



*sharing our Greek culinary heritage*

## *Eleni's Yemista*

### *You will need...*

12 medium-large ripe tomatoes  
4 medium red capsicum  
2 large brown onions, finely chopped  
1 cup thick tomato passata  
1 bunch mint, finely chopped  
½ bunch continental parsley, finely chopped  
½ cup extra virgin olive oil (EVOO)  
2 ½ teaspoons table salt  
2 ½ teaspoons cracked black pepper  
1 ½ cups long-grain rice  
350g kefalograviera, cubed  
4-5 potatoes  
3 cups water  
Breadcrumbs  
Extra EVOO for drizzling

### *Preparing the yemista*

- Carefully cut across the base of the tomatoes, but not all the way across, to form 'hinged-lids' on all the tomatoes
- Using a melon baller scoop out most, but not all, of the flesh of the tomatoes and place this in a food processor
- Add the passata to the food processor and blitz with the tomato flesh
- Reserve 1 - 1 ½ cups of the puréed tomato/passata and add the remaining puréed tomato/passata to a large mixing bowl
- Add the finely chopped onions, parsley, mint, EVOO, salt, pepper, rice and kefalograviera to the mixing bowl and mix well
- Cut out the stalk, along with a little surrounding flesh, from the top of the capsicums and remove the seeds and veins from the capsicums too. Retain the capsicum lids

- Spoon the tomato-herb-rice mixture into the hollowed-out tomatoes and capsicums, making sure 2-3 pieces of cheese go into each tomato and 4-6 pieces into each capsicum. Place these in an extra-large baking dish
- Peel and slice the potatoes into thick chips and lay these in the baking dish in one corner
- Add 3 cups of water to the reserved puréed tomato/passata and mix well
- Pour the tomato-water mixture over the potatoes and yemista
- Drizzle the yemista and the potatoes generously with EVOO
- Spoon 1 teaspoon of breadcrumbs on top of each of the yemista

### *Baking the yemista*

- Place a large piece of vented foil over the baking dish
- Bake at 200°C fan-forced for approximately 2 hours. One hour covered and approximately 1 hour uncovered; until the rice and potatoes are cooked through, and the breadcrumbs and capsicum brown a little.

### *Serving the yemista*

- Enjoy the yemista with crusty bread. Kali Orex!

### *Key notes*

- Eleni prefers to use truss tomatoes for her yemista, for their flavour and their shape. When buying truss tomatoes, choose bright red ones for their better flavour and texture (Do not buy the orangey-red ones. They are floury and flavourless)
- The tomatoes should be ripe, but firm, so they can retain their shape during baking
- When removing the pulp from the tomatoes, leave enough flesh in the tomatoes, so the tomatoes retain their shape and don't turn into collapsing sacks of skin
- If you accidentally create a small hole at the 'base' of the tomato when you're scooping out the flesh, fear not, you can still stuff the tomato and the filling will not come out during baking or serving. In fact, the cooked filling will plug the hole
- Use the soft stalks from the parsley and mint, along with the leaves. Discard the coarse stalks
- If you use a food processor to chop the onions and herbs, be sure not to over-process them. You want to have some texture for both, and not end up with purée and pesto!
- Eleni uses 1/2 cup EVOO in the filling. You can even use 3/4 cup of EVOO for extra depth of flavour in your yemista
- The filling needs to be a little runny. You can add some of your reserved tomato/pasta mixture to make it runnier
- Do not over-fill your yemista! The filling needs to feel loose, not packed in the yemista, otherwise the tomatoes will split during baking, as the rice cooks and expands
- Use an extra large pan, which can accommodate 12 tomatoes, 4 capsicums and 4-5 potatoes
- These yemista are even more delicious the day after they are made, so any leftovers will certainly be savoured!