



Taste

Wine and food



Senses are gates of our souls



# A Good Morning Food





Macedonia enjoys about 280 sunny days per year, just one indicator of a good climate that enables successful growing of different vegetable varieties.

Undoubtedly, the best known vegetables for this region are the tomato and the pepper. The attractive tomatoes are large, juicy and fresh, with Macedonia's native tomato being the "jabolchar". There are also different kinds of peppers – green, yellow and red, sweet or hot. They are enjoyed fresh, used in salads, marinated with vinegar and cooked straight on a barbeque. The hot pepper is irreplaceable for preparation of spicy dishes.

Nearly every street corner has a market where you can find fresh vegetables and a great variety of salads to eat them with. It's heaven for those who prefer healthy food.

The traditional Macedonian salad is prepared by combining fresh tomatoes, cucumbers, onions, roast peppers and parsley. The best known salads in the Macedonian kitchen are the shopska (tomato, cucumber, onion, green pepper and sheep cheese), the Aegean (olives, tomato, cucumber, onion, green pepper) and the taratur (cucumber, garlic, yoghurt, olive oil).

In order to become part of the traditional way of eating in Macedonia, one must experience the old-fashioned "meze". This is practiced by real gourmets who, before eating the main dish, sip a glass of rakia with their salad. Even if one does not enjoy alcoholic beverages, they will certainly want to see what is so magical about this ancient tradition.



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# Salad Cult

The image is a close-up, shallow-depth-of-field photograph of a salad. In the foreground, a pile of salad is in sharp focus, showing bright yellow potato cubes, finely chopped green herbs, and long, thin white onion rings. Below these, hints of red tomatoes and other vegetables are visible. In the background, another plate of salad is out of focus, showing similar ingredients like tomatoes and herbs. The overall lighting is warm and soft, creating a bokeh effect with some light spots in the background.



The cold appetizers in Macedonia are sometimes called prolonged meze. In Macedonian meals, they are a true prelude to the main course.

One of the most complicated meals for preparation is the traditional salty pie, which appear in different shapes and flavors. Usually they are filled with cheese, spinach or sorrel, and sometimes they are served as a roll instead of a pie.

Excellent appetizer choices are the seasoned eggs, salty pancakes, marinated mushrooms proja, and during the summer, zucchini can be irresistibly tasty and refreshing. They are usually cut into circles and poached, but can also be served boiled and mixed with chopped garlic and parsley.

In the past it was necessary to prepare vegetables for the winter months when they could not be grown. This gave birth to another Macedonian tradition: mixed pickles, or torshi. This food, rich in vitamins and minerals, is prepared by soaking peppers, green tomatoes, cauliflower, carrots and pickles in vinegar.

Ajvar, another appetizer, is the pride of Macedonian cuisine and is characteristic of wintertime. The recipe, which includes red peppers, is one of the biggest secrets of the Balkan kitchen. It's traditionally prepared at home, in yards and gardens.

The ajvar has its own tasty companions such as lutenica, malidzano and different kinds of pindjur which accompany the top delicacies. Lunch can also be combined with garlic, potato or bean dip. The dips are easy to prepare, and just like the pindjur, can be served in a traditional crock, accompanied by cheese.

The ritual of prolonged meze in Macedonia presents a magic of combined tastes that one will never want to end.

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# Prolonged Meze





**M**acedonia has environmentally clean meadows and pastures teeming with specific flora that gives the white and yellow cheeses produced in this region their special taste and aroma.

Over the centuries, cheese has been an important part of traditional cuisine. The white cheese is similar to feta and can be made out of goat, sheep or cow milk, or a mixture of sheep and cow milk. When we speak of yellow cheese, one must know that the most famous are made in Galichink and Lazaropole.

For their uniqueness, we can highlight cheeses from three regions – Mariovo, Berovo and Galichink. These rare cheeses are a national Macedonian feature; their quality is due to the natural ambiance and the healthy environment in which they are produced.

The Mariovo hard cheese, the dairy specialties from Maleshevo and the sheep cheese from Galichnik are an integral part of Macedonian cuisine and no one has ever remained indifferent towards their specific taste and special aroma. The cheese is usually made by masters who follow ancient ways of preparation.

When you taste Macedonian cheese, you taste the mountains and the eternal greenery, as well as the traditions and secrets used by the master cheese makers.



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# Cheese Sensation





Rakia is an inseparable part of the Macedonian cuisine, which when combined with a nice salad, good conversation and company, warms the soul, whets the appetite and brings people closer.

It's an old custom to welcome a guest at home with a glass of rakia and meze. Rakia is traditionally served in special glass flask called "chokanche". When consumed moderately it's believed to improve your health; it's no coincidence that our ancestors have called it natural remedy.

Macedonia has a secular tradition of careful cultivation of grape vines and rakia production. The most common rakia is "lozova". Produced with white or yellow grapes it is 40 to 60% ABV. The metropolis of grapes and rakia is the city of Kavadarci.

In certain parts of Macedonia the "slivovica" (plum brandy/rakia) can be very popular. One can feel the taste and aroma of the plum, and some people say that it has a rejuvenating power.

One of the best known Macedonian brands is the popular Strumica Mastika, a rakia seasoned with mastic. It is best in the region of Strumica where it has been produced for more than three centuries. This Mastika is the most famous of the Balkans, and the exquisite quality comes from the fact that it is made exclusively with natural ingredients.

The Macedonians traditionally produce rakia at home. The process is not very complicated but it requires a great deal of experience, time and care. It's wonderful when you get your hands on an older rakia that was stored in oak or mulberry barrels. This rakia has a special gold color and a rich taste.

The Macedonian brandies have long been awarded at international fairs and are well accepted by everyone who has tried them. There are many varieties – it is up to your will and humor to see which one you will choose and how it will be combined. Until one tries a Macedonian rakia, one will never truly be acquainted with our country.

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# The Dew of Heaven





People who abide to the tradition of slava celebrate certain days of the year when they open the door of their homes to their circle of close friends and family. Many of these celebrations fall on fasting days when the meals should not include meat.

One of the most famous traditional fasting dishes in Macedonia is also one of Macedonia's most remarkable gourmet dishes: tavče gravče. It's made of Macedonian beans and requires a great deal of care and skill to prepare. Its stoneware serving dish gives the beautifully seasoned taste another special dimension.

Another important dish is sarma (stuffed cabbage leaves), which represent a feature of the Macedonian kitchen. It's usually made of pickled cabbage whose leaves are separated and filled with a mixture of rice and spices. It's rolled to get the specific form of this tasty meal commonly served during the winter. Once a person tastes sarma they will never want to stop eating – they simply melt in your mouth. Of course, if one is not fasting they can try sarma stuffed with minced meat.

The fasting peppers usually made of bell peppers are another Macedonian specialty.

The Macedonian fasting kitchen is a celebration for any vegetarian, but even if you are not a vegetarian and you're invited to a fasting slava (family feast honoring the patron saint), don't worry because with such a variety of foods, one can never be left hungry.



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# fasting food





Macedonia has many authentic sorts of grapes which are grown in the region, however, only one of them can be found exclusively on Macedonian land. We are speaking of Stanushina, an old variety of grape that can be found in the Tikvesh region.

The main feature of this variety is its durability. There was a period in the past when it was about to become extinct because no one paid it any attention, but it survived.

This variety of grape is used for production of high quality wine.

The vines of the Stanushina ripen quite late, yet the cold does not affect the good yield. When taken to the cellar, the grape requires special attention and serious commitment. On a good year, it can produce a wine with mean strengths of 11 to 12 percent alcohol.

The wine has an intense aroma of strawberry, raspberry, and the fruity notes are best enjoyed when the wine is consumed young at 10 to 16°C. It's an excellent choice to combine it with light and creamy puddings. The main features of the wine are mostly expressed when served with lettuce, sarma, stuffed bell peppers or some light dishes.

The color of the wine made of Stanushina is characteristically pale, but it has a rich extract and high acidity level which give the beverage an exquisite freshness. People with refined taste adore this wine and never miss the opportunity to grab a bottle of wine for themselves when visiting Macedonia.

Taste this valuable wine from the only endemic Macedonian grape. After one sip you'll realize that you taste part of the Macedonian history embedded in the grape.

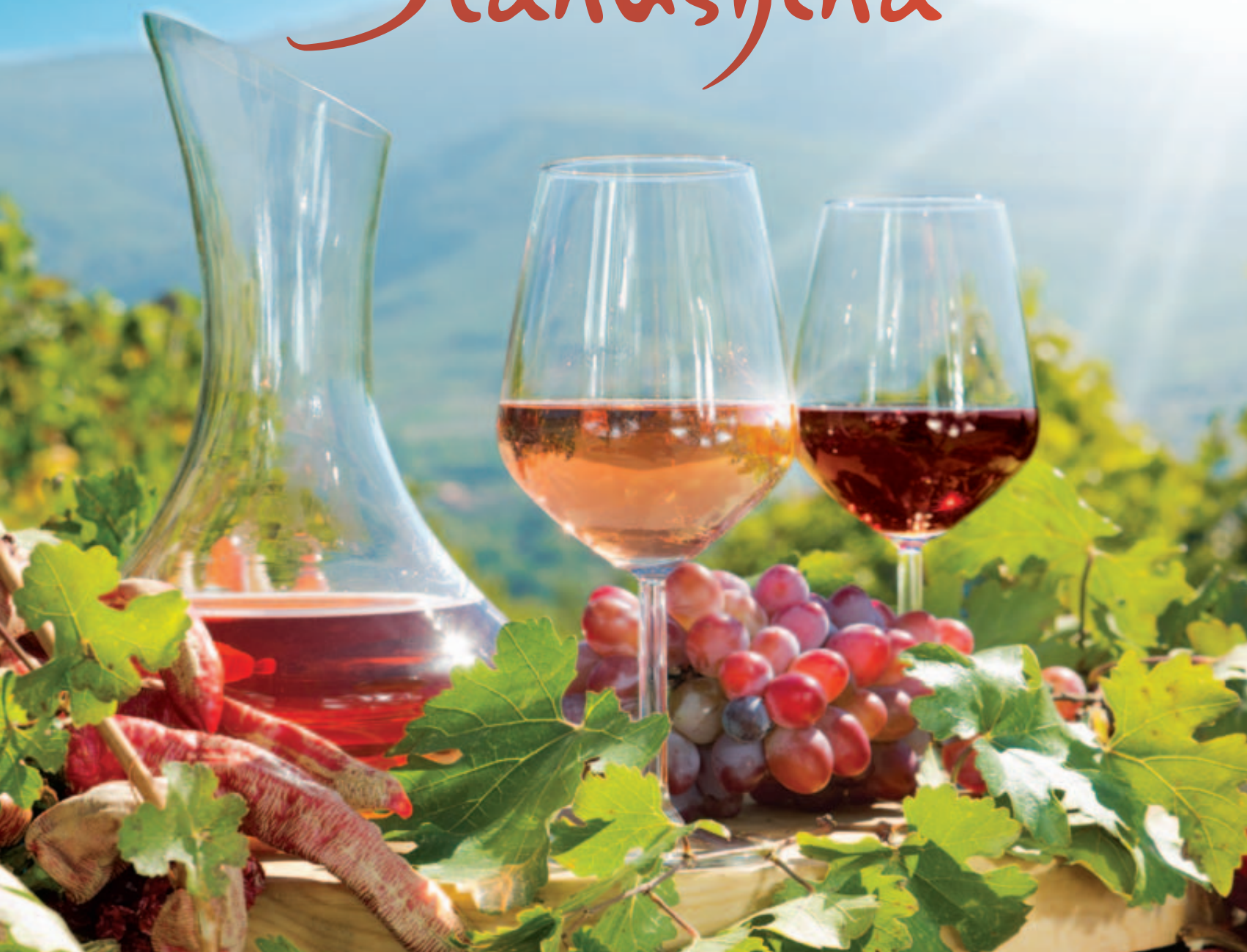


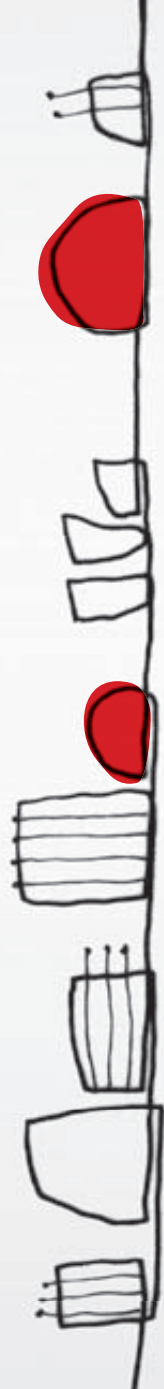
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Stanushina





Our people say that the fish swim three times – in the water, in the pot and in the wine.

In Macedonia there are lakes and rivers which are characterized by incredible cleanliness, thus there is tradition of fish specialties and flawless wine used to prepare some of them.

One of these specific traditional recipes is “Drunken carp”. This fish can be found in Prespa, the town in which the recipe is best prepared. A well-cleaned carp is cut and seasoned with garlic, parsley, lemon crest and carrot, and during the preparation, it’s constantly sprinkled with tomato sauce and large quantities of white wine. It can be served in combination with potato salad or rice.

The Ohrid Lake is well known for the endemic type of Ohrid trout. The color of its meat is white or pink. The traditional recipe in Ohrid is the so-called “tresena pastrmka”, a boneless baked trout. Another specialty is the trout stew.

The best known Dojran specialties are based on fish, especially perch and rud. The most famous recipe is the fish on reeds. This meal is prepared by folding the fish – usually rud – in a reed and placed directly on embers to cook.

For the greatest pleasure when consuming these fish specialties, it’s advised to open a bottle of white wine, such as Smederevka or Zhilavka.

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*fish*





Relief glass of wine - bowl with calotte body from  
III-I century BC, decorated with a motif of  
"Macedonian shield", found in Kardar Hill site in  
Gevgeliya.

The leading grape variety for production of white wines in Macedonia is Smederevka. This variety is one of the oldest in the Balkans, and in the Macedonian grape growing areas it's most common in the Povardarie region. Smederevka ripens late (early October) and it usually gives a great yield. Since it is sensitive to low temperatures, it should be grown in warm wine growing regions in healthy and deep soils. The grapes have thin, translucent, and hard skin with greenish-yellow color; its taste is juicy and pleasant.

The wine produced from Smederevka has a smooth flavor with a fine wine aroma. Smederevka is a table wine and is best served at a temperature of 8-10°C with light appetizers, white meat, cheese, fish and green seasonal salads. During Macedonia's hot summer days, Smederevka is mixed with soda and served as a spritzer.

Zhilavka is a type of grape found in the warm wine growing regions of Veles, Ovche Pole and Tikvesh. Grown on weak, rocky, limy and dry soils, Zhilavka ripens late. This sensitive grape has a characteristic thin and translucent skin of a greenish-yellow color. The grape is juicy and sweet and beautifully refreshing with a fruity flavor and aroma that produces top quality wines.

The wine produced of Zhilavka has an aroma that is characteristic for this breed. This dry white wine has a full body and is best served at temperature of 10 to 12 degrees. We recommend it with seafood, pasta, white meat, cheese, appetizers based on cheese, and with desserts.



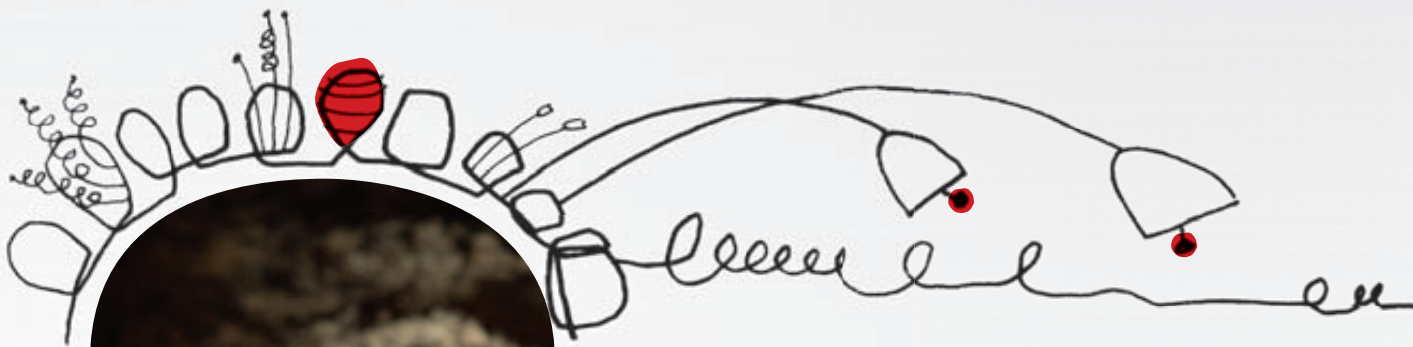
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# Smederevka & Zhilavka





Until you come to Macedonia, you will never know the true taste of lamb meat. Juicy and irresistible, attractive in its looks and taste, many people say that it melts in your mouth.

When thinking of main dishes on the Macedonian table, we usually think of a meat specialty, especially lamb. Its specific taste and top quality results from clean and rich pastures.

Almost every house in Macedonia has its own recipe for a perfect roasted lamb, and the preparation of a great lunch does not always require complicated preparation.

Usually it's prepared by slicing the meat's surface and filling it with garlic and rosemary. The meat is garnished with potatoes, pumpkin and onion, or any other vegetable.

The tradition of preparing lamb is seen on holidays or picnics. The festive table for one of the biggest Orthodox holidays, Easter, is always filled with lamb meat because the lamb is an important symbol of grace, chastity and cleanliness.

Besides the usual manner of preparation, there is an old recipe coming from Debar where the meat is served with dried plums.

The lamb meat requires heavier wines, such as Vranec, Prokupec or Kratoshija.

The lunch dishes on the Macedonian traditional table usually include dishes with pork and beef, but not excluding the well known stuffed bell peppers, stuffed zucchini and sarma, which are usually stuffed with minced meat and combined with vegetables.

A person needs to enjoy a lunch in Macedonia so they can realize why this table is one of the best known in Europe.



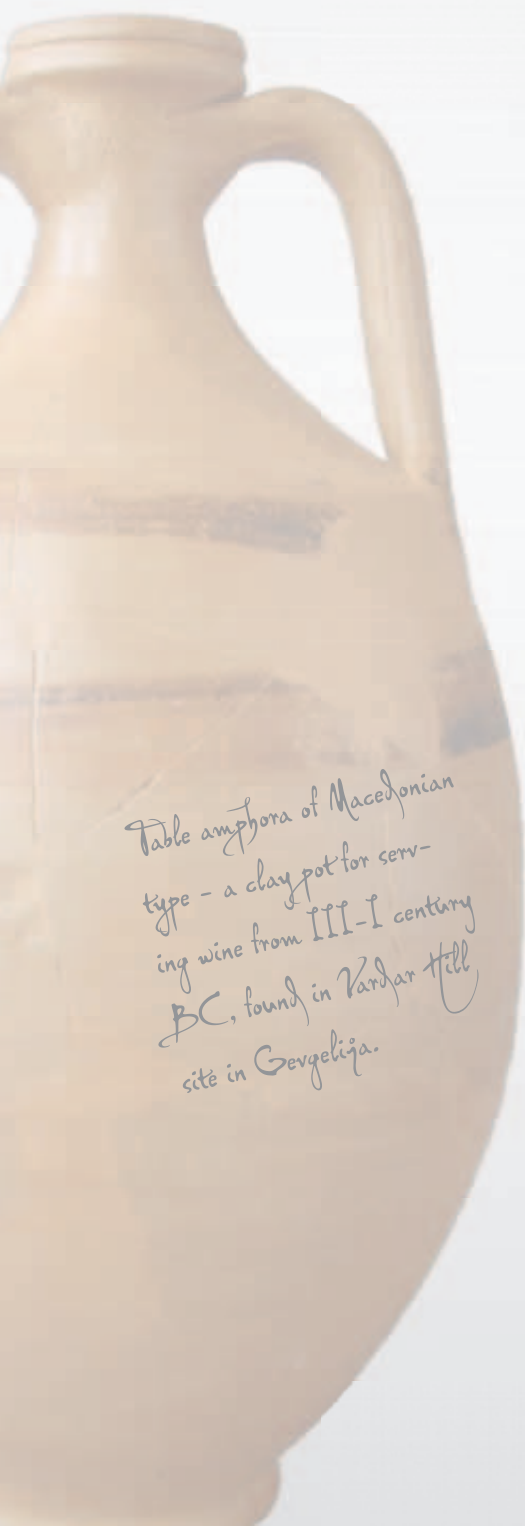
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# Meat Specialties





*Table amphora of Macedonian  
type - a clay pot for serv-  
ing wine from III-I century  
BC, found in Karjar Hill  
site in Gervelija.*



The specific grape variety Prokupec is a forgotten Balkan grape that cannot be found elsewhere in the world. In Macedonia it can be usually found in limited areas, such as Pelagonija, Polog, Pčinja and Osogovo region.

This variety ripens very late and the skin is thick and dark-blue in color. It has an extremely rich yield. The Prokupec requires fertile and mildly humid soils, and on dry and weak soils it can suffer from dryness.

The Prokupec grown in good conditions is a good base for reinforcement of red wines, making it appropriate for mixing with other red wines.

The Prokupec represents a harmony of color, aroma and taste. It is a light, well-colored, and easy-drinking wine.

This fresh wine usually has a 10 to 13 percent alcohol content. It has a ruby red color and the aromas are a combination of cherry and sour cheery. It is best served at a temperature of 16-18°C with light appetizers, pasta and boiled vegetables.

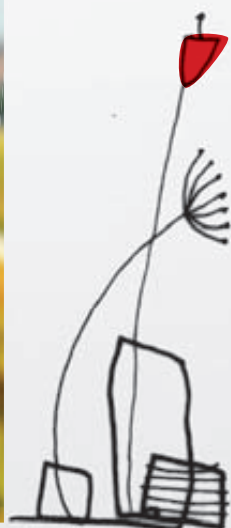
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Prokuper





The most important and leading variety for red wine production in Macedonia is the Vranec. It originates from a natural interbreeding and is found in large quantities in the wine growing areas of the Povardarie region. It can also be found in smaller quantities in Macedonia's other wine growing areas. The grape has a dark red color and it has best yields on moderate, fertile and humid soils.

The young Vranec wines have a light purple color, with an aroma of strawberry jam and wild berries. The mature medium bodied and strong wines have an intense ruby red color, which is rich in extracts. This wine has a harmony of complex aromas similar to wild berries, rich tannins, chocolate and liquor. The Vranec wine served at room temperature pairs well with all Macedonian dishes, as well as with red meat, game, barbeque and smoked meat.

Kratoshija is a variety of grape that has a long history in Macedonia. It's believed that within Macedonia's territory it has been grown since ancient times, when wine was poured in amphora and sent to the noblemen. Despite the fact that it was nearly extinct, the Kratoshija has survived and the wine makers have turned it into a top quality variety.

The Kratoshija has a high wine pedigree and is one of the best known types of red grapes in Macedonia. It ripens in late September in the Povardarie region, and even later in other regions. It requires mildly fertile and humid soils and withstands the dryness by developing a sugary taste and more intense color.

The Kratoshija wines are mildly strong with 11-12 percent alcohol. This wine is dry and red and has a dark red color with a rich harmony of flavor and aroma. It is best combined with all types of barbequed meat and piquant cheese. We recommend serving it at a temperature of 18 do 20 degrees.

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# Kranec & Kratoshija





There is no better way to complete a good meal rather than giving in to the sweet pleasure of dessert.

The Macedonian cuisine has many traditional desserts. One of them is “slatko” (food preserve) or jam, which according to ancient custom, are served to guests as an act of welcome. Different kinds of slatko can be prepared – strawberry, raspberry, apricot and wild berries – but especially characteristic is the slatko made of wild figs commonly prepared in southwestern Macedonia.

The Macedonian honey is all natural and has a special flavor thanks to our untouched meadows. The honey in the Macedonian cuisine is used as a spread and additive in sweets, and is also spread over roasted pumpkin.

A characteristically old dessert in Macedonia is the molasses which is produced from grape juice. It has a unique flavor and aroma, as well as healing qualities. The sweets and cakes in the past were prepared with molasses.

Furthermore, our specialties of pumpkin pie and poppy cake have to be tasted.

There is no house in Macedonia where the hosts will not serve you some dessert whose recipe has been kept for generations in their family, and with one purpose only: to sweeten your soul with some tasty and irresistible homemade dessert.

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# Sweet Closure





The Temjanika is a variety of grape whose origin is not precise, and it is thought to come from the Middle East. It is one of the oldest and most widespread varieties throughout the world and in Macedonia it can be found in the Tikvesh region. The variety's name comes from its intense smell of thyme.

The Temjanika ripens in late August or early September on light and mildly humid soils. It is the best Muscat variety for warm wine growing regions and has an average yield. The grape has a thick, hard skin with greenish-yellow color, with rusty colored dots on the side that receives sun. The juice is colorless with an intense Muscat aroma.

The Temjanika gives high-quality, semi-dry and dessert Muscat wines. The Temjanika wine has an intense yellowish-gold color with nuances of green and its fresh taste is felt for a long time. Main aromas are those of Muscat and are spicy, while aromas of apricot, dry plum and orange crest can also be felt.

The Temjanika wine is served at a temperature of 10-12 degrees, and can be consumed with light food, white meat, seafood and desserts. However, bearing in mind that it has rich aroma, it can also be served and consumed individually.

*Kantharos - a glass of wine from the IV-III century BC, decorated with a red painted ivy branch, found in Vardar Hill site in Gevgelija.*



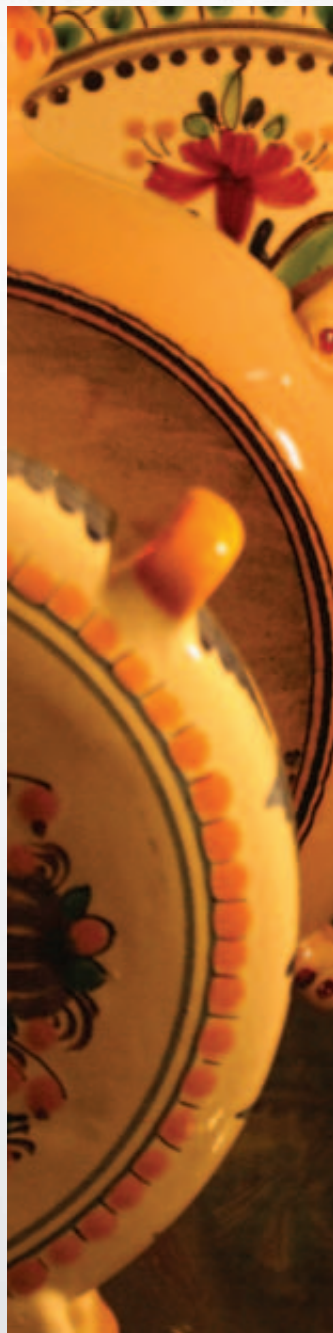
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# Temjanika





The history of man is related to the history of wine. The story of wine production is thousands of years old, and the experience was improved and upgraded for perfection of the production process of the ambrosia grape.

By the neolith prehistoric period the first preconditions for wine production had been established. The archaeological findings point to the fact that the first wines were produced of wild fruits, including wild grape. The grape was tamed in the early bronze period in the territory of the Middle East. Grapes and rice have been used for production of mixed fermented beverages since 7000 B.C. in China, and the production of wine using grape fermentation started in 6000 B.C. on the territory of what is now Georgia and Iran. Increased wine production appeared among the Sumerians and the Egyptians in the 3000 B.C.

According to research, contemporary wine culture originates from the Minoan and Mycenaean civilization. The development of enology was significantly influenced by the Roman Empire and the wine regions in Western Europe are a result of its development.

In the beginning of the 19th century a great deal of the European vineyards suffered because of the epidemic Phylloxera. Many varieties of grapes were destroyed at that time, but the Balkans were not heavily affected, so local varieties have survived until today.

Wine was consumed in Antique Macedonia when the “Days of Dionysus” were held to honor the god of wine. The members of the Macedonian royal dynasty are known as wine lovers. In some of the Tikvesh villages there are remains of houses constructed with clay bricks where the bricks and clay were made with wine. During the Roman Empire Macedonia was one of the most significant wine regions in the Empire. The rich wine history continued when Christianity arrived: according to tradition, the wine was included in Orthodox celebrations, and for weddings it was given to the bride and groom with bread and salt.

Today, Macedonia has more than 24,000 ha of vineyards, and the intense aromas of the Macedonian wines are a result of the combined influence of the Mediterranean and Continental climate.



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A group of women in classical-style dresses are harvesting grapes in a vineyard. They are wearing white and light-colored dresses with floral patterns and have green grape leaves and clusters on their heads. The scene is set in a vineyard with rows of grapevines. In the background, there are rolling hills and a small town or village under a warm, golden sunset sky. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and historical.

# History of Wine



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Macedonian cuisine is extremely specific because it combines many different spices. Used in the right amount and in the right place, spices add a unique taste, smell and appearance to dishes and make them distinctive. Each spice has its own magical influence.

Many herbs have always been used to add flavor and healing features to the food. Among the herbs used as spices which grow in Macedonia, the best known and most commonly used is parsley. Basil, sage, rosemary and mint are also commonly added to food. Thyme has also always been a favorite herb, hence its Macedonian name: “majchina dushica” (“mother’s soul”).

Teas made of rosemary, thyme, basil, sage, yellow wort and chamomile are most famous among Macedonians. Especially characteristic is sideritis. This one-year herb grows in the high mountain regions and is known in the people’s medicine as a universal remedy against colds, flu and for overall reinforcement of the immune system.

Other specific spices that can be found in Macedonian cuisine are the bukovec, summer savory, sweet clover, dried tomatoes, dried peppers, and in Radovich we have the characteristic poppy salt produced of the Macedonian poppy.

To truly taste spices one must never be bashful and should simply use bread and dip it into the spices. Sometimes, something so simple as dipping the bread in salt or bukovec can unleash many unexpected pleasures and tastes. These are the basic rituals of the Macedonian hospitality and the essence of the Macedonian cuisine.

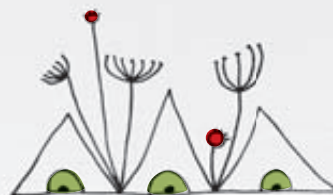


# Spices & Teas





# Caption



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|-----|--|-----|--|
| 01. | Popova Kula Winery, Demir Kapija               | 40. | Kerem Winery, Gevgelija                |
| 02. | Radevski Winery, Demir Kapija                  | 41. | Jostela Winery, Gevgelija              |
| 03. | Elenov Winery, Demir Kapija                    | 42. | Rivin Winery, Gevgelija                |
| 04. | Grkov Winery, Kavadarci                        | 43. | Dehri Winery, Bogdanci                 |
| 05. | Bujuk Winery, Kavadarci                        | 44. | Pekopromet Winery, Bogdanci            |
| 06. | Gligorovi Winery, Kavadarci                    | 45. | Valandovo Winery, Valandovo            |
| 07. | Filovski Winery, Demir Kapija                  | 46. | Izverno Winery– Vranovski Anovi, Veles |
| 08. | Riveko Winery, Negotino                        | 47. | Velvin Winery, Veles                   |
| 09. | Venec Winery, Negotino                         | 48. | Nikolov Winery, Veles                  |
| 10. | Tikvesko sonce Winery, Demir Kapija            | 49. | Lozar Winery, Veles                    |
| 11. | Sarafov Winery, Negotino                       | 50. | Sato Sopot Winery, Veles               |
| 12. | Eros Winery, Kavadarci                         | 51. | Tristo Winery, Veles                   |
| 13. | Tikves Winery, Kavadarci                       | 52. | Brusani Winery, Skopje                 |
| 14. | Traikovsky Winery and distillery , Kavadarci   | 53. | Divino Winery, Skopje                  |
| 15. | Mojsoff Winery, Kavadarci                      | 54. | Kartal Winery, Skopje                  |
| 16. | Ilijevi Winery, Kavadarci                      | 55. | Skovin Winery, Skopje                  |
| 17. | Donov Winery, Kavadarci                        | 56. | Kamnik Winery, Skopje                  |
| 18. | GMN Winery, Kavadarci                          | 57. | Vinar Winery, Skopje                   |
| 19. | Peca Winery, Kavadarci                         | 58. | Bord-Life Winery, Skopje               |
| 20. | Na Vin Winery, Kavadarci                       | 59. | JSC Strumicko pole Winery, Strumica    |
| 21. | Letprom Winery, Kavadarci                      | 60. | Dalvina Winery, Strumica               |
| 22. | Bovin Winery, Negotino                         | 61. | Vineks Winery, Radovich                |
| 23. | Povardarie Winery, Negotino                    | 62. | Aleksandrija Winery, Radovich          |
| 24. | Sato Rojal Winery, Negotino                    | 63. | Vinasa Winery, Radovich                |
| 25. | Lavin Winery, Negotino                         | 64. | Ezimit Winery, Shtip                   |
| 26. | Antigona Winery, Negotino                      | 65. | Anevski Winery, Shtip                  |
| 27. | Pivka Winery, Negotino                         | 66. | Imako-Vino Winery, Shtip               |
| 28. | Pamela Winery, Negotino                        | 67. | Dion Winery, Shtip                     |
| 29. | Kabranov Winery and distillery , Negotino      | 68. | Trickovic Winery, Kumanovo             |
| 30. | Vinaris Winery, Negotino                       | 69. | Premium Winery, Kumanovo               |
| 31. | Dudin Winery, Negotino                         | 70. | Vekovnik Winery, Kumanovo              |
| 32. | Vardarska dolina Winery, Negotino              | 71. | Nipro Winery, Kumanovo                 |
| 33. | Fonko Winery, Negotino                         | 72. | Zemsil Rik Sileks Winery, Kratovo      |
| 34. | Stobi Winery, Gradsko                          | 73. | Vik Andzelo Winery, Vinica             |
| 35. | Slavin Winery, Kavadarci                       | 74. | Pirgan Winery, Prilep                  |
| 36. | Vinea Winery, Kavadarci                        | 75. | Lozar Pelisterska Winery, Bitola       |
| 37. | Popov Winery, Kavadarci                        | 76. | Ohrid Winery , Ohrid                   |
| 38. | Maleric Winery, Kavadarci                      | 77. | Km-Vin Winery, Struga                  |
| 39. | Rigo Impeks Wine production company, Gevgelija |     |  |





One can not develop taste from what is of average quality, but only from the very best.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe



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