

Menu for Defending the Gate 2024

This feast is themed around the retaking of the Italian city Otranto from the Ottomans in 1481 by Kings Ferdinand of Naples and Aragon, with the help of Hungarian mercenaries.

First Course - *Gli Assediati / The Besiegers*

This course is themed around the various cultures involved in retaking the city, using Italian, Hungarian and Spanish recipes.

Arrosto di Manzo (Roast Beef)

Eye round beef, salt

Salse (Sauces)

We chose a set of sauces to represent multiple cultures involved in the conflict.

Salsa Verde (Green Sauce)

Green sauce based on parsley, mint or basil is common throughout many 15th century Italian cookbooks. The Neapolitan collection mentions that it is good with fish but does not give a recipe.

Parsley, olive oil, white balsamic vinegar, lemon juice, anchovies, salt, pepper, garlic, capers

Salsa di Amarene (Sour Cherry Sauce)

We found sour cherry sauces for meat in both Hungarian & Italian sources.

Canned tart cherries, bread crumbs, sugar, ceylon cinnamon, ginger, white balsamic vinegar

Sarmisakli Yogurt Sos (Yogurt-Garlic Sauce)

A little Ottoman yogurt-based sauce snuck into this course.

Whole milk yogurt, garlic

Torta con Rucola (Arugula Tart)

There are recipes for various herb, egg and cheese pies throughout 15th century Italian recipe collections. This is our own combination of elements we like from several recipes, particularly including the idea from “Bolognese Tart” of making a top crust of shredded cheese.

Pie crust: wheat flour, wheat starch, lard, sugar, salt, Sodium Propionate, Citric Acid and Potassium Sorbate (preservatives), xanthan gum

Filling: ricotta, parmesan, arugula, butter, eggs, pepper

Barbabietole e Carote Bollite Nell’Olio (Boiled Beets and Carrot)

Beet, carrot, olive oil, nutmeg, sage, garlic, butter

Csinálni (Apple and Currant Frycakes)

This word in modern Hungarian is usually translated as donut, however the recipes in both historic Hungarian cookbooks we consulted for this don’t really resemble modern donuts. Frycake is a more literal translation, although not all of them are even fried! This recipe specified to bake the cake.

Flour, sugar, butter, eggs, currants, apples, brown sugar, ceylon cinnamon

Second Course - *Dīnāriyya Intermezzo / Interlude of Coins*

This intermezzo course was inspired by a recipe for “dinariyya” found in the *Book of Dishes* which is a soup of coin-shaped things. (A *dīnār* at the time was a gold coin.)

Dīnāriyya / Minestra di Denari (Coin Stew)

The original recipe included coin-shaped meatballs and fried slices of hard-boiled egg but we decided to create a vegetarian friendly version with an Italian twist.

Onions, carrots, parsnips, orecchiette pasta (durum wheat), olive oil, mushroom stock (mushrooms, salt, maltodextrin, sugar, palm oil, hydrolyzed soy & corn protein, onion, corn oil, canola oil, disodium inosinate, disodium guanylate, soybean oil), salt, ceylon cinnamon, cumin, white balsamic vinegar

Denari di Maiale (Pork Coins)

This rub for roasted pork is from one of the 15th century Italian cookbooks.

Pork tenderloin, coriander, salt, pepper

Bread Coins

Enriched wheat flour (niacin, b complex vitamin, reduced iron, thiamin, riboflavin, folic acid), calcium propionate, corn syrup solids, enzymes, fumaric acid, guar gum, salt, sesame flour, sodium bicarbonate, sorbic acid, soybean oil, soy flour, sugar, sunflower oil, vegetable monoglycerides, whole wheat flour, yeast.

Third Course - *Farewell to the Ottomans*

Inspiration for this course primarily comes from *The Book of Dishes (Kitāb al-Tabīkh)* by Muhammad Al-Hassan. This 13th century Arabic cookbook was known to be used by chefs to the Ottoman court.

Ispanaklı ve peynirli börek (Spinach and Feta Pastry)

Börek come in many varieties of shapes, sizes and cooking methods - but all are delicious pastries made of thin sheets of yufka dough usually with butter and filled with a variety of things.

Phyllo dough (Enriched Wheat Flour (Wheat Flour, Niacin, Iron, Thiamin, Water, Mononitrate, Riboflavin, Folic Acid)) Corn Starch, Dextrose, Vital Wheat Gluten, Cultured Wheat Flour, Canola Oil, Salt), onion, spinach, feta cheese, eggs, dill, salt, pepper, butter

Kofta (Lamb Meatballs)

Does it even count as an Ottoman course if no lamb is served? Cumin and coriander seem to be the most common spices used to flavor meat.

Lamb, onion, mushrooms, cumin, coriander, salt

Lift Mukhallal Muhallā (Sweetened Pickled Turnips)

This recipe in *The Book of Dishes* does not specify the spices to use other than to color the turnips with a little saffron. We skipped the saffron and went for turmeric for flavor and color.

Turnips, white balsamic vinegar, salt, honey, turmeric, ginger

Qatāyif (Semolina Pancakes)

These are described in *The Book of Dishes*, but there is no recipe. Most of the traditional fillings are nut pastes, so we looked to modern recipes for inspiration.

Pancakes: wheat flour, semolina flour, sugar, yeast, baking powder

Filling: mascarpone, sweetened condensed milk, dried apricots