsamarella*’s, however meat with the bone-in is used. Sometimes, the entire animal (except from the head) is used, opened in the middle, the intestines and fat removed.

**Gastronomy:** Meze dishes of excellent taste, especially when served with Zivania.





## Hiomeri Pitsilias, Posyrti and Lountza Pitsilias



Three cured meat products produced mainly in the Pitsilia region from pork meat that is “cooked” (matured) in dry red wine of the region and then smoked. They are dark-coloured with a strong, distinct scent of wine and smoke and a slightly salty taste. Hiomeri Pitsilias and Lountza Pitsilias are registered as PGI since 8/10/2020 and 10/2/2021 respectively.

**History:** Through the centuries, the use of natural ways and methods of preserving meat and meat products in Cyprus has led to the development of

distinctive traditional Cypriot meat products. Prominent among them are the abovementioned cured meat products. Historically, these products were produced in high-altitude areas because of the cold climate that favours meat preservation. Every rural family, even in the mid-20th century, used to raise 1-2 pigs destined for the preparation of these products, allowing availability of meat throughout the year. Hiomeri was considered the “most luxurious” of the three (Patapiou N. & Lazaroy Ch. (2012)), its reputation spread not only among Cypriots but also among foreign travelers visiting the island. This is evidenced by several references to hiomeri, accompanied by praising comments; the earliest among them was by Fra Angelo Calepio, dated to 1573. Also, documents of the Archives of the Venetian Consulate in Cyprus (1769, 1771), attest to exports of hiomeri to Syria.

### Production method:

**Hiomeri Pitsilias:** Pork leg is salted and left for 5-7 days, then immersed into wine for at least 2 weeks to “cook”

(mature). It is also seasoned with dry coriander either during salting or while immersed in wine. It is then smoked (smoking temperature not higher than 38°C, meat not placed directly over fire) while periodically pressed. Finally, the meat may be placed in a cool aerated room to mature.



**Posyrti Pitsilias:** Pork abdomen is used. The procedure is similar to that which applies for Hiomeri, except that no meat pressing is performed. Spices such as cumin and black pepper may also be used for the making of “posyrti”.



**Lountza Pitsillias:** Pork fillet is used. The procedure is similar to that which applies for Hiromeri, except that meat pressing is optional.

**Gastronomy:** Hiromeri, lountza and posyrty Pitsillias may also be consumed as meze dishes to accompany alcoholic beverages. Also, lountza and posyrty Pitsillias may be served for breakfast but also as a snack, either fried or grilled.

## Loukaniko Pitsillias



Loukaniko Pitsillias is smoked wine sausage, made in the communities of Pitsilia. It is registered as PGI since 10/2/2021.

**History:** Sausages, together with other meat products, used to be one of the most important foodstuffs for rural families. The absence of refrigerators triggered the need to invent preservation methods, that would allow availability of meat throughout the year. Pitsilia region is an area of high altitude and cold climate and according to written sources it was well known for making sausages.

**Production method:** The minced meat (with some fat) is marinated in red dry wine, salt and various herbs (dry corian-

der, cumin, black pepper). The mixture then is left for at least 3 days in wine and then fed into pork intestines that have been previously cleaned. Ties are made ("teratsia") one after the other to form a chain (thread) of sausages. The sausages are then smoked by burning wood from trees or bushes for 2-5 days.

**Gastronomy:** It may be consumed cooked in various ways such as fried or on charcoal.





## Pitsilia hazelnuts

(Fountoukia Pitsilias)

*Pitsilia hazelnuts* are edible nuts of mainly two varieties: "Ntopia" (Local) or "Makroula" (*Corylus maxima*) and "Peratika" (*Corylus avellana*).

**History:** The hazelnuts of Pitsilia, known as "leftokarka", are found in the Pitsilia region, especially on the north side of Troodos, from Madari to Papoutsia. During the summer, mainly in mid-August, the festivals of Hazelnuts and other fairs are organized in certain Pitsilia villages.

**Production method:** The harvesting of Pitsilia hazelnuts is mainly carried out in August when the nut is easily removed from its leafy outside and

obtains a brown colour. However, in Pitsilia, the harvest starts earlier, at the beginning of August, as hazelnuts are also consumed raw. Once harvested, they are dried in order to acquire the desirable moisture, and then, at the right temperature, they may be preserved for a year.

**Gastronomy:** Consumed either fresh or dried. In their fresh form, they can be consumed shortly after harvest, before deshelling and drying. Dried hazelnuts are often consumed with beer and other alcoholic beverages and used in confectionery and in chocolate production.

## Agros rose water

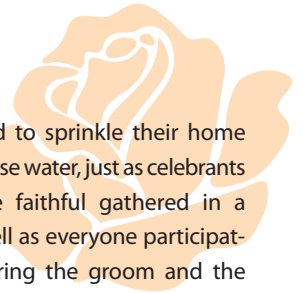
(Rodostagma Agrou)

Agros rose water is the distillate from the whole flower of "Damask rose" (*Rosa damascena*).

**History:** Rose water production has been carried out since the old days in the villages of Troodos, mainly Mylikouri and Agros. Rose water held an important place in the social and religious life of the Cypriots. Until the early 20th c.,







Cypriots used to sprinkle their home guests with rose water, just as celebrants did with the faithful gathered in a church, as well as everyone participating in preparing the groom and the bride for the wedding sacrament. For this purpose, they used silver myrrh containers called “merrehas”. Rose water was sold at festive fairs; it was usually exchanged for products like wheat and bulgur that were not widely grown in the mountainous areas.

**Production method:** The roses were collected in the early morning before the strong sun caused part of the essential oils to evaporate, and their petals were placed directly into a distiller. The derived steam was passed through a cold tube, liquefied and collected. Small quantities of rose water were also produced with the zivania cauldron (“lambikkos”). The rose water was stored in dark-coloured glass containers away from sunlight.

**Gastronomy:** Rose water is widely used in making syrup for various confections (e.g. baklavas, “dahtyla” etc.), as well as other sweets, such as rice pudding, etc. It is also used in the production of Soutzioukos, Ppalouzes and Kkiofterka.





## Troodos trout

(Pestrofa Troodous)

The Troodos trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) is a fresh-water cultivation, produced in hatcheries on the Troodos mountain range.

**History:** Since 1960, because of the infertility of the soil of the mountainous area of Troodos, people in many surrounding villages turned to the rivers and dams of the area. This led to the development of trout farming. Since 1971, villages like Kakopetria, Platres

and Foini have become a popular destination for both locals and tourists for the consumption/purchase of trout.

**Farming method:** Trout farming is carried out in reservoirs with spring water from the Troodos region. Its production, directly related to weather conditions (especially temperature and rainfall), is carried out throughout the year.

**Gastronomy:** The trout of Troodos is often cooked on the grill or in the oven. Of late, it is also used as the main ingredient in various recipes.







## Arakapas mandarins

(*Mandarinia Arakapa*)

Mandarins of the *Citrus deliciosa* species, they are cultivated mostly in the area of the village of Arakapas in the Limassol district. They are widely known as *Arakapa mandarins*. This mandarin tree is known as “Cypriot” or “local” and is famous for its fruit, which is very aromatic and tasty, but contains a large number of seeds. The fruit is of a medium size with a yellow-orange colour during maturation. Its skin is thin and smooth and can be easily peeled off (Kapari – Isaia, 2006).

**History:** The mandarin tree of Arakapa was imported to Cyprus in 1870 (Pavlidis, 1986). According to P. Gennadios (1959), this tree was initially imported by a man named Giousouf Efentis, after whom the tree was named in the old days.

**Production method:** Arakapa mandarins ripen from December until March. This specific variety has adapted well to the soil and weather conditions of the semi-mountainous region Arakapas. The tree foliage is quite resistant to the low winter temperatures of the region. Additionally, the variety



is characterised by the phenomenon of biennial bearing i.e. alternating years of overproduction and underproduction. Strict pruning and fruit reduction in the year of overproduction is recommended as a measure against this phenomenon, which also increases the size of the fruit.

**Gastronomy:** Consumed fresh. They can also be used in making sweetened mandarin juices, fresh juices, as well as liqueurs.



## Cyprus red soil potato

*Cyprus red soil potatoes* are famous for their excellent flavour and firm texture. They easily stand out due to their reddish skin, obtained from the fertile red soil of Kokkinohoria (red soil villages) in the eastern region of Cyprus, where they are cultivated. They are also grown to the west of Lefkosia (Akaki, Peristerona and Astromeritis). The main varieties are Spunta, Marfona, Cara, Nicola, Sieglinde, Diamant, Timate, Liseta, Charlotte, Ditta, Filea, Superstar, etc.

**History:** The exact timing and circumstances of the import of potatoes to Cyprus are not well documented. According to D. Christodoulou (1959), the earliest reference regarding the import of potato seeds in Cyprus is dated to the 16th c. W. Bevan, director of the Department of Agriculture for the period between 1912-1924, reports (1919) that the local variety was imported by Arab merchants in the 16th c. and that

potato cultivation in the Kokkinochoria began in 1915. However, as reported, the extensive cultivation of potatoes on the island began earlier, in 1909, with the import of potato seeds in Cyprus. From that period, the establishment of potato exports was seriously considered. Potatoes grown in red soil were of higher demand and sold at a better price. Until the Independence in 1960, the island exported potatoes mostly to





the Great Britain and Western Europe. Red-soil potato remains to this day one of Cyprus' biggest export products.

**Production method:** Potatoes are cultivated in two separate seasons. The spring crop is planted in November/February and harvested in March/June. Seed for this crop is generally imported and EU certified. A portion of the spring crop is reserved as seed for the winter crop, planted in August/October and harvested in November/February. Both spring and winter crops are irrigated. After being uprooted, the tubers are collected by hand or with special machines and packaged close to the fields, ensuring the freshness of the product. In recent years, the usual practice has been to plant potatoes once every three years. According to the applied three-field rotation, planting with potatoes is followed by cereals for the next year and no planting at all for the third year.

**Gastronomy:** Cooked in various ways such as oven-baked, boiled, fried, stuffed, mashed, etc., they are also used as an ingredient in several other dishes.



## Kolokasi Sotiras/ Kolokasi- Poulles Sotiras



The name *Kolokasi Sotiras/Kolokasi-Poulles Sotiras* has been registered as Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) since 3/8/2016. The plant "edible

*kolokasi*" (*Colocasia esculenta*), commonly known as kolokasi, is a type of vegetable that belongs to the Araceae family and is cultivated in Cyprus for its edible starchy roots ("mappes" and "poulles").

**History:** The oldest reference on Cyprus kolokasi is dated to the 12th of May 1191, when kolokasi was served during dinner at the reception for the wedding of Richard Lionheart to Berengaria, at

Lemesos castle (Jeffery, 1926). Producers aptly call kolokasi a “piggy bank” (“koukoumas”) because it can be preserved in the ground for a long period of time and harvested only when required. According to Sakellarios (1890), the best kolokasi in Cyprus was produced in Lapithos and Pafos. Prior to the Turkish invasion of 1974, significant cultivation was carried out in Agios Andronikos of Karpasia, in Syrianochori and to a lesser extent in the Pafos district. Today, kolokasi is mainly cultivated in the Ammochostos district, more particularly in the Municipality of Sotira, but also in the villages of Avgorou, Frenaros and Liopetri. To a smaller extent it is also grown in Pafos.

**Production method:** Kolokasi planting starts at the end of February (early planting) and continues until April (late planting). The plant develops a large central rooting system (stem) which in the Cypriot dialect is known as “mappa”. The stem lies under the surface of the ground and from it develop several side-roots, known as “poules”. The natural decay of the leaves is a sign that harvest time is nearing, usually starting in early September and lasting until May. Kolokasi



Cyprus Food Museum, Nicos Avraamides

is mainly consumed locally, while some of it is exported to the UK for the Cypriot community.

**Gastronomy:** Kolokasi is cooked in a variety of ways, e.g. with tomatoes with or without meat, or as “kapa-mas” with wine (very well known in the Ammochostos district). It makes an excellent meze when cut into slices or chips and fried, but also in the form of puree. Modern recipes, some of which have been created on the initiative of local producers, include alternative usages both in cooking and pastry making.

## Akanthou cheese (Akanthiotiko tyri)

Akanthou cheese was produced in the village of Akanthou from the raw milk of goats that grazed a variety of aromatic plants in open expanses.

**History:** Archbishop Kyprianos (1788) writes of the “*Excellent cheese of Akanthou*”; in 1890 Sakellarios reports that “*the cheeses of Akanthou were the best of the island*”. Also, archaeologists visiting the area during the 19th c. refer to Akathiotiko tyri as the most renowned on the island. Censola (1877), after visit-



ing the archaeological sites of Akanthou, reports that the residents engaged mostly with the production of cheese and that large herds of goats and sheep found plenty of food in Akanthou. Akanthou cheese was produced during the Fifty-day fasting period that preceded Easter. There are also reports of exports of Akathiotiko cheese to neighbouring countries.

**Production method:** The goat milk was placed into a cauldron (“hardjin”) boiling over a fire. Rennet was added and, after coagulation, the fire was put out to allow the milk to set. After setting, the curd was stirred manually, gradually gathered into a large mass, the “vlougkos” or cut curd. The cut curd was placed in special moulds (“talaria”) and strongly pressed manually. The moulds were then placed in the hot cheese whey (first heating). The cheese was removed from the moulds, re-pressed, and placed back into the moulds to be re-heated (second heating). Then, the cheese was removed from the moulds, salted, and placed back into the mould. The same procedure was repeated for the next 3 days. Finally, the cheese was removed from the moulds and left outside for 2-3 nights to draw in the night’s humidity. Cheese intended for the mak-

ing of flaouna did not require any more processing. The rest of the cheese was either placed on “psatharka” (kneaded straw) over smoke from burnt lentisk or immersed into melted beeswax. Left to dry, it could be preserved for the next 3-4 years.

**Gastronomy:** Akanthou cheese was used for the preparation of “flaouna”, eaten as a meze dish or grated onto pasta.



## Rizokarpaso pies (Laggopittes Rizokarpasou)

Rizokarpaso pies are holey pies cooked on the “plaka”, a rounded, smooth rock of approximately 3 cm in thickness, placed on charcoal.

**History:** According to Kypri and Protopapas (1997), “Laggopittes were cooked on a rock in Rizokarpaso during fasting on the celebration of John the Baptist on the 29th of August”. Bibliography shows that Laggopittes were also produced in different variations in other areas of Cyprus, especially in villages of the Pafos district.



**Production method:** First, a viscous puree (very soft dough) is prepared using flour, water and leaven (a small amount of salt can be added). The dough is covered and placed in a warm place to “swell”. The rock is then heated and daubed with oil to make it non-stick. The puree is gradually poured on the rock to cook. While cooking, the puree is sprinkled manually with water which creates holes (vents) that look like honeycombs.

**Gastronomy:** Laggopittes Rizokarpasou are served either warm or cold with honey or carob honey and/or epsima.






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