



FOOD CORRIDORS

EMPOWERING RURAL & URBAN FOOD CONNECTIONS
WITHIN EUROPEAN REGIONS

from nature
to your table!

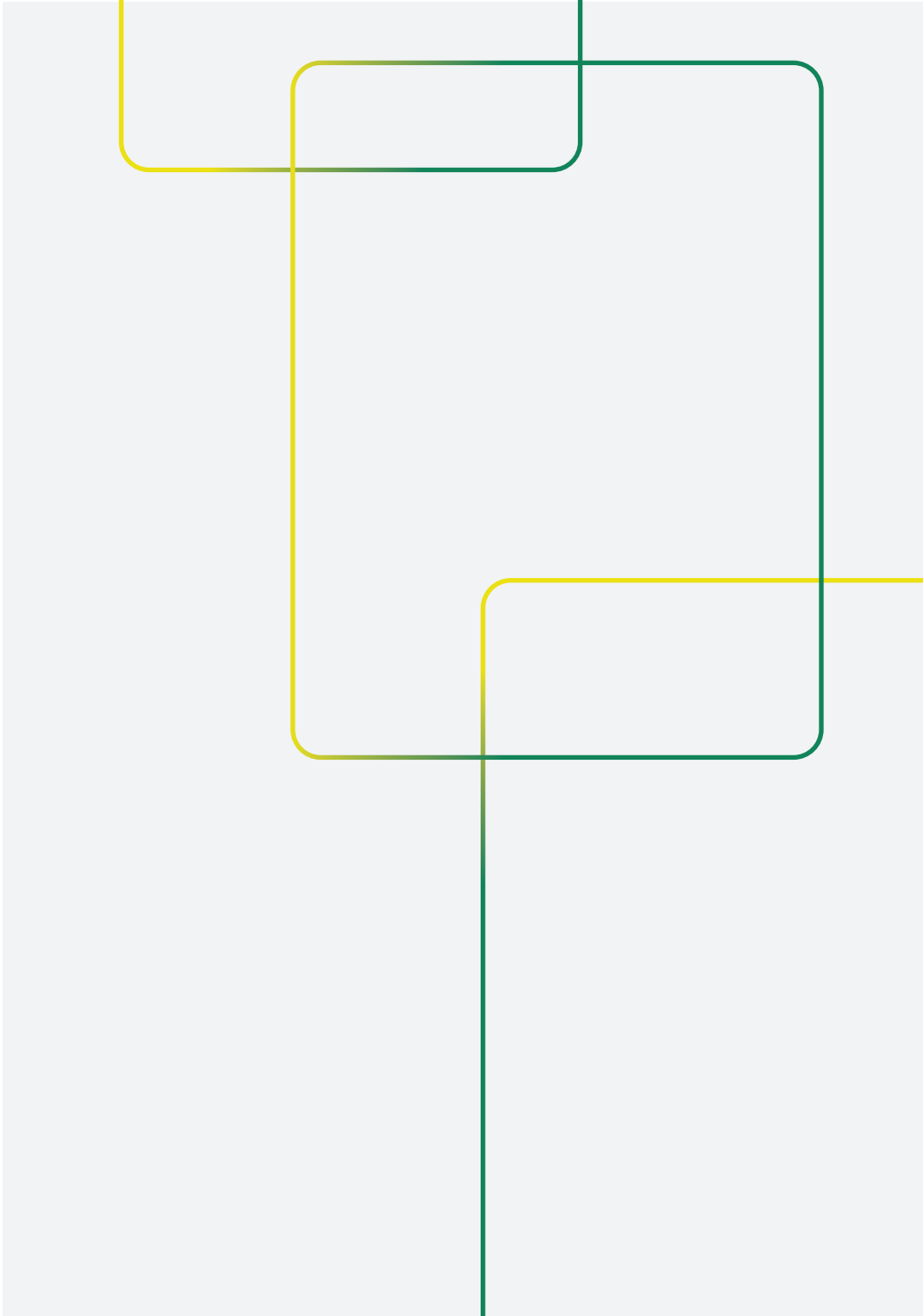


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Introduction

The present publication is a deliverable of the project «FOOD CORRIDORS - Empowering Rural & Urban Food Connection Within the European Union» of the Territorial Cooperation Program URBACT III.

The Municipality of Larissa collaborates with six partners from Portugal, Slovenia, Estonia, Italy, Hungary and Romania, with the aim to create a network of cities that promote local and healthy food and boost small production and consumption chains .

The present guide is an action of the project aiming to showcase local production and promote the agri-food sector and the development of local identity based on economic, social and environmental sustainability.

The information presented in this publication are the products of research of secondary literature and collection of oral testimonies, in the context of the project «The Heritage of Taste», of the organization QUALIA, which studies cultural practices related to gastronomy and health.



Feta Cheese PDO

Feta cheese is definitely the most popular Greek cheese, both within the borders of the country and worldwide. Feta is made from Greek sheep and goat milk (strictly in the proportion of 70% sheep and 30% goat). In Greece, approximately 130,000 tons of feta cheese are produced every year, while its taste and aroma vary according to the region, climate, water and the animal's diet. In the wider area of Larissa, feta's taste is pleasantly acidic and salty. Feta cheese can be literally paired with any food (pasta, meat, salads, vegetables cooked in an olive oil-based sauce), it can be included in pies and sweets, but also «appears» on the table by itself, with olive oil, or olive oil and oregano. A version of feta often found in Thessaly is the "feta baked in parchment paper", where a piece of feta is wrapped in parchment paper with olive oil, oregano, tomato and peppers, and baked in the oven until warm and soft, but not melted. An amazing appetizer for Tsipouro and wine from Tirnavos.



Kaseri Cheese PDO

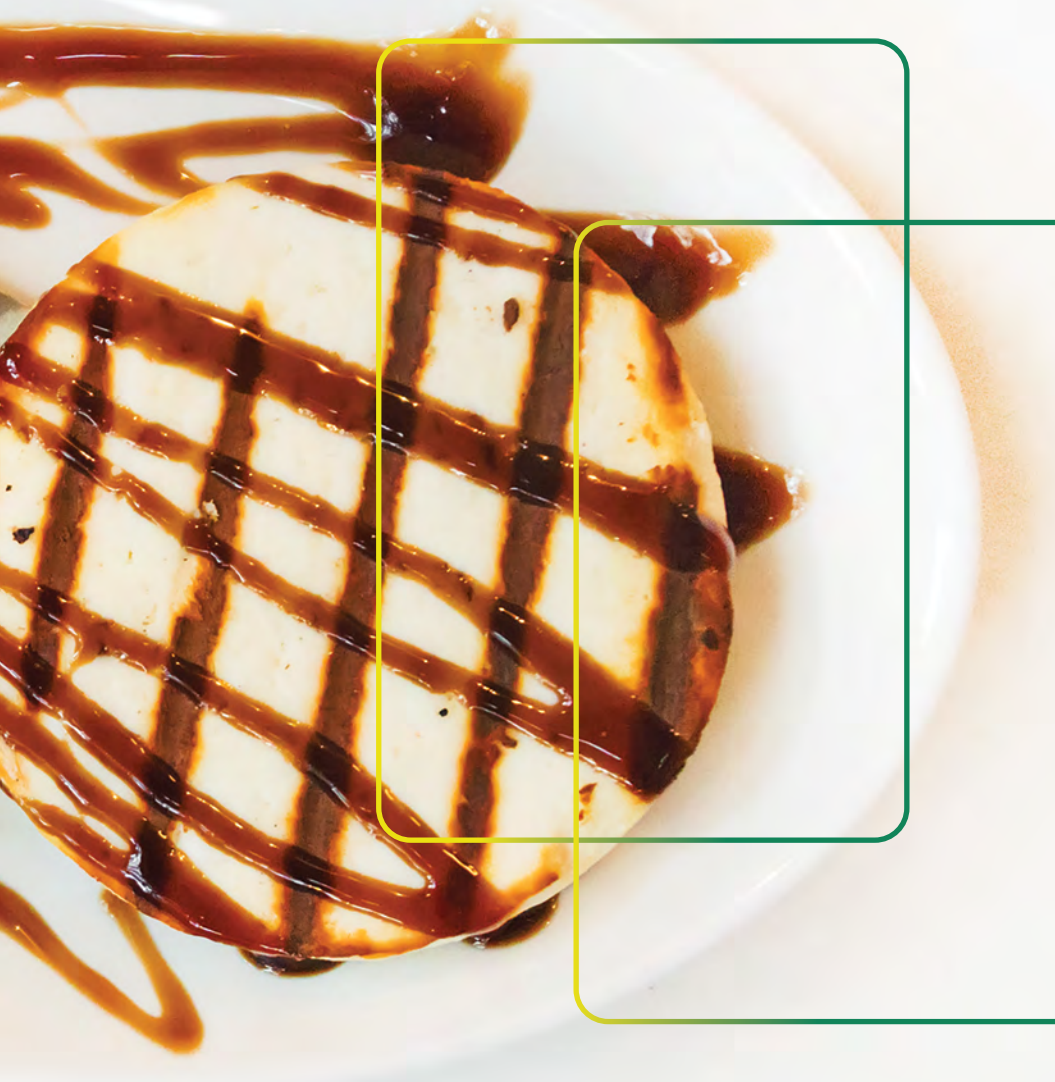
Kaseri is an extremely popular cheese in Greece and abroad, with a long culinary history. According to historical sources, kaseri arrived in Greece first in Thessaly, at the end of the 19th century (1890) via Bulgaria and Eastern Romilia. Kaseri is made from Greek sheep's milk or from a mixture of sheep's and goat's milk (in a ratio of no more than 20%). It is a cheese with a distinct aroma of milk and butter, which elevates pasta dishes, salads, simple sandwiches, savory tarts and pies. Of course, it can also be eaten raw, where its pleasantly fatty and mildly salty taste is highlighted, creating an excellent combination with a wine from Rapsani.



Manouri Cheese PDO

Manouri is made from 100% Greek goat and sheep milk, and has a characteristic creamy, soft texture and a sweet and mild taste. It is perfectly combined with dried fruits, sweet and salty jams and nuts and for this reason it always forms the basis of a richly flavored cheese plate. It goes great with full bodied red wine, leaving a rich mouthfeel. It can also be used in salads and sandwiches, creating a taste perfection with basil pesto. An excellent, warm version of it, is the breaded manouri with honey and sesame, for which we bread slices of manouri in flour, brush them with egg wash, and dip them in sesame. Fry them on both sides in hot olive oil and after leaving them on absorbent kitchen paper, pour honey over them.







Galotiri Cheese PDO

Galotiri is a spreadable soft white cheese, which is made from sheep's or goat's milk or a mixture of these. It stands out for its slightly sour and pleasant taste and is ideal for bruschettas with grilled vegetables, cherry tomatoes, olives and various cold cuts, while it is perfectly combined with freshly ground pepper but also with fresh oregano and thyme, creating a «mountainous» taste. Given its cool and crisp taste, it perfectly accompanies grilled red meat, pork and chicken. Because of its creamy texture, it is an excellent choice for salads, especially with legumes and quinoa, where it takes on the role of the sauce. In the taverns of the area of Larissa, galotiri can be found accompanying fried potatoes and grilled meat.





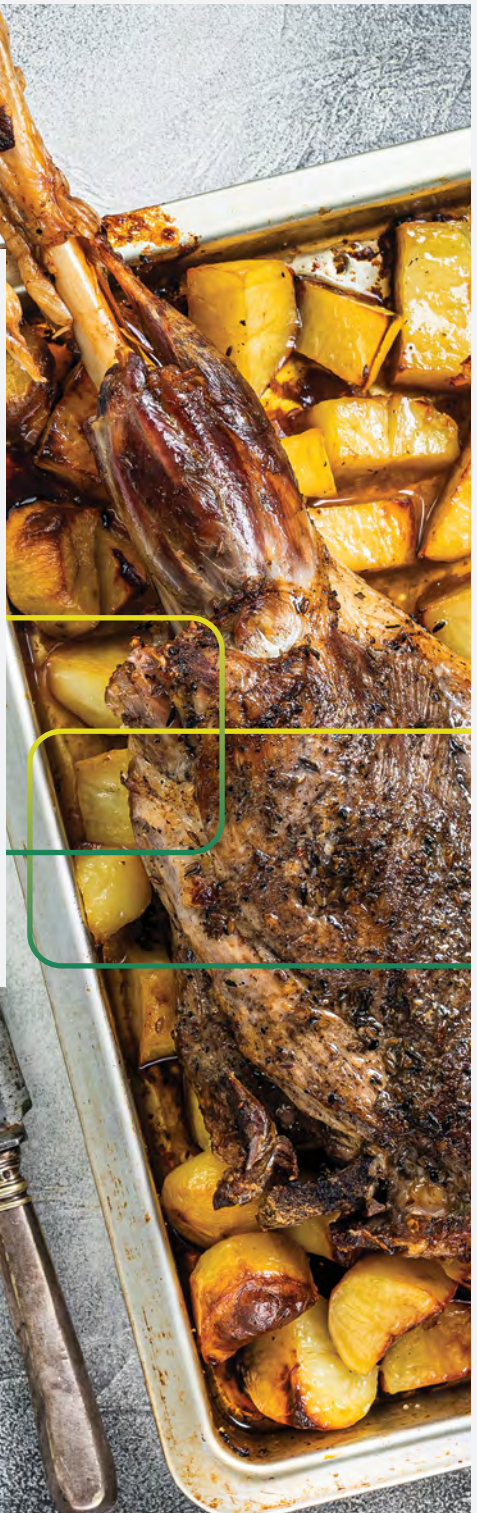
Batzos Cheese PDO

Batzos is a semi-hard white cheese made from sheep's or goat's milk or a mixture of them. Its taste is slightly sour, peppery and very salty and it is usually found pan seared, the famous Greek "saganaki". It is a top cheese delicacy for tsipouro and wine, because following a Larissa tradition, tsipouro and ouzo require cheeses and appetizers that stimulate thirst, so people will drink more water along with the alcohol. Batzos has low fat content (19.00g/100gr), so for an irresistible saganaki, flour a square piece of batzos and fry it in hot oil on both sides, until its crust takes on a golden colour. Serve it with plenty of lemon.



Elassona Lamb PDO

According to ELGO DIMITRA, «The Elassona lamb meat owes its quality characteristics to the special soil and climate conditions of the area (mountainous and semi-mountainous areas), with rich vegetation and a wide variety of plants (in Mt. Olympus alone 1,700 species of plants exist), some of which are aromatic. The antioxidant substances of many of these aromatic plants give a special aroma and taste to the milk and especially to the meat of the Elassona lambs, and for this reason is the top choice for consumers. The Elassona lamb is tender and very tasty and cooking it simply, with potatoes, in the oven, adding mustard, lemon, rosemary, oregano, paprika and garlic, is enough.





Ellassona Kid (young goat) PDO

The Ellassona young goat in 2021 attracted the interest of Jean-Marie Hoffmann, the chef of the French embassy, who created the dish «Kleftiko 2.0: Ellassona goat PDO with French comté cheese». This recipe with goat, potato mash, cheese and comté cheese biscuits, where the taste of Greece and France meet through two of their PDO products, is a must try. The recipe was published in Gastronomos magazine, and its short version is this: place the meat in a deep dish with butter, olive oil, garlic, onion, a tomato cut in quarters, coarsely chopped roasted Florina pepper and salt, and marinate for 2 hours. Put everything on a baking sheet and add the potatoes and 150 gr of comté cheese, cut into small cubes. Bake in a preheated oven at 150°C for 3 hours and 30 minutes. For the «tuile comté» cheese biscuits, heat a non-stick pan on high temperature, and with a tablespoon take spoonfuls of the grated cheese and put them in the pan, creating medium discs and let them «bake» for about 2 minutes, until they turn brown. Garnish with caramelised onion, mashed potatoes and sauce from the juices of the grilled meat and broth.





Rapsani Wines PDO

Every bottle of Rapsani wine contains both the winemaking tradition of the region and the cultural history of its community, for which the grape harvest was of prominent importance. Rapsani wines cannot be placed on the market earlier than 6 months after their production. Their taste is dry but full and they go great with cheeses, cold cuts, roasts and also unique pasta dishes. It is no coincidence that the legend of Nectar in Greek mythology is connected to Rapsani, as the god Dionysos gathered the grapes from the vineyards of the region and made the finest wine, which he then offered to the gods of Mt. Olympus, in order to celebrate his four sons with Ariadne.





Ellassona Wines

PGI

From the small copper pitchers in which the wine was being served in the legendary steakhouses and taverns of Ellassona, to the modern wine labels, this particular area gives us excellent wines, from vines on the south side of Mt. Olympus. White, rosé, red – dry, semi-dry, semi-sweet, sweet, from Debina, Rhoditis, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Trebbiano, Muscat Hamburg, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Syrah, create a new fine quality wine culture that will surely establish itself as a «new» tradition.





Krania Wines PGI

In Krania, on the eastern slopes of Mt. Olympus and at altitudes from 350m to 750m, Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot are cultivated with great care and passion, which give us the amazing white and red dry wines of Krania. The altitude and the mountain winds of the region can be "felt" in the wines of Krania, and they contribute to the creation of special wines with a «robust» taste, which go perfectly with every dish, from cheese platters and charcuterie, to traditional stews of the region such as the slow-roasted young goat with potatoes.





Krannonas Wines PGI

In the prefecture of Larissa, in the area of Krannonas, and at altitudes from 300m to 400m, excellent Sauvignon Blanc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Syrah are cultivated, which produce very high quality dry white and red wines. The wines of Krannonas stand out for their aromatic character and their «sweet» acidity and they perfectly accompany fruits, cheeses, pasta and meat dishes.



Tirnavos Wines PGI

The economic, social and cultural life of Tirnavos is inextricably connected to viticulture and the production not only of tsipouro, but also of good wine, as historical sources state, as early as from the 17th century. In 1817, the scholar Ioannis Oikonomou Logiotatos, wrote that «The people of Tirnavos are pious, reveller and extravagant, in a way where it is rare not to see someone there not drinking a lot». Therefore, the people of Tirnavos, loving wine so much themselves, created a series of excellent wines for the visitors of the region as well, labels which now, can be found all over Greece and abroad.



Tsipouro from Tirnavos PDO

Tsipouro started its journey from Tirnavos, and it is the spirit that made the wider region famous throughout Greece and abroad. According to historical sources, the people of Tirnavos learned the process of distillation from Bulgarian perfumers. In the middle of the 19th century, a Turnavite, Zisis Misouras, tried to boil grapes. His effort was crowned with success and by collecting the distillate liquid, drop by drop, he created a new product, which he named tsipouro. Zisis Misouras created the first distillery and officially released the first famous Tsipouro Tirnavou between the years 1852 and 1855. This fine spirit is now synonymous with going out with friends and is a social and culinary event, as each order is accompanied by special appetizers. Its main distinction, but also a point of contention among the people of Larissa, is whether it is better to consume it «with anise or without».



Cherries from Aghia

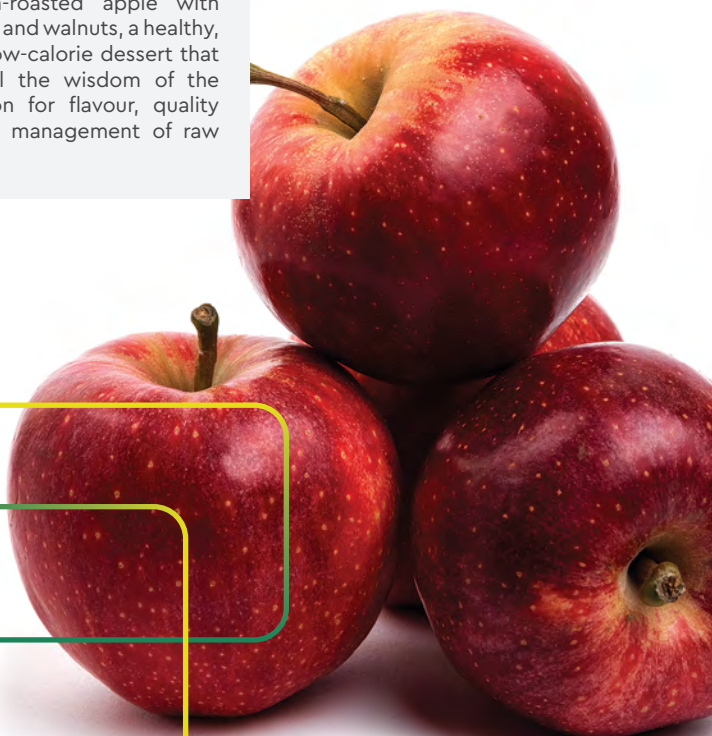
The region of Aghia is full of cherry orchards, a unique image just before the harvest, when the trees are loaded with the region's fleshy cherries, with their characteristic deep red color. The cherries of Aghia are distributed all over Greece, but also abroad. With the aim of preserving and making use of the abundance of fruits in the area, a great tradition of spoon sweets developed in Aghia from the beginning of the 20th century, among which the cherry has a rightful place. Before the special tool for pitting cherries, a hairpin was used to pit them, a particularly time-consuming process performed by groups of women, which grew to a cultural practice of the period when the spoon sweets were being prepared.





Apples from Aghia

Aghia's apple trees are approximately 900,000, and almost 25% of the apple production in Greece is grown in the area. In addition to their intense export activity through which they are found all over Greece and worldwide, the apples of Aghia are the «must try» fruit of the region, either raw, roasted, or as a spoon sweet or jam. An old recipe that survives to this day is the «humble» oven-roasted apple with sugar, cinnamon and walnuts, a healthy, nutritious and low-calorie dessert that encapsulates all the wisdom of the culinary tradition for flavour, quality and sustainable management of raw materials.



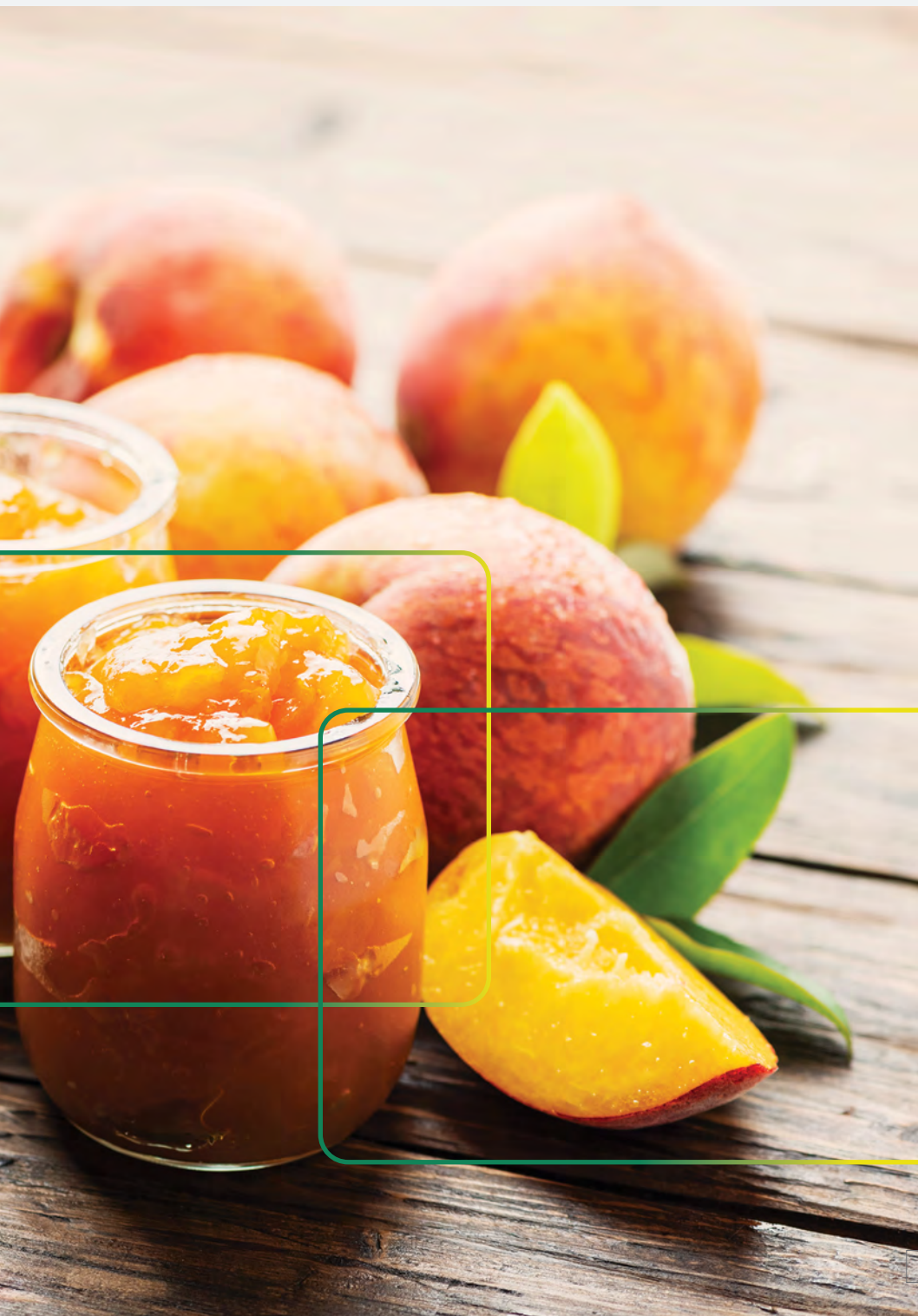
A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding a woven basket filled with several bright green pears. The pears are fresh, with some still attached to their stems and green leaves. The background is softly blurred, showing a person wearing a yellow and white striped garment. The overall scene is bright and sunny, suggesting an outdoor setting like a farm or market.

Pears from Tirnavos

Among the famous pears of Tirnavos are the "Kontoula", "Kosia", "Santa Maria", "Williams and Highland" varieties and of course the famous variety "Kristalli", which covers 90% of the Greek pear production. When eaten raw, the Tirnavos Kristalli is the most crunchy, juicy and at the same time velvety fruit that the human mind can think of, and the sweetest and richest when eaten cooked. Pear jam is a culinary miracle, and one of its ideal places is in pasta flora, a foreign delicacy that, from around the 1960s, began to be a sample of high pastry skills, and up to nowadays, it has been fully included in the culinary tradition of the region.

Peaches from Tirnavos

The history of the fruits of Tirnavos is long and rich, and peaches occupy a prominent place in it. The stories from local communities about pitted peaches, their harvesting process in mid-July, and their transformation into jam are endless and echo the exquisite aromas and flavors of this fruit. The jam made of Tirnavos's peaches is a unique product that can elevate both a simple slice of bread with butter as well as a cheese platter. It goes wonderfully with Manouri, Kaseri and Graviera cheese.





Grapes from Tirnavos

The city of Tirnavos, the grapes and the grape harvest form an ancient cultural «triangle» and it is an accepted fact that grapes are an ancient symbol of taste in the region. One of the most «humble», nutritious and delicious confections of the Tirnavos's culinary tradition, is "moustalevria", a pudding made with grapes. Traditionally, after the grape harvest, people pressed the grapes by hand, mainly the black ones, the Moschato variety, took the juice, boiled it, poured in "nizeste" (corn starch) and stirred it until it thickened. Then it was put under the sun for a while so it was preserved for longer and it was the main dessert from mid-September. Traditionally it was accompanied with Greek coffee, but nowadays it goes surprisingly well with a good freddo espresso!



Kiwi from Pineios River Delta

The kiwis of Pineios delta are unique, and according to scientific research they are considered the best on the market, because of the water used for watering them that comes from the Pineios river and because of the excellent climate conditions created by Mt. Olympus. Kiwi, with their special taste and texture, could only have correspondingly interesting culinary versions, one of which is its sorbet! For its preparation we need mashed kiwis, sugar, water and lemon. We make the syrup by boiling water and sugar, and add the mashed kiwis. Place the mixture in the freezer and puree every 45 minutes until it becomes creamy.

Mt. Kissavos and Tempi Valley Olives

The symbol of Greece's culinary culture, the olive, is produced in large quantities and of excellent quality in Mt. Kissavos and Temp Valley. The delicious olives and the high quality olive oil are characteristic products of these areas, which is why they belong to the main purchasing options of the visitors. After all, a Greek tradition requires every home to have a jar of olives and some good olive oil, so that the guests can be pampered at any time and moment, either with the simplest meze, with olives, tomato, feta and toasted bread, or with more complex culinary versions!





Apricots from Tirnavos

Another gift of nature in Tirnavos is the apricot, which the local residents turned into a gift of taste, preparing bitter almond liqueur from its pits. After some of the year's apricots have turned into jam and some have been dried, the old homemade recipe for bitter almond liqueur is quite simple: crush the pits of the apricots and take out the almond. After washing them and wiping them well, put them in a bottle with sugar and white brandy or tsipouro, and leave it in the sun for two months, shaking the bottle twice a week.



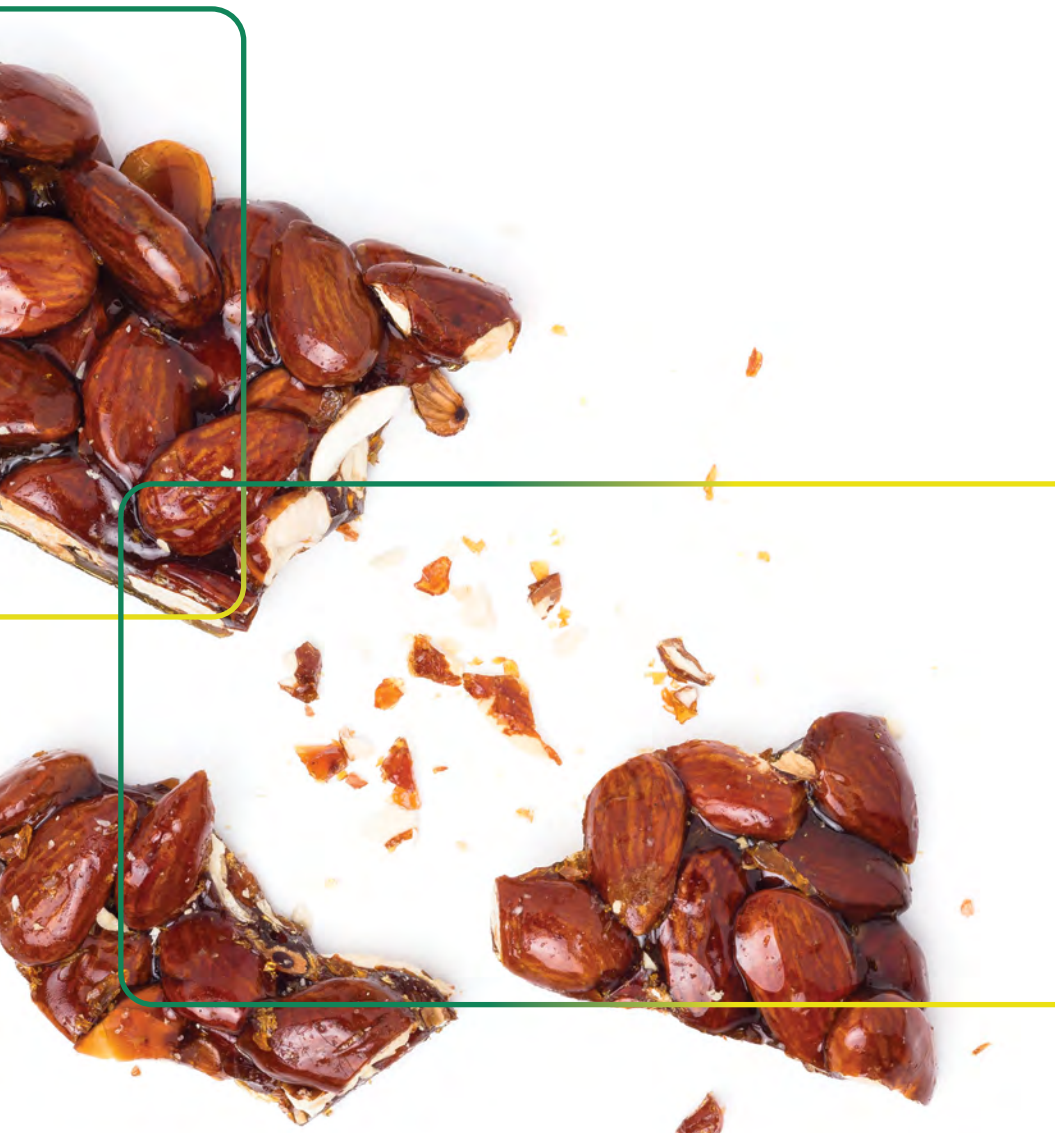
Almonds from Sikourio

The almonds of Sikourio are a truly unique raw material and the region offers 16% - 18% of the Greek almond produce. The almonds of Sikourio hold an important place in the cultural life of the region, so every September the almond festival is organized, during which the local Women's Association organizes an almond dessert competition, in which enchanting syrup desserts, made with local almonds, proudly «parade»! Definitely worth a culinary visit!

Almonds from Tirnavos

Tirnavos is also famous for its almonds. Because of the large production and deliciousness of this product, the older generations have left behind a salty and a sweet recipe, both easy and delicious. For the salted almonds, let them marinate in lemon juice and salt and then bake them at a low temperature (100°C) for 2 – 3 hours so that they soften and absorb the juice and salt. For the sweet version, bake the almonds, slowly burn the sugar in the pan, add the almonds and stir until they caramelize.

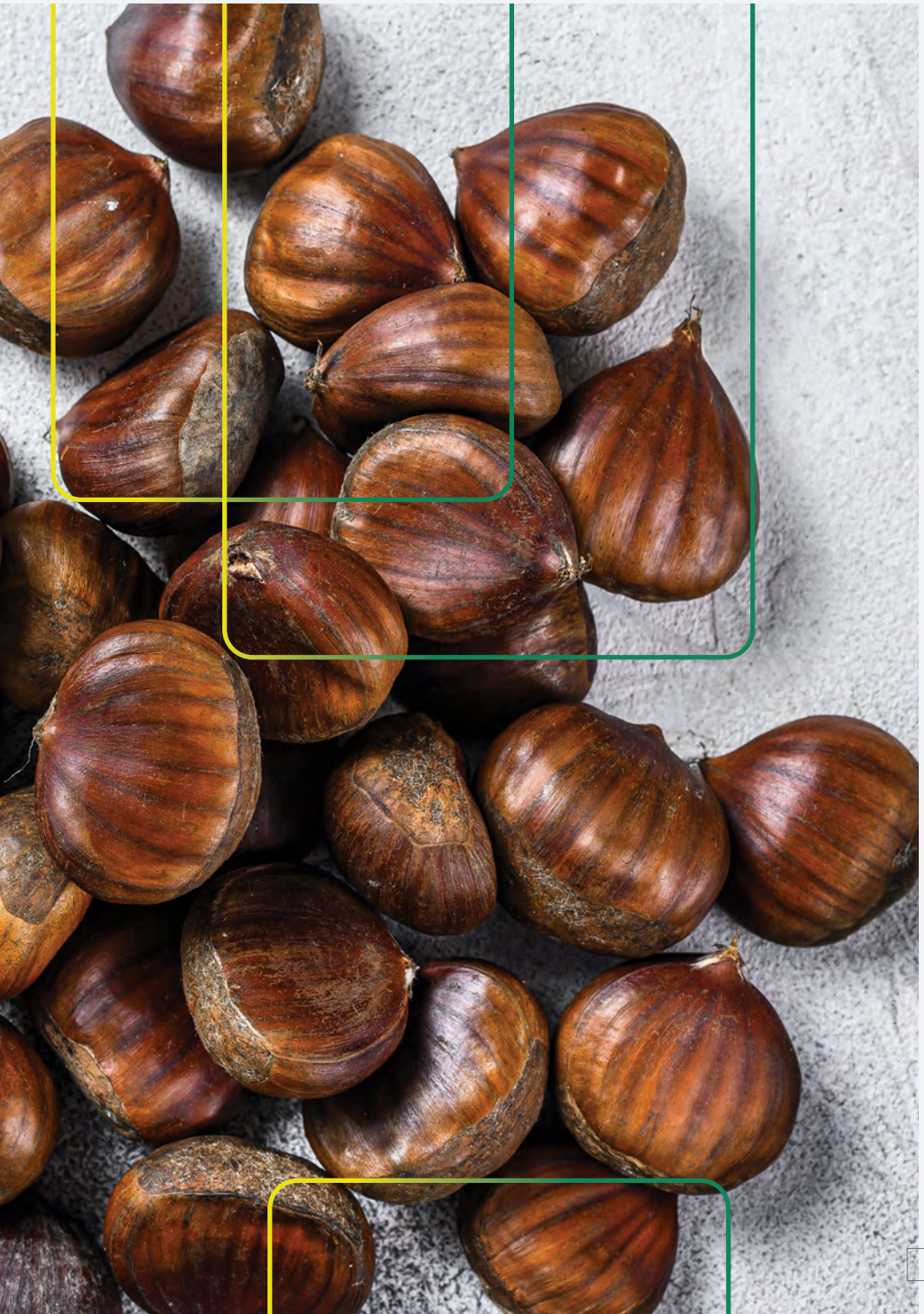




A collection of chestnuts, some whole and some cracked open, scattered on a light-colored, textured surface. The chestnuts are dark brown with a glossy sheen. The background is a light, mottled grey or white surface with a rough, stone-like texture.

Chestnuts from Mt. Kissavos

The chestnuts of Mt. Kissavos are synonymous with the warmth of the houses and people of the area. An excellent Christmas recipe of the region is wild boar with chestnuts and plums in the roaster. Add coarsely chopped onion slices, bay leaves, orange juice, salt and spices, pitted plums and chestnuts (pre-boiled) as desired. The advice of the area's seniors is to boil the chestnuts with sea salt and fig leaves, because the milk of the leaves imparts a unique aroma and makes peeling them easier.



Garlic from Platikamos

Garlic has amazing and multiple health benefits, and with its characteristic pungency, it adds great flavour to any dish. Platikamos's garlic is renowned for its quality and deliciousness and thanks to the highly active Agricultural Cooperative of the village, it receives scientific research that promotes it around the world. One of the oldest and most widespread recipes with garlic, is «taratori», a soup with cold water, yogurt, cucumber, dill and mashed garlic. It is most likely that "taratori" arrived from Greek Macedonia and was quickly adopted by the local inhabitants as a refreshing meal during the hard work in the fields in the unbearable heat of Platikamos, which is one of the warmest areas in Greece.

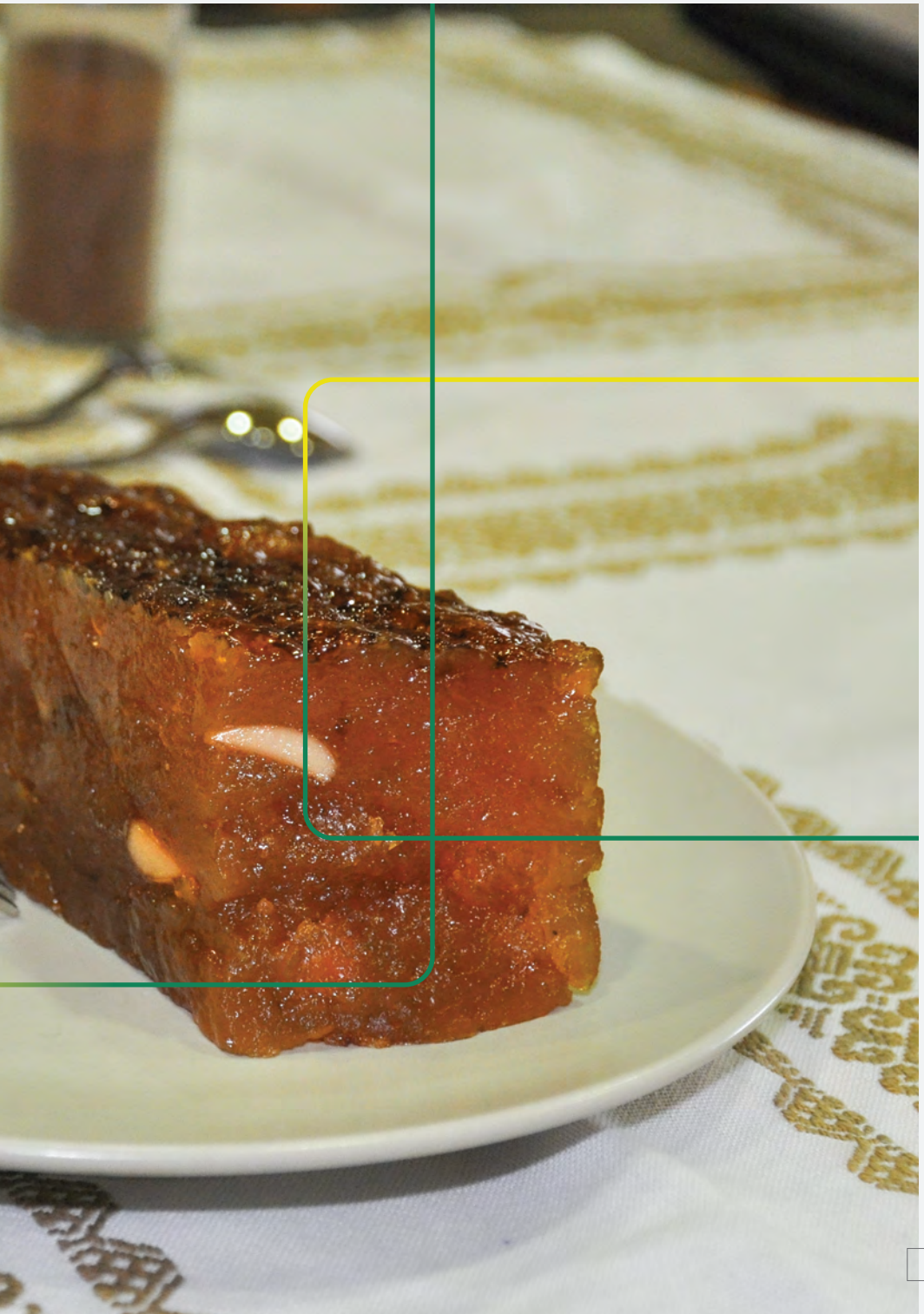






Halva from Farsala

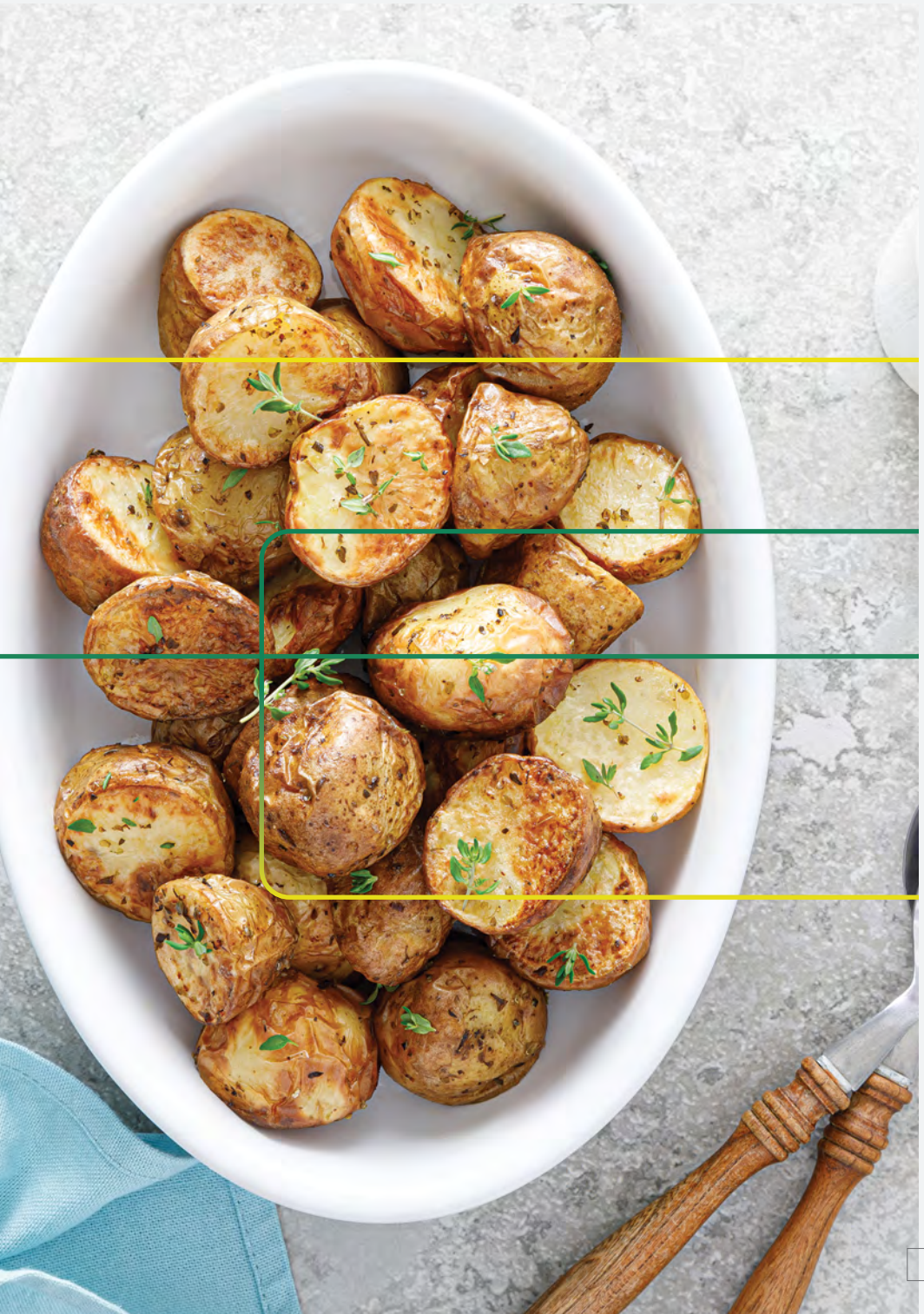
Its incredible shiny crust with almonds has been associated with fairs, religious holidays, the great bazaar of Larissa and every other celebration and event in the region of Thessaly. The city of Farsala is known all over the world for their halva as early as from the 19th century. Because of its connection to the Bazaar of Larissa, many people refer to this specific halva as the «bazaar halva». Each piece of freshly baked Farsala halva is a highly precise flavour composition of sugar, good butter and good almonds, which is truly unforgettable.



Potatoes from Mt. Olympus

Mt. Olympus potatoes are a particularly tasty and high-quality agricultural product of Greece, which is grown mainly in the villages of Skamnia, Kallipefki and Karia, at an altitude of 900 to 1,100 meters. The older generations, due to the hunger and hardship that they had experienced, highly value the potato, because of its multiple uses in the kitchen. «Potatoes can be boiled, fried, baked, stewed, can make "skordalia" (sauce with mashed garlic), they are priceless». Mt. Olympus potatoes can elevate all the dishes, but they are really worth trying in a "skordalia, with Platikamos garlic and walnuts, which accompanies excellently cod and other salty fish and various types of breads and nuts.





Mountain Tea from Mt. Olympus

According to an ancient Chinese saying, "Superior tea comes from the high mountains". Accordingly, the tea of Mt. Olympus, *sideritis scardica*, occupies a special place in Greek folk culture, but also in the traditional folk medicine of the region, as in addition of being a daily tasty habit, it was also used as a valuable medicine for colds, coughs and general inflammations of the upper respiratory system. Many scientific studies «confirm» that this traditional use has multiple beneficial and therapeutic effects on the human body. Plain, with honey, with lemon or even with cardamom, cinnamon and dried clementine, Mt. Olympus tea is a real treasure of the region.

Honey from Mt. Kissavos

Honey is a truly miraculous food, whose history dates back to ancient times and is found both in mythology and in the writings of Hippocrates. From flower honey (more neutral) to chestnut honey (more bitter), the regions of Gonni, Rapsani and Mt. Kissavos produce excellent honey, a product that deserves to accompany any visit to the region, and can be combined with drinks, breads, grilled cheeses, sweets and many other delicacies.



Lentils from Farsala

A natural source of protein, but also a legume that accompanied the inhabitants of the region during the harsh periods of hunger in the past, lentils are a favourite dish. Its most common form is that of soup which, when well cooked, is truly heartwarming. However, one of the most loved, more modern variations is lentils as a salad, with courgette and carrot, either raw and grated, or slightly boiled, all «bathed» in good olive oil and balsamic vinegar, accompanied by a generous portion of feta cheese.





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