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FILLO – tender pastry for gastronomic specialities!

Fillo, often also written *Filo*, is a kind of paste, which, similarly the German puff paste consists of flour, water, oil and salt. In the Greek kitchen the *Fillo* paste is used for some well-known delicious: for example *Spanakopita*, those are crispy paste bags filled with spinach and sheep cheese, or for the sweet *Baklava*, here the *Fillo* coats chopped nuts and lay into honey syrup, a benefit to the Greek coffee. For the sake of completeness it is said that this paste is also well known within the Turkish and Arab kitchen. However the Turkish *Yufka* is somewhat thicker and set with yeast.



Making *Fillo* is very complex and nowadays most people are missing the time in addition. Alternatively it can be bought at the supermarket; however it loses a lot of its taste by the mass production.

For more than fifty years there has been a small shop in *Chania*, right behind the market hall [left picture]. Its owner is specialized in the production of *Fillo* and *Kantaifi* paste (*Kantaifi* is a paste similar to glass-noodles for certain sweet foods, for example the delicious nut roles).

Just two years ago the business consisted of only one area. In the meantime it has been modernized. Now the Paste production takes place in the lower floor, while sales is at the ground floor.

Sales are done by the lively owner *Angeliki Varanaki* [picture right] (her father created the business). Here she is right in her business.

Here a joke, there a chat or simply only listen, for most customers *Angeliki* is more than just “the business woman”.

She patiently and helpful answered all of my questions. *Angeliki* also told me: “My co-worker *Giorgos* is the actual soul of the shop. None has such a fine feeling for the *Fillo* like him! “

While watching *Giorgos* at work I can only agree.



His area is the lower floor. Dust of flour flickers in the air. Everything is covered with a fine, white layer, even *Giorgos*, who nods his head to me with a smile.

Absent-minded and calmly he address himself to his task. If the paste is finished kneaded, he waves out

the necessary quantity, pulls it briefly forwards ...



... and then *Giorgos* throws the paste elegantly on the large table. He then circles with small steps around the table and pulls the filmy plate sensitively. It is so thin, I think it will tear.



Far from it, after three to four round tours the *Fillo* spreads on the whole table and will be covered with a special jute cloth for its protection. The next *Fillo* comes thereupon and so on and so on. Thus *Fillo* paste is present if necessary at any time, which *Giorgos* cuts then into salesfair plates.

Once in a while, when I am close to the market hall, I get myself a portion of *Fillo* from the friendly *Angeliki Varanaki*.

By the way, the paste can be kept very good in the refrigerator and can be frozen for some time.

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