

DESTINATIONS

GREECE, CYPRUS & BALKANS | THESSALONIKI

of the
BEST

THESSALONIKI DISHES

Greece's second city joins the Michelin Guide this year, so use its signature dishes to sell a tastier stay, writes **Alice Barnes-Brown**



TRIGONA

The Greeks love a sweet treat, so it's no surprise the cone-shaped trigona is a staple snack in Thessaloniki. Stuffed with creamy custard, these triangular filo pastries hail from Panorama, a hilltop suburb of Thessaloniki. Locals say bakery Elenidis has been selling the best since 1960, but clients don't need to trudge uphill to get one, because there are branches in the city centre, with custard piped fresh into crispy pastry shells in each bakery. Peckish visitors can also try baklava, kataifi (a similar syrup-soaked pastry), profiteroles or portokalopita (orange cake).

BOUGATSA

In its most traditional form, bougatsa, like trigona, is a filled filo pastry. But having originated in modern-day Turkey, the sweet version is made from rustic semolina rather than luscious cream. There are many more savoury variations on this beloved breakfast item – think salty feta, leafy spinach or even spiced beef. Clients can embark on their very own bougatsa tour, beginning with Bougatsa Bantis, one of a few bakeries to still make its own filo pastry from scratch – then hop on the new Thessaloniki metro to sample other bakeries along Egnatia Street, one of the city's main thoroughfares.



BOUYIOURDI

Thessaloniki's version of baked feta graces restaurant menus throughout the city – and with lashings of spicy red pepper, juicy tomatoes, fresh oregano and plenty of local Halkidiki olive oil, what's not to love? It's best devoured as part of a meze lunch, so clients should head to a mezedopoleio (taverna specialising in small plates) to try it. Old-school cafe Tsinari in Ano Poli, close to the city's Heptapyrgion castle, serves a variety with mustard for an added kick, with five types of ouzo to wash it down.

SOUTZOUKAKIA

Speaking of ouzo, Thessalonians typically like to take their tipple with a plate of soutzoukakia meatballs. These kofta-like treats were first made in Smyrna (now the modern Turkish city of Izmir), and are covered in a tomato sauce rich in cumin and cinnamon. Many grills will claim they serve the best, so it's hard to go wrong. But for soutzoukakia with a view, try one of the restaurants near the White Tower such as Zythos Dore, a 1950s-style beer hall, which mixes beef and lamb to create a signature kebab served atop a hearty bed of mashed potato.



FRAPPÉ

Believe it or not, this cold caffeinated drink was invented in Thessaloniki – almost by accident. In 1957, Nestlé employee Dimitris Vakondios was attending the Thessaloniki International Fair, but ran out of hot water for his coffee – so he experimented with cold water, ice and a shaker. Raise a glass to his accidental genius at Estrella cafe, next to the Byzantine church of Hagia Sophia.



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