

Fried Green Beans, Halloumi & Lemon-Tiganita Fasolakia
Serves 8

For the batter

1 1/4 cups unbleached all-purpose flour

1/2 cup cornstarch

1 tablespoon chopped flat-leaf parsley

1/4 teaspoon grated lemon zest

1/4 teaspoon minced garlic

Sea salt and freshly ground pepper

2 cups chilled soda water

2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil

For the beans, cheese and lemon

4 quarts canola oil

1 pound tender green beans, trimmed and moistened

8 lemon slices, about 1/8 inch thick

1/4 pound halloumi cheese, in 4 slices, each broken in half lengthwise

1/2 cup unbleached all-purpose flour

Minced flat-leaf parsley for garnish Lemon halves for serving

For the batter: In a large bowl, combine the flour, cornstarch, parsley, lemon zest, garlic, 2 teaspoons salt, and a pinch of pepper. Mix well with a whisk. Add the soda water and olive oil and whisk just until most of the lumps are gone. Don't overmix, or you will deflate the batter. Let rest at room temperature for 10 minutes, or cover and refrigerate for up to 3 hours. Mix gently before using.

In a large, heavy pot, heat the canola oil until it registers 360°F on a deep-frying thermometer. Put the beans, lemon slices, and cheese in a colander set over a bowl. Toss with the 1/2 cup flour, then shake off the excess. Working in small batches, dip a few of the beans, lemon slices, and cheese in the batter. Lift them out, letting the excess batter drip back. Fry until the lemon and the cheese start to brown (the beans will not brown much), about 2 minutes, agitating them frequently in the oil with tongs or a wire-mesh skimmer. Lift them out with tongs or a skimmer onto a tray lined with paper towels. Sprinkle with salt. Keep warm in a low oven while you fry the remainder.

Transfer the fried beans, lemons, and cheese to a platter and garnish with a light sprinkle of parsley. Serve hot with the lemon halves.

Kokkari: Contemporary Greek Flavors Cookbook