

Grilled octopus

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Here it is....our first entry in **Our Kouppes**, the space we have carved into **Mia Kouppa** to share our own recipes. As we mentioned when we introduced Our Kouppes, many of the recipes you find here will be inspired by the food that we grew up with, and this grilled octopus is definitely that! We have vivid memories of summers in Greece, where we would see freshly caught octopus drying in the sun by the port, and sun-kissed fishermen eager to sell their bounty to locals and local restaurants.

In Greece we enjoyed octopus prepared in a variety of ways. Back home, our parents also cooked octopus in several, delicious fashions. We will definitely be sharing their recipes with you in the future (their octopus

and pasta dish is amazing!), but first, we thought we would share *our* recipe for grilled octopus.



As you may have gathered, we love food. We love to cook it, eat it, and talk about it. And we are lucky to be surrounded by like-minded individuals. One of our favourite foodie friends is Marc, a man that both of us have had an exclusive, long-standing and pretty committed relationship with. Marc is our hairdresser, and we've been through a lot together. He has been our hair stylist for 35 and 30 years, respectively. That's a lot of haircuts! He has seen one of us through the punk rock styles of the 80s and witnessed the other cry incessantly the first time she chopped off her long, curly locks. He has prettied us up for our weddings, graduations and holidays. He has helped us feel human again after giving birth, and shown us that most days can be made better with a proper cut and coif. He knows what we like, he suggests what he thinks would look great on us, and he encourages us to be brave and try out new things; we often do, because we trust him wholeheartedly. You could say that we are simply smitten with our stylist. If you live in Montreal, or are just passing through, you should pay Marc a visit at [Beauté Business](#). Tell him we said *Hi!* and treat yourself to a lovely salon experience. Your head of hair will be in talented hands.

Recipe videos

Cinnamon raisin bread







Of course, years of sitting in Marc’s chair every 6 – 8 weeks...you get to talk about more than hair. We often chat about our pets, families, favourite movies, upcoming holidays, and food (the man makes his own maple syrup!). For a while now, we have been tempting Marc with tales of our octopus recipe, promising that we would share it with him. And so, here it is. Grilled octopus, our first entry into Our Kouppes, for all of you...but especially, for Marc.

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Helpful hints

Many people who enjoy eating octopus shy away from preparing it themselves at home, intimidated by stories of tough, and unpleasant results. This is really a shame, because actually, cooking octopus is not that hard. The best way to determine if an octopus is cooked through is to pierce the skirt (the part of the octopus where the tops of the legs meet the head) with a sharp knife. If the knife enters the skirt easily and effortlessly, then the octopus is done. A properly cooked octopus should offer the same resistance that a boiled potato would. Keep in mind that even the best cooked octopus will be somewhat chewy; that is the nature of the thing. But, if cooked correctly, it will be tender.



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Following the boiling of the octopus, we like pop it on the grill to create a nice char. This part can be a bit tricky. You simply have to remember that the octopus is already cooked, and all you want to do is give it some

nice grill marks. So, your grill has to be hot enough to crisp up and char the outside quickly, without overcooking the inside. Your octopus should be on the grill for only a few moments.







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It is sometimes difficult to find fresh octopus, so if all you can get your hands on is frozen, go ahead and buy it. Some people say that the octopus ends up being more tender through the freezing process; we don't really know if that is true, but we often use frozen octopus and the result is great. The bonus to buying frozen octopus is that it will already be cleaned. The head of the octopus contains eyes, a mouth, a pair of beaks and a file-like organ which it uses to drill through the shell of its prey when necessary. Frozen octopus will most certainly already have

these parts discarded. If you are buying it fresh simply ask your fishmonger to clean the octopus for you.

We like to serve this octopus as an appetizer, as part of a buffet, or even as the main component of a meal, in which case we would serve it with **rice** and a **salad**. It is very versatile. It is also a food which is permissible during Orthodox periods of fasting; a great option when other options are limited.



Mia Kouppa

If you have leftovers (unlikely), you can keep the octopus in the marinade for several days. It will actually taste better the next day. Bring to room temperature before serving for maximum flavour.



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Mia Kouppa: Grilled octopus

Servings: 4

Time: 2hrs

Difficulty: moderate

Print

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Ingredients

- **2 pound fresh or frozen octopus**
- **5 allspice berries**
- **2 cloves garlic, thinly sliced**
- **2 bay leaves**
- **1 sprig of fresh thyme**
- **1/4 cup (60 ml) balsamic vinegar**
- **For the marinade: 1/2 cup (125 ml) olive oil**
- **1/2 cup (125 ml) balsamic vinegar**
- **1 tablespoon (15 ml) dried Greek oregano**
- **1 1/2 tablespoons (22 ml) freshly squeezed lemon juice**
- **1 tablespoon (15 ml) finely chopped capers**
- **1 garlic clove, thinly sliced**
- **1 teaspoon (4 ml) fresh thyme, finely chopped**
- **1 tablespoon (15 ml) flat leaf parsley, finely chopped**
- **1/4 teaspoon (1 ml) ground black pepper**
- **1/2 teaspoon (2 ml) salt**

Directions

- **If you are using frozen octopus, defrost it completely in the fridge overnight.**

- **Rinse your octopus well under cool running water.**
- **Place your octopus in a large pot. Add the allspice berries, garlic, bay leaves, and fresh thyme. Add enough water to just cover the octopus.**
- **Bring to a boil and then reduce the heat to medium. Cook, covered, for approximately 30 – 40 minutes. The octopus is done when the skirt (the part of the octopus which connects the legs to the head) can easily be pierced by a sharp knife. Remove from the heat and add 1/4 cup balsamic vinegar to the cooking liquid. Allow the octopus to steep in this liquid until it comes to room temperature. You can also keep it in the refrigerator until the next day.**
- **Remove the octopus from the cooking liquid and set aside.**
- **Prepare your marinade. In a large bowl or measuring cup, combine the olive oil, balsamic vinegar, oregano, lemon juice, capers, garlic, thyme, parsley, salt and pepper. Mix well and set aside.**
- **Meanwhile, prepare your grill. Chop up the octopus into 3 sections, the head, and two sections of 4 legs each. This will make it easier for you to grill the octopus, without being concerned that you will lose any legs through the grate of the grill. When your grill is hot, place the octopus on it. Remember, it is already cooked; you are simply warming it up, and getting some nice char marks on the octopus. This should take only a few minutes per side. Any longer and you risk over-cooking the octopus.**
- **Remove the octopus from the grill, place it in a bowl, and pour the marinade over it. Take a piece at a time, cut into bite size pieces, and return to the marinade. Toss well. There should be enough marinade to coat the octopus very well. Allow it to sit in the marinade for at least 5 – 10 minutes before serving.**
- **Serve sprinkled with some additional chopped parsley if desired, and a wedge of lemon.**

Enjoy!