



NEWCOMERS

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WELCOMING NEW ARRIVALS TO ATHENS

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Newsletter April 2021

Dear Members

What a sense of pride was on display at the 200-year celebrations of Greek Independence! And not only here in Athens where Prince Charles attended the magnificent military parade on March 25th as a guest, but in every corner of the world where a Greek community celebrated the birth of the modern Greek nation.

The iconic Sydney Opera House looked even more magnificent when lit up in blue and white; streets in cities throughout Australia were filled with Greek flags as the Australian diaspora celebrated the start of the Greek War of Independence.



Similar scenes were witnessed across America - in Chicago, Boston, New York and San Francisco - and by Canada's Greek communities. In the heart of Europe, Belgium paid tribute to Greece by dressing up the iconic statuette of Brussels, Manneken Pis as an Evzone, and a ceremony was held in the Belgian capital to honour the bravery of the Greek heroes. The world rejoiced with Greece!

And now we can look forward to Easter, despite the continuing restrictions as another year passes in extraordinary circumstances we could never have foreseen. But traditions remain deeply embedded in Greek life at Easter time, so I have included some traditional recipes for Lenten food in this issue and useful guidelines for the successful dying of red Greek Easter eggs.

Now that we have changed our clocks the evenings are already longer, sunset is later, and our thoughts naturally turn to what summer 2021 may look like. For many of us I expect the priority will be to reunite with family and friends – albeit in a safe environment. I readily admit that I find connecting with family and friends on Zoom to be tiringly unsatisfactory and am pretty fed up with Facebook trivia. So let's hope we can soon travel safely and see the people we love face to face once again.

In the meantime . . . we can enjoy celebrating Easter here in Greece. May the pleasures we derive from the traditions and celebration of this significant event help to alleviate the lockdown lethargy which I suspect is affecting us all. Greek Easter will surely lift our spirits!

Stay safe and well!

Chris Grant-Bear, Editor



**Happy Easter
to our members
on
Easter Sunday, 2nd May**



April 22nd Earth Day
April 23rd St George's Day
April 26th Holy Week begins
April 30th Good Friday
May 1st May Day
2nd May Easter Sunday
9th May Mother's Day in Greece

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<u>EU-WIDE EMERGENCY</u>	<u>112</u>
<u>POLICE EMERGENCY:</u>	<u>100</u>
<u>FIRE BRIGADE:</u>	<u>199</u>
<u>TOURIST POLICE</u>	<u>171</u>
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<u>SOS MISSING CHILDREN:</u>	<u>1056</u>
<u>DOCTORS SOS</u>	<u>1016</u>
<u>EMERGENCY HOSPITALS</u>	<u>1535</u>
<u>POISON FIRST AID</u>	<u>210</u>
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A Poem

Ladies, pass it on.

It takes 66 days for a new behaviour to become automatic.
According to the experts.
It takes 66 days for a new situation to become your reality.
We have lived in a pandemic for over 365 days.
Your psyche has been altered.
You're a different person now.
You have different expectations, different routines, different thought processes and different needs.
You have a different view of life, the world and your priorities have definitely shifted.

Please do not expect to bounce back into your old life, your old self after this.

Not straight away.
Not without some adjustments.

It's just too much pressure after all you've been through,
You will need time, patience, kindness, understanding and you may find this hard to believe but you will also need some down time at home.

You're a different person now and that's ok my friend.

That's ok.

Just please get to know the new version of you before the locks truly lift, that way you can pave a better road out. A kinder road out.

Don't put too much pressure on yourself to go back to the old you.
The old you has seen so much more now.

Change was inevitable.

By Donna Ashworth

Art by Kelly Ann, owner of The Poppy Tree





Join thousands of organizations as we call on the world to come together for...

THREE DAYS OF CLIMATE ACTION

April 20-22, 2021

Find out more by visiting:

[Earth Day 2021 | Restore Our Earth™ | EARTHDAY.ORG](https://www.earthday.org)

You may or may not know that Earth Day celebrates 51 years this year. 51 years of action to help our planet. This year it is on 22nd April and the theme this year is: Restore Our Earth.

Why not try to do something positive on 22nd April to help restore our earth. You can find lots of ideas on line but here are some to get you started.

1. Do a half-hour clean up around your neighbourhood. Even better if you can get your neighbours to join you!
2. Turn off all lights and electricity for an hour in the evening.
3. Don't use your car for the day. Ctrl+click: [Calculate your personal carbon footprint](#) and then make a commitment to reduce it.
4. Eat a plant-based diet for the day. Going forward try Meatless Mondays.
5. Do an inventory of how much plastic you use daily/weekly/monthly. Make a commitment to reducing plastic waste. Ctrl+click: [Calculate your personal plastic consumption](#) and then make a commitment to reduce it.
6. Make an effort not to waste water by not letting taps run. Use this day to focus on consumption and then make a commitment to reduce it.
7. Unsubscribe from circulars in your email box. Somewhere electricity is being used to send them!
8. Unsubscribe from any catalogues or circulars that come through the door!
9. Scatter some wildflowers for our pollinators. If you don't have a garden, scatter some in a big pot. Let wildflowers grow in your garden for as long as possible, don't cut any grass yet or weeds yet – bees and butterflies will love you!
10. Commit to making some changes every day not just on Earth Day!

Happy Earth Day everyone. Together we can make a difference!

Pauline Leyden Zoulias

Where to Order Your Greek Easter Meal This Year in the Athenian Suburbs

by Tatiana Harkiolakis

We may not be able to go out for a classic Greek Easter this year, but Easter can come to us! Below, we've compiled a list of the best family tavernas that have either confirmed or will possibly cook up traditional Greek Easter dishes and deliver them to your door. *Note:* You should call in advance at around mid-April to confirm if the taverna will still be cooking on Easter, and get your order in a week ahead of time.



Kifissia: Classic taverna **Taverna Vasilis** (*Leoforos Kifisias 284; 210802386*) will have *mageiritsa* on Holy Saturday and lamb and *kokoretsi* on Easter Sunday. Another classic, **Tavernieon Katsarina** (*Leoforos Kifisias 311; 2106254072*), will have lamb, *kokoretsi*, *mageiritsa*, and other meaty dishes. Meanwhile, **To Koutouki tou Kifissia** (*Leoforos Kifisias 308; 2108080780*) will have *mageiritsa*, goat or lamb cooked in a ceramic pot, and more.



Other Northern Suburbs: In Neo Psychiko, **Magireuta Takis** (*Adrianeiou 35; 2106747237*) will release their Easter menu in early April. Also in Neo Psychiko, **Marie & Antoinette** (*Triantafillidi 22 & Georgiou Vlahou; 2130416420*) will have lamb, *mageiritsa* (with a vegan option), and *dolmadakia* (stuffed vine leaves). In Holargos, **Taverna O Stavros** (*Dorianis 12; 2106529000*) hasn't decided yet, but they've served other years, cooking up classic lamb and *kokoretsi*.



Glyfada: With one branch in Halandri (*Iroon Politehneiou 39; 2106721864*) and one in Glyfada (*Alsous 7; 2108985996*) **Prokomenes** will also have lamb and *mageiritsa*, as well as side dishes, including baked potato (*patata hovoli*). **Yiouvetsakia Kalofagadiko** (*Moreos 45 & Ithomis 20; 2109648081*) will have a large menu with various lamb dishes, *kokoretsi*, *mageiritsa*, and other choices. **Oikogeniaki Taverna O Ilias** (*Xenofontos 28; 2109619636*) will also have lamb, *kokoretsi*, and other grilled meats (they do takeaway instead of delivery).



Other Southern Suburbs: In Palio Faliro, **Magikes Katsaroles** (*Sintagmatarchou Zisimopoulou 47; 21 0941 8821*) will confirm whether they'll do Easter food by 10-15 April; other years they've had lamb, goat fricassee, and vegan *mageiritsa* made with mushrooms. Another Palio Faliro classic, **Taverna Babis** (*Leof. Amfitheas 71; 2109420529*), is still deciding as well, but they have a good reputation for their classic Greek dishes. Further south in Voula, **To Tentzero** (*Plastira 12; 2108993152*) will have traditional Easter dishes, including *mageiritsa* and goat.

We wish you all a happy, healthy Easter, with brighter, warmer (and hopefully more active) spring days ahead!

Tatiana Harkiolakis www.facebook.com/TheAthenianSite



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Memory Glitch by Martina

Was it 1994 when my mother decided to take us to Hydra out of the blue for Easter? 1994. What a number. It almost sounds Edwardian.

I remember taking black and white pictures of the island and us, analogue of course, that I then developed myself in the dark room when I got back to uni in London to finish my BA in Art and Art History that same year. My mother was not the traveling type, we travelled a great deal to visit family dispersed throughout Europe, but we never did any touristic trips. Mama wasn't the tourist type. Also, even though we travelled a great deal and seemed to be privileged with an education in England and family all over the place, our small single mom unit didn't actually have a lot of money. So going on a vacation just us and having to pay for accommodation never happened. In fact I think this Hydra escape was the only time my mother, my two sisters and I actually did this sort of thing.

Images from these couple of days in Hydra, creep into my mind. You know the kind of memories that keep creeping into your mind like glitches out of the blue for no good sensory reason? My mother had reached yet another crossroad in her life. We walked through what I remember to be the circular formation of the island from edge to edge, her with a withdrawn look, my second sister and I brunettes and barely adult, and my littlest sister a straight haired blond six-year-old, running around us adorably oblivious (or probably not), inquisitive, charming and typically attention seeking. We sat in different kafeneia on the port and watched the luxurious yachts bobbling, my mother, a half-smile on her face, her eyes distant and forlorn.

On Good Friday we followed the mourning crowd towards the Kamini district and its little port. The silence around us was palpable, the only sound a pining shuffling of hundreds of feet from around the island with the *epitaphios* a beacon directing their course and dictating their mood. The crowd was just as much a part of the re-enactment in the scene as the *epitaphios*. Demure, down cast, sorrowful. I can't recall the church bells ringing solemnly. Was my little sister holding a *fanarakí*? All I remember was the buildup of emotion as we made our way, the extreme gravity of the moment. We were at the back end of the mass coming from our side of the island, and on a hill, by the time we came to a standstill. At last we were able to see the *epitaphios* for the first time on the small, coved beach below us. From our vantage point I seem to remember being able to see across the bay all the way along to the other hill ahead of us, packed with people all just as still, and below the *epitaphios* carried by young men, made its way into the sea, no longer followed just silently observed by all. It shook precariously as it carefully broke the water, shedding decorative flowers on its way. When the young men were waist deep in water, hoisting their burden as high as they could, they came to a strained halt. There they stood, waiting for the signal. Suspended in disbelief there we all stood waiting for the miracle.

Our small unit in its own isolated mood, had blended into the scene seamlessly thus far, we too waited demurely, shielding our candles from blowing out. It seemed like an eternity before the bearers, reacting to a cue from the priests on the shore behind them, dramatically released the *epitaphios* allowing its bulk to buckle and be swept by the tide, while they dove valiantly into the cold spring sea. Steered by this buildup, the gravity of the crowd, the rhythmic heavy silence, and before I could contain myself, I let out an unsuppressed scream of enchantment, gratitude and encouragement, clapping wildly as if I were in a Prince concert.

Needless to say that I was shushed aggressively by several strangers around me, their disapproval mingled with reprimands at the disrespect. Amidst the murmur, my shouts of glee still echoed across the bay. Hit at the very heart of my fragile identity, in an instant I became my own Judas, an imposter disguised as a Greek, my worst fear realized. I cried quietly and inconsolably all the way back to our room.

A little while later I was in London again and in the uni dark room, safe in my unquestioned Greek identity again. I hid this memory deep in the recesses of my mind and developed only the pictures that were unrelated to it. But you cannot delete memories. They remain like a glitch. This one resurfaces each and every Easter with renewed vigor, making me shudder anew, even after all these years.

Martina Anagnostou www.martinanagnostou.com Instagram: @martinanagnostou

Easter Eggs with a Difference . . .

last week Robin showed me a unique Easter Egg she was preparing for the AWOG bazaar; a handmade, Victorian style, sugar Easter egg topped with sugar paste flowers and leaves. I was able to identify the 10 flowers: pansies, daffodils, water lilies, violets, rosebud, daisy, lily of the valley, poppy, almond blossom and the Easter lily. The eggs, which weigh 240 grams, are edible, but of course they are meant for decoration. If the sugar eggs are wrapped in plastic and stored in a box away from moisture they can last for many years.

More details from Robin at (snowbird1624@yahoo.com) but be sure to give her a week's notice of your order and pick up arrangements. **Happy Easter!**



Red Greek Easter eggs symbolise the blood and sacrifice of Christ, so you can't celebrate a Greek Easter without them. Traditionally we should make these vibrant Greek Easter eggs on Holy Thursday. The tradition of cracking the Greek Easter eggs after 'Christ has risen' on Easter Monday, symbolises the resurrection from the dead and the new life. The player who successfully cracks the eggs of the other players is the 'winner' and is said to be granted luck for the rest of the year.

To make the perfect dyed Greek Easter eggs you will need the following ingredients

12 eggs

1 package red egg dye powder

6 cups warm water

1/3 of a cup vinegar

olive oil, for shining

Make sure that the eggs are at room temperature; leave them out of the fridge for 3 hours before you start preparing this recipe.

1. Wash the eggs thoroughly and place them gently in one single layer in an empty pot. Add enough cold water to cover the eggs by 3-4 cm. If you place the cold eggs in already boiling water, the shells are more than likely to crack immediately, due to the difference in temperature. Fresh eggs sink to the bottom of the pot, so get rid of eggs that float on top, as they may have gone off.
2. Season the water with a good pinch of salt and bring to the boil. Stir gently while the water is coming to a boil to help centre the yolks. Boil the eggs for 6 minutes.
3. As soon as the eggs are boiled, remove the pot from the stove and place the eggs under running cold water for about a minute to stop the cooking process and help prevent the yolks from forming a less than attractive green crust around them.
4. After the eggs cool down, start preparing the dye. Place the warm water and the dye powder in a large glass bowl and stir, until dissolved. Don't forget to add the vinegar, or else your 'red' Greek Easter eggs will become pink and pale.

Carefully place the eggs in the bowl and then set aside for 2-3 minutes. Remove with a slotted spoon on to a rack over some kitchen paper and let them dry for about 40 minutes. Give a shine to your Easter eggs, by wiping them with a paper towel with a little olive oil.

Bits and Pieces . . .

- An exciting exhibition at the National Historical Museum of Athens, with key events from the 1821 Greek War of Independence depicted using Greek Playmobil figurines and accessories, will run until May 2020.



Among the historical figures depicted are Laskarina Bouboulina, the first female to be posthumously named admiral for her war services, Greek Generals Theodoros Kolokotronis and Markos Botsaris and Filiki Eteria, the secret organisation founded in 1814 in Odessa whose purpose was to overthrow the Ottoman rule and establish an independent Greek state.

- **Residents of Greece aged between 65 and 69 years old** can now book an appointment for their coronavirus vaccinations with their AMKA social security and AFM tax numbers on the **emvolio.gov.gr** website
- **To get a temporary AMKA number go to website**
<https://news.gtp.gr/2021/03/05/how-to-get-a-temporary-amka-number-in-greece-for-vaccination/> to fill out an application.
- **Greece's Covid-19 Vaccination Certificate Now Available for Download**



Photo source: European Commission

Greek residents who have been vaccinated against the coronavirus (Covid-19) can request their digital vaccination certificate online through the gov.gr website (in Greek) after getting the second dose of the vaccine. Individuals who want to download their certificate will need their personal Taxisnet password and AMKA number. The vaccination certificate, which will have a unique verification code number and advanced digital stamp, can be printed or stored as an electronic document to be sent via e-mail when needed. The certificate contains only basic information from the vaccination register of the e-Government Center for Social Security (IDIKA) and is produced by the National Infrastructures for Research and Technology (EDYTE).

- **Tokyo Olympic torch relay begins as sign of hope in Japan** The Olympic flame was lit in March last year in Greece at a ceremony held without spectators. Then, just two days before the relay was due to start, the then Japanese prime minister, Shinzo Abe, agreed to delay the Games by a year. Now the official countdown to the Tokyo Games has begun. Members of the Japan women's football team began the torch's 120-day journey which will culminate in the opening ceremony at the Olympic stadium on 23 July. Organisers are clinging to the hope

Continued from previous page

that the torch's appearance in Japan will generate enthusiasm in the host country. According to recent opinion polls, most Japanese want the Games to be postponed again or cancelled due to fears that they will spark a new wave of Covid-19 infections.

•



Children wearing face masks as they wait along the route of the 2020 Olympic torch relay.

- **A Gift for the Greek Diaspora: the Right to Vote** The estimated 7 million Greeks of the global diaspora have extra cause to celebrate the 200 years of Greek Independence. Greeks living abroad have now been gifted the right to vote in national elections.
- **There seems to be a lot of confusion regarding the changes to sending and receiving parcels since Brexit.** If you want to use a courier – which is often cheaper than the regular Greek mail – look at the information on [parcelcompare.com](https://www.parcelcompare.com) where you will find a) the exact costs of sending my goods and b) the best deal on any given day of the week. You enter the details of exact weight, height and depth of your parcel, address, etc and are shown a list of options. Payment online. Pick up from your home and next day delivery to UK. I highly recommend this site.
- Answers to all your questions can also be found at <https://www.elta.gr/en-us/personal/lettersparcels/weblabeling.aspx>

How have your food shopping routines changed during the covid pandemic?

Perhaps, like me, you make fewer trips to the stores and do your major food shopping on line since covid restrictions took the joy out of a visit to the supermarket or the street markets? This change in shopping habits has led me to a better use of my fridge and freezer, always remembering that the first priority is to minimize the risk of foodborne illness. And with a well-stocked space, I can stretch out the time between shopping on line.

We can spend hours on the old debate over whether fresh or frozen is better for us, but I just mix fresh and frozen for different purposes in order to eat well. Revisiting the "rules to remember" below helped me not only to save you money but also helped me reduce food waste.



Rule #1 concerns the thawing texture of food: After freezing and thawing, some meats and fish, hard cheeses and sliced bread return to their fresh state, but softer cheeses, such as goat cheese, Brie, or Camembert often change texture.

Rule #2. Don't let leftovers sit out before or after freezing. It's a common misconception that any bacteria in leftovers will be killed by freezing. It's unsafe to let food thaw at room temperature because bacteria can multiply rapidly and create toxins that will survive the cooking process, even if the food is cooked to temperatures that kill the bacteria themselves.

Rule #3. Don't just use whatever bags are handy. When packaging that's not designed for the freezer is used, the food loses quality more quickly because more air can get into the package, leading to freezer burn. Freezer burn causes moisture loss, and that can lead to food that's dry, has ice crystals on it and shows changes in flavor, color, and texture.

Rule #4. Put dates on each package of stored food and rotate older items to the front to be used sooner. Here are some general guidelines for storage times:

- Fruits and vegetables: up to 12 months
- Raw beef, veal, lamb, and pork: up to 12 months
- Raw poultry: up to 12 months
- Ground meats: up to four months
- Fish: up to six months
- Precooked foods, like leftovers: one to two months
- Cooked meats: two to six months

Ground meats have a shorter time frame because of the way they're processed and handled. Always smell any meat once it's thawed, because if the aroma is off, it's no longer safe to eat. (It may smell like ammonia due to the breakdown in proteins and fats.)

Rule#5. Consider how your fish is handled Seafood is highly perishable, so it's great to have some in the freezer rather than in the fridge. Commercially caught fish and shellfish, flash frozen on the boat at sea, are usually vacuum-sealed and safe to keep for up to six months.

Rule#6. Don't thaw on the counter Thawing food properly is critical to preventing foodborne bacteria from multiplying to dangerous levels. The 4 following ways are safe:

Thawing by cooking for small pieces of food, ground or chopped meat.

Thawing in the microwave is typically the second-fastest way (cooking is the fastest). It's not recommended for large items, such as whole chickens, but it is ideal for smaller foods or foods that will be added to a larger dish later.

Thawing in cold water takes about 20 to 30 minutes per pound of food. You must change the water every 30 minutes, and keep the water at 40 degrees Fahrenheit.

Thawing in the refrigerator is by far the easiest and safest way to thaw frozen food, but it takes the longest.

Rule #7: Pack Your Freezer Full to save on your electricity bill. It takes more energy to keep the space at below-freezing temperatures with just a few items in there.

- **And finally, Rule #8. Refreeze properly:** Previously frozen meat, poultry, or fish purchased from the store can be refrozen as long as it's been handled safely and hasn't been at room temperature for more than a two-hour period. If a food has been thawed in the refrigerator safely, you can refreeze it, as long as it's within three to four days since thawing. Food that was thawed and then cooked is safe to refreeze.

Lenten Foods

Shrimp Youvetsi is a tasty Lenten food, but this recipe contains olive oil.

Ingredients

- 2 1/2 lbs shrimp
- 1/4 cup butter (or dairy free butter)
- 1 large onion sliced, 1 sliced carrot, 1 green pepper sliced
- 1 can crushed tomatoes (14oz)
- 1/2 cup crumbled feta
- 4 tbsp chopped parsley
- 1/2 cup orzo
- 3/4 cup Kasseri cheese (optional)



Directions: Clean and rinse the shrimp. Put them in a small saucepan with enough water to just cover them and steam until just cooked. Remove shrimp, keep the water to use later in the recipe. While the shrimp is cooking, fill a medium saucepan with about 6 cups of water and bring to a boil. Add the orzo and cook for about 8 minutes, or until the orzo is "al dente" - cooked but still slightly firm. Drain the orzo and set aside.

Once the shrimp is done cooking, heat the butter in a pan and sauté the onions, green peppers and carrots till soft. Add the crushed tomato, the water from the shrimp and black pepper to taste. Boil over medium heat until the sauce thickens and the butter is completely incorporated. Remove the above mixture from the heat and stir in the shrimp, feta, orzo and parsley. Add salt to taste if needed. If not adding feta to the recipe you will need salt. Put the shrimp and orzo mixture in a baking pan. Sprinkle black pepper and cayenne pepper on top as well as the Kasseri cheese (optional) and bake in the oven at 400 degrees for about 30 minutes. You can use mozzarella cheese in place of Kasseri cheese if desired.

Broiled Portobello Mushrooms

INGREDIENTS

- 1 1/4 c. shredded Gruyère and 1/4 c. freshly grated Parmesan
- 2 tbsp. freshly chopped parsley, plus more for garnish
- 1 tbsp. fresh thyme leaves
- 1/2 tsp. garlic powder
- 6 large portobello mushrooms, stems removed and sliced 1/2"
- 1/4 cup of Heavy cream
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste



DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 425°. In a medium bowl, toss together Gruyère, Parmesan, parsley, thyme, and garlic powder.

Arrange one-third of mushrooms in the bottom of a 2-quart baking dish. Season with salt and pepper. Sprinkle with one-third of the cheese mixture. Repeat layering two more times. Pour cream over mushrooms.

Cover with foil and bake until mushrooms are tender, about 35 minutes.

Remove foil and carefully pour off any excess liquid in bottom of dish. Broil until top is golden, about 4 minutes more.

Greek Easter Cookies

Koulourakia These sweet little traditional Greek Easter cookies are super quick to bake.

Ingredients

- 250g butter (8.8 oz.) at room temperature
- 1 1/2 cup sugar
- 13g powdered baking ammonia (1 tbsp) and 1/2 cup lukewarm milk
- 4 medium eggs
- 1 tbsp vanilla extract
- zest of 2 oranges
- 1kg all-purpose flour (35 oz.)
- 2 egg yolks and 1 tbsp water for glazing the koulourakia

Instructions

Start by mixing the butter and sugar. In a mixer's bowl add the sugar and butter (chopped) and mix for about 10-15 minutes, until the butter is creamy and fluffy. In the meantime warm the milk until lukewarm and remove the pot from the heat. Add the ammonia and blend until dissolved. Set aside.

Add the eggs to the butter-sugar mixture one at a time, whilst mixing, allowing time for each one to be absorbed, before adding another. Pour in the vanilla extract, the orange zest and milk, with the ammonia, and mix to combine. Add the flour, a little bit at a time, whilst mixing, until the ingredients are combined and the dough is soft and not too sticky.

Cover the dough with some plastic wrap and set aside to rest for 20 minutes.

Place the dough for the koulourakia on a clean working surface, take a small piece of dough and form long cords. Shape the koulourakia with your hands, giving them any shape you like. Line a large baking tray with parchment paper and place the koulourakia, leaving some distance between them as they will rise a lot when baked. For this koulourakia recipe, you will need approx. 4-5 large baking trays, depending on the size of the cookies. In a small bowl add the egg yolks and 1 tbsp water and whisk with a fork. Brush the top of the koulourakia and bake in preheated oven at 200C for 15 minutes, until nicely coloured. Let the koulourakia cool down completely and store in airtight containers for up to three weeks.



A suitable grace for Easter Sunday lunch?

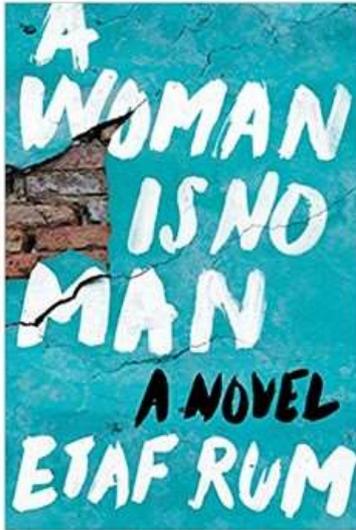
God of goodness, bless our food
Keep us in a pleasant mood
Bless the cook and all who serve us
From indigestion, Lord preserve us.
Amen

Book Reviews by Di Drymoussis

Thank you, Di for two thought provoking reviews for April.

A Woman Is No Man

by Etaf Rum



The story of the challenges faced by three generations of women living in a Palestinian-American family as they are torn between love and family, culture and society and the past and the future.

Writing this book must have been a quite an emotional turmoil for the author. Islamophobia plagues our world today and, exposing such a dark side of the Arab world by an Arab woman would be considered a betrayal of the community. Though the *Quran* holds women in high regard, man unfortunately does not. A woman is no man because she is considered inferior to a man, but a woman is also no man because, what she might lack in physical strength, she makes up for with resilience and emotional strength.

The story tells of three generations of women, each hoping that living in America might change her life – only to discover that you can take a woman out of Palestine, but it's harder to take Palestine out of a woman when all around her are still expecting her to conform to the behavioural norms of her homeland.

With the narrative shifting between Isra, her mother-in-law Fareeda, and Isra's eldest daughter Deya, we are given remarkable insight into differing perceptions, based on generation. Though harrowing in parts, I was totally captivated from start to finish. The book opened my eyes to the plight of women in Palestine and the culture that followed them, even when they emigrated - hugely unsettling - but it was something I had to read. It was both powerful and moving, and so much more besides. Etaf Rum manages to seamlessly take us through different periods of time, through the view of these three Palestinian-American women.

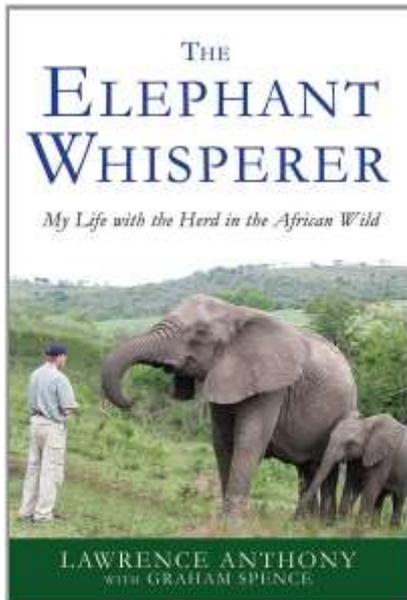
When looking for a wife for their eldest son, Fareeda and Khalid had returned to their homeland of Palestine in search of a bride who hadn't been 'tainted' by western culture. For Isra, leaving Palestine for America was a romantic adventure, despite being told by her mother that marriage and motherhood were a woman's only worth, and that love had nothing to do with it. She would love her husband, would strive to understand him, to please him and surely in this way she would earn his love. The reality was so very different. Marrying into a family who had not integrated into American society, Isra found herself facing an uphill struggle trying to please not only her husband but also his mother, never quite satisfying either. Fareeda rules with a rod of iron but is herself a long-time victim of her husband's fists and bouts of drinking. After the couple had saved enough money to escape from the camps, they had set up home in Brooklyn, New York but the need to keep up appearances and maintain family honour made life pretty dysfunctional for Fareeda and her family. Isra, is Palestine-born but 'exported' to New York to make a good marriage only to find out that such a marriage can't survive the birth of four daughters and no sons. Isra's eldest daughter Deya, is a bit too American for her grandmother's liking and yearns to have the freedoms that should be due to an American-born girl. Their unique cultures are at war with each other. Fareeda wants them to remain true to their heritage but Isra and Deya want something more.

In Fareeda's world, a woman's worth is linked to her husband. He can do what he likes with her, she is his property. If he wants to abuse her, it's acceptable so long as she disguises the bruises with make-up. Rather than bonding together in their adversity, the elders turn a blind eye to the abuse of the younger women as if that's just the way things are and always will be. We're left wondering if Deya and her sisters can break the pattern of pain and suffering or, will normalise it in the ways their mother and grandmother have already done. The two contradicting cultures must be incredibly difficult to navigate at the same time. One culture is steeped in medieval and oppressive traditions and rules, whereas the other culture allows freedom in all areas. How are children and young people supposed to be true to both?

Etaf Rum has produced an amazing debut novel highlighting the tensions for women as they try to escape their traditional roles. ***A Woman Is No Man*** is a must-read, powerful, deeply affecting novel. It's raw, unforgettable and brave - a narrative that needs to be told.

The Elephant Whisperer

by Laurence Anthony



When South African conservationist Laurence Anthony was asked to accept a herd of 'rogue' elephants on his Thula Thula game reserve in Zululand, his common sense told him to refuse. But he was the herd's last chance of survival – dangerous and unpredictable, they would be killed if Anthony wouldn't take them in. As Anthony risked his life to create a bond with the troubled elephants and persuade them to stay on his reserve, he came to realize what a special family they were - from the wise matriarch Nana, who guided the herd, to her warrior sister Frankie, always ready to see off any threat - and their children who fought so hard to survive.

This non-fiction book is a fascinating, easy read - a real treat! South African conservationist, Laurence Anthony, tells of his exploits when he accepted a herd of 'rogue' elephants on his Thula Thula game reserve in South Africa - a story of an African reserve from its birth to growing with others reserves to become a 'super' reserve. Tales of being at one with an elephant herd - mixed with stories of crocodiles, snakes, and wild animal attacks - bring into the recipe everything an African wildlife story needs to have. Even if you are not an animal lover you will feel differently about elephants after you have read this sensitive book. (As a species we could learn a lot from them!) Though I am not usually a great fan of animal books it was a most enjoyable read. I have to admit I do love to watch elephant videos sent to me on

my phone or the documentaries on TV about elephants in the wild. I find them particularly fascinating with their matriarchal social organisation and devotion and tenderness to their offspring.

Against all advice Laurence Anthony took on the herd when told that it was their last chance of survival - they were to be killed if he didn't take them. Before the move was completed, the elephants broke away and the matriarch and her baby were shot, leaving the remaining elephants traumatised, dangerous and very angry. As soon as they arrived at Thula Thula they started planning their escape - making life for Laurence even harder and more difficult for him to create a bond with them and save them from execution. However, against all odds, Laurence turns things around with this aggressive, dangerous herd of elephants, gaining their trust one by one. . .until they even respond to his calls.

The book is both sad and joyful in equal measures. It is also not without its share of comical moments, such as the time the overweight vet was being chased and how a couple of poachers had the tables turned on them by the use of pretend witchcraft. A number of events are memorable, such as the baby elephant born deformed and the tenacity displayed by the herd to try and care and protect it by going without food and water over several days. Another was the close relationship the author had with an outcast juvenile bull which eventually had to be destroyed and which, sadly, it was subsequently discovered that a simple course of antibiotics would probably have made this unnecessary.

Then there were the game rangers who turned 'bad' and were running a side-line in bush meat – and the poachers who set fire to the game reserve just so they could divert attention while poaching at the other end of the reserve. The cruelty some humans inflict on these magnificent beasts just for the sake of a quick profit beggars belief but this story is a beacon of hope. I shed tears when I read that the elephants called to pay their respects when the author died.

A thoroughly enjoyable book which you don't necessarily have to be an animal lover to appreciate. The only thought I was left with on finishing the book was wondering how the herd and reserve are coping now. The day-to-day goings on at Thula Thula would make for a great blog.
Highly recommended.

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The advertisement features a photograph of a woman and two children smiling from inside cardboard boxes on a wooden floor. The boxes have the Orphee Beinoglou logo on them. The text on the left side of the advertisement lists the company's services and contact information.

Laughter is still the best medicine!

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their kids are yelling at them to stay indoors!
- Every few days try your jeans on just to make sure they fit.
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