

◆ APPETIZERS ◆

Roasted Kalamata Olives *Elies sto Fournο*
Marinated Green Olives *Elies Kyprou*
Marinated Kalamata Olives *Elies Marinates* GREEK FESTIVAL RECIPE
Roasted Almonds *Amigdala Psita*
Yogurt and Cucumber Dip *Tzatziki*
Eggplant Spread *Melitzanosalata*
Garbanzo Bean and Garlic Dip *Hummus*
Garlic Spread *Skordalia*
Flaming Cheese *Saganaki*
Spicy Feta Cheese Spread *Tyrokafteri*
Roasted Pepper and Feta Spread *Piperies me Feta*
Roasted Red Peppers *Florines*
Baked Feta with Peppers and Tomatoes *Feta me Piperies sto Fournο*
Sweet and Sour Eggplant with Olives and Capers *Caponata*
Greek Meatballs *Keftedakia*
Spinach Fritters *Keftedakia me Spanaki*
Grape Leaves with Meat Stuffing *Dolmadakia* GREEK FESTIVAL RECIPE
Grape Leaves with Rice Stuffing *Dolmas or Sarmas* GREEK FESTIVAL RECIPE
Roasted Beets with Greens and Garlic Spread *Pantzaria me Skordalia*
Roasted Octopus *Chtapodi*
Spinach Triangles *Spanakopita* GREEK FESTIVAL RECIPE
Cheese Triangles *Tyropita* GREEK FESTIVAL RECIPE

John Maroulis was just old enough to work as a merchant seaman when he left his family on the island of Skopelos for a new life in America, but he was old enough to remember how his mother gathered food from the sea and garden and cooked over a wood fire.



Wonderful things grew on trees in Glossa, John's village. Skopelos is famous all over Greece for its plums and pears. John remembered, "We cut the pears before they were ripe and hung them in net bags from the exposed beams in our house...In the evenings, people would come over, tell stories and jokes and eat the pears. The whole house smelled of the fruit."

John's father was an olive farmer. The children's job was to gather the "hamades," ripe Amfissa olives that fell to the ground. Most were sold, of course. Whenever Greeks sit down to eat anywhere in the world, there are olives on the table—cured, dried, or marinated, by the handful, or with salad or bread.

Olives are rarely baked, but it's the taste of baked olives that evokes for John the most poignant memories of his father, of his island home built of stone, of hard wooden benches covered with rabbit fur, and of the aroma of bread baking in the "fournο," the wood-fired stone oven built in the yard by his grandfather.

One winter day when John was nine years old, he was pounding freshly-caught octopus against the rocks at the edge of the sea to tenderize it while his father built a fire in the orchard above from trimmed olive branches. "When I came back with the octopus, my father cooked it directly on the fire. With a little olive oil and vinegar, which we always had with us when we went to the fields, the octopus was incredibly delicious."

That day, John's father tossed a handful of "hamades," the ripe olives picked up off the ground, right into the fire. "When they were cooked through and kind of wrinkly, we brushed off the ash and put them on a plate with olive oil and vinegar."

Decades later, John shared his memory of fire-roasted olives with Stathis Mataragas, owner of Pizza Plaza Restaurant in Anchorage, bemoaning the long absence of this treat in his new life. Stathis tried to duplicate it by baking Kalamata olives in his pizza oven. The baked olives quickly became a favorite of local Greeks and Armenians.

ROASTED KALAMATA OLIVES *Elies sto Fournο*

Roasting deepens the flavor and softens the sharp brininess of Kalamata olives, and also firms the olives' texture. Like the olives pulled from a Greek hillside fire that John Maroulis remembers, they are best served warm. But even when cold, baked olives are a special treat.

2 cups Kalamata olives
 2 Tbsp. red wine vinegar
 1/4 cup olive oil
 1 tsp. dried oregano, crushed

Preheat oven to 350° F. Drain and rinse brine from the olives, place them in a glass or stainless steel pan, and bake for 35 - 40 minutes. The olives are done when the meat begins to shrink up and the skins look wrinkled. Remove olives from the oven, place in a bowl, stir in the vinegar, olive oil, and oregano, and serve.