



Chios Mastiha traditionally was used in breads, ice creams, and in some island cheesecakes, small parcels of delicate pastry filled with fresh sheep's milk cheese that were and still are a regional and seasonal-Easter-specialty in many of the Aegean islands. Here, with the advent of Greek yogurt, which is widely available all over the world, and classic cream cheese, the traditional Greek-island cheesecake gets a modern spin.

Chios Mastiha Cheesecake

Makes 6-8 servings

Chios Mastiha liqueur is used in the dish below. It is subtler and lighter in flavor than either powder or crystals, but every brand of the liqueur is slightly different; some have a strong and marked Mastiha presence, while in others the spice is understated, sometimes even combined with anise to make a more complex flavor profile.

1. Beat the egg yolks, sugar, and Chios Mastiha liqueur in a double boiler until the mixture is creamy and pale.
2. Melt the gelatin in a little water over low heat in a small sauce pan and beat it into the egg mixture. Add the cream cheese, yogurt, and mint leaves.
3. Whip the cream to stiff peaks and fold it gently into the mixture. Pour into individual molds and chill for at least four hours before serving. To serve, turn onto a plate and decorate with a few strawberries, strawberry sauce, and balsamic vinegar.

- 3 egg yolks
- 100 gr. (3 oz.) sugar
- 4 oz. Chios Mastiha liqueur
- 2 gelatin sheets, 7 gr. ¼ oz.) each, soaked in water to soften
- 420 gr. (14 oz.) cream cheese
- 2 Tbsp. strained Greek yogurt
- 8 fresh mint leaves, finely chopped
- 300 ml (10 oz.) heavy cream, whipped stiff
- Fresh strawberries for garnish
- 4-6 Tbsp. strawberry sauce or coulis, for garnish
- 2 tsp. balsamic vinegar