

Major religious festivals and landmark social events are connected to specific, usually complicated dishes.

At social affairs, such as weddings, christenings and religious festivals, the main dish is pilaff rice while special types of bread are prepared and decorated with a lot of skill and craftsmanship.

## Pilaff

### Ingredients

1 Kg zigouri(2 years old lamb)  
1 hen , weighting 1½ Kg  
2 water glasses rice (not granular)  
6 water glasses broth  
2 tbsp. Butter made of staka  
½ water glass lemon juice.



### Instructions

Wash the meat well. Fill a saucepan with water, add a tbsp. Salt and boil the meat at low heat for at least 1½ hour. When it is ready, take the meat out and strain its broth. Season the meat with salt and pepper. Put the broth in a saucepan, boil it, add the rice and cook for about 20' on medium heat, stirring continuously to avoid sticking until it absorbs almost all the broth. Sizzle the butter in a coffee –pot, pour it over the pilaff and leave it covered for 5'. Serve the rice and meat separately.

If you want, 5' before the rice is done and before you add the butter, you can add ¼ water glass lemon juice in the casserole.

## Xirotigana (fritters)

### Ingredients

1kg flour  
½ cup raki or lemon juice  
1tbsp. olive oil  
1tbsp salt  
as much water as need (about 2 cups)  
For syrup  
2 cups sugar  
2cups water  
1 cinnamon stick  
1 cup honey  
3tbsp lemon juice  
Cinnamon powder and ground nuts for sprinkling



### Instructions

Knead rather smooth and elastic dough with the above ingredients.

Roll out the dough to long, almost paper-thin strips, 3cm wide and 25 cm long.

Heat the oil in a pan.

Wrap one strip at a time around your fingers, first using two fingers, then three and then four; stick the edge and deep-fry. With the help of two forks, turn these rings upside down, taking care not to spoil the shape. When each fritter is nice and brown, take it out of the pan and place it on kitchen roll.

Prepare the syrup when all the fritters are ready. Boil the sugar in water, with the cinnamon, for 5' and add the honey and the lemon. Dip each fritter in the very hot syrup and when you take it out, place it on dish and sprinkle with nuts (or sesame seeds) and the cinnamon powder.

## Sardine festival

At the small port of Souda and Nea Hora in Hania they hold the sardine festival in September, guests have the opportunity to sample mouth-watering grilled sardines to the sound of Cretan music.

A fish-festival also takes place in Elouda in the end of September, signifying the begging of the fishing period.



## Chestnut festival

In Prasse of Kydonia and in Elos of Kissamos the chestnut festival is held every year around the end of October – beginning of November. Chestnuts hold a special place in local cuisine.



## **Tsikoudia festival**

In October the tsikoudia festival is held, organized by Hania prefecture local authorities. A tsikoudia (local raki-like distilled drink) cauldron is set up in the old Chania customs office and guests enjoy warm tsikoudia accompanied by rich traditional dishes. The same festival is also held in November in Loutraki of Kydonia, in Kandano, in Platania, in Plaka of Rethimnon and in Lasithi .



## **Koures, lamb shearing festival**

One of the most impressive held in the last months of the spring or in some cases in early September, in every mountainous region of Crete, during which all farmers breeding sheep invite their friends and family to help with the shearing, a grand party follows with plenty of food and drink.



## **Kazanemata (cauldron festival)**

In the autumn, raki production is cause for non-stop celebration from one side of Crete to the other, the occasion is known as “kazanemata” (from the Greek word kazani for the distillation cauldron). Raki distillation is combined with mandinades(tradition Cretan rhymes), song and dancing, and above all, excellent Cretan mezedes.

