

TRY MAKING THESE ROMAN RECIPES AT HOME:



BEAN AND CHICKPEA SALAD

This recipe was adapted from a cookbook written by Apicius.

For the main dish:

- 1 packet raw green beans (french or dwarf)
- 1 tin chickpeas

For the dressing:

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons red grape juice
- squeeze of lemon juice
- 1/2 tsp ground cumin
- salt and pepper to taste

Method:

1. Top and tail the green beans
2. Chop into 1/2 cm pieces
3. Drain and rinse the tinned chickpeas
4. Combine the beans and chickpeas in a dish
5. Mix the ingredients for the dressing in a small dish
6. Add salt and pepper to taste
7. Drizzle the dressing over the beans and chickpeas

KYDONION SYN MELITI

(from Rufus, as quoted in Oribasius' Medical Compilations)

Ingredients:

10 quinces (Pears can be substituted but quinces are tarter. If using pears reduce the honey by 1/3 and add the juice of half a lime) 100ml honey

Method:

Peel, core and dice the quinces and put them in a saucepan. Add the wine and honey and bring to a simmer. Cover and cook for 30 minutes until they are soft (reduce the time for pears). Transfer to a blender and puree. Pour into individual bowls and chill in the fridge before serving.

HONEY CAKE

Serving suggestions: Can be eaten on its own - it keeps well - good with fruit and cream!

Ingredients:

- 3 eggs
- 200g clear, runny honey (a strong flavoured one is best)
- 50g spelt flour, sifted

Method:

1. Preheat oven to 170C, 330F or gas 3. If you have a fan oven, turn off the fan if possible or put the heat down to 160C
2. Grease well one or two baking tins, according to size - about 2 x 17cm circular tins or 1 rectangular approx 20x22cm
3. Break the eggs into a bowl and beat them hard and well until getting stiff, creating lots of air bubbles
4. Gradually beat in the honey
5. Gently fold in the sifted flour
6. Pour the mixture into the prepared tin(s)
7. Cook in oven for approx 40 to 50 mins depending on type of oven and how deep the mixture is in the tins
8. Take out and turn onto a wire tray to cool

BAKED EGG CUSTARD (TYROPATINAM)

Serving suggestions: Serve with fresh seasonal fruit

Ingredients:

- 1 tbs (40g) honey
- 1/2 pint (300 ml) milk
- 3 eggs
- a pinch nutmeg
- a pinch pepper (optional)

Method:

1. Mix the honey, eggs and milk
2. Whisk a little to combine
3. Pour into an ovenproof bowl
4. Bake at Gas 2, 150C, 300F for 25-30 minutes
5. Remove and allow to cool a little Sprinkle the top with grated or ground nutmeg and serve. You could also sprinkle a little pepper over it, as Romans were very fond of pepper, even on puddings

TIGER NUT SWEETS

The recipe is one of the oldest recipes known and was found written on a piece of clay! They are surprisingly sweet; if you find them too sweet leave out the honey and coat the date balls in the ground almonds.

Ingredients:

- 200g fresh dates (if not available use mejool dates)
- 1 teaspoon cold water
- 10-15 walnut halves
- 1/4 teaspoon of cinnamon
- small jar of runny honey
- 75g ground almonds

Method:

1. Chop the dates and put into a bowl (remove the seeds from the dates if you do not have seedless ones)
2. Add the water and stir well with a fork
3. Stir in the chopped walnuts and cinnamon
4. Shape into balls using your hands
5. Pour the honey into a bowl
6. Put the ground almonds onto a plate
7. Have a clean plate ready to put the finished sweets onto Dip the date balls into the honey, then roll in the ground almonds, making sure they are well coated

CUCUMERES

Ingredients:

- 1 large cucumber
- 3 tablespoons white wine vinegar
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon runny honey
- sea salt to taste

Method:

1. Peel the cucumber
 2. Chop into large slices
 3. Add these to a pan with the vinegar, olive oil and honey
 4. Gently cook the cucumber until soft, shake the pan occasionally to make sure it's not sticking.
- Serve as a hot side dish

DATES ALEXANDRINE

Ingredients:

- 16 whole dates
- 16 whole almonds (or blanched almonds)
- 20 gm butter
- cinnamon
- runny honey

Method:

1. If you are blanching the almonds yourself, put them in a bowl and pour over boiling water. Wait for a few minutes and strain the almonds. Peel the skin off
2. Warm the butter in a pan until it is just melted, take from the heat
3. Cut the dates carefully (the knife does not need to be very sharp) and take out the stone
4. Put some cinnamon in a small dish or saucer
5. Take each almond, dunk it in the butter, roll it in the cinnamon and put into the opening of the date
6. Put the dates on to a heatproof dish or plate
7. Coat each date with honey - using a brush or pouring with a small spoon
8. Pour over the rest of the butter
9. Bake in a hot oven for 6-8 minutes
10. Allow to cool a little before eating

TYROS EIS HALMEN

(from Bassus' Geoponica)

Ingredients:

Cheese and Honey

Method:

Wash and dry the Feta cheese to remove excess salt then cut into 1cm cubes. Using a clean pickling jar place a layer of the cubed cheese in the bottom. Cover this with a layer of thyme and then a layer of cheese. Keep on adding alternating layers until the entire jar is filled. Thoroughly mix the honey and vinegar and pour the mixture into the pickling jar until the final layer of cheese is covered. Seal the jar and leave to infuse for a day.

TYROS DIA KOSKINOY CHEESE AND HONEY

(from Athenæus' *Deipnosophistae*)

Break off a piece of cheese (feta), put it in a bowl, then turn a bronze sieve over the top and work the cheese through. Whenever you are about to serve pour sufficient honey over it.

RICOTTA CHEESE

Ingredients:

1/2 gallon whole milk, not UHT pasteurized

1/3 cup lemon juice (from 1 1/2 to 2 lemons), 1/3 cup distilled white vinegar, or 1/2 teaspoon citric acid (available from cheese-making suppliers)

Salt

Implements:

Strainer or colander

Cheese cloth

Large pot and small saucepan

Method:

1. Use a large pot to bring your milk to a boil on high. Whisk the milk the entire time to ensure that it doesn't burn, clump or stick to the bottom of the pot.
2. Wait for it to boil over. It'll happen at about the 10 minute mark and when it does you want to quickly turn off the element.
3. Remove the milk from heat. Pour in the lemon juice or vinegar (or citric acid) and the salt. Stir gently to combine.
4. Let the pot of milk sit undisturbed for 10 minutes. After this time, the milk should have separated into clumps of milky white curds and thin, watery, yellow-colored whey — dip your slotted spoon into the mix to check. If you still see a lot of un-separated milk, add another tablespoon of lemon juice or vinegar and wait a few more minutes.
5. Set a strainer over a bowl and line the strainer with cheese cloth. Scoop the big curds out of the pot with a slotted spoon and transfer them to the strainer. Pour the remaining curds and the whey through the strainer. (Removing the big curds first helps keep them from splashing and making a mess as you pour.)
6. Let the ricotta drain for 10 to 60 minutes, depending on how wet or dry you prefer your ricotta. If the ricotta becomes too dry, you can also stir some of the whey back in before using or storing it.
7. Use or store the ricotta: fresh ricotta can be used right away or refrigerated in an airtight container for up to a week.