

Cabbage & Rice

In Greece, there are many open-air markets where garden fresh vegetables are found in abundance. To a Greek, a *salata* (salad) actually means a seasonal vegetable served raw or cooked, hot or cold, and seasoned with olive oil, lemon juice and maybe a little vinegar. I remember growing up and sitting down for a family meal and having a tomato and onion salad with oil and vinegar, a few olives, some feta cheese and a nice sized piece of crusty bread. What great memories!

With winter upon us, I tend to shy away from the heavy meals like chili or stew and instead opt for more dishes with vegetables. The following recipe is one that my *Yiayia* (grandmother) made for us all the time, and the whole family absolutely loved it (yes, the four children in my family actually ate cabbage by the bowlful). It's hearty enough to be a meal in itself, yet it's still light enough to use as a side dish.

3 cups of chopped cabbage

1 cup of rice

¼ cup of olive oil

4 tablespoons tomato paste

1 tsp. of salt

2½ cups of water

¼ tsp. of pepper

2 tsp. chopped parsley

Cook the cabbage and all of the seasoning in the olive oil over low heat for about 20 minutes. Next, add the water and tomato paste and bring to a boil. (Note: try to avoid adding more tomato paste, as this will make the dish "heavier" than you want it to be. It's difficult to do, because you really want to empty that entire little can of tomato paste – but DON'T DO IT!!!!!!) Add the rice, reduce the heat to low/medium, cover and simmer until the rice is cooked. If you have to, add more water to ensure that the rice cooks evenly. But remember, you must add boiling water or it will never be absorbed by the rice. Once the rice is cooked add the parsley and serve immediately.

I hope you try this recipe, and come to the restaurant to let me know your thoughts.

Yiassou,

Chef Niko