Gastronomy & local products of Sikyonia



Sikyonia is blessed with fertile plains and mountain villages — and the plate shows it.

Oil, wine & currants

Olive oil, **wine** and the famous **Corinthian currants** are the region’s signatures.

From the mountains

In the mountain villages you’ll find **honey**, mountain tea, cheeses and meat — authentic flavours from small producers.

Discover the villages in Excursion to the villages.

The Coastal Palette: Fresh Catch and the Kiato Lemon

In the bustling seaside town of Kiato, the culinary scene is defined by its proximity to the Corinthian Gulf. The local "psarotavernas" (fish taverns) line the waterfront, offering a daily rotation of whatever the local fishermen bring in. From silver-scaled sardines and anchovies, often served "atherina" style (fried small fish), to larger catches like sea bream and red mullet, the emphasis is on simplicity. A drizzle of local olive oil and a squeeze of the famous Kiato lemon is often all that is needed to elevate the dish.

The "Maglini" variety of lemon, synonymous with the plains of Sikyonia, is a point of local pride. These lemons are known for their thin, smooth skin and incredibly high juice content. Throughout Kiato, you will find this citrus influence in everything from traditional "avgolemono" (egg-lemon) soups to "lemonato" veal and handmade preserves. The scent of blossoming lemon groves is a defining characteristic of the coastal air during the spring months, marking the start of a new agricultural cycle.

The Legend of the Corinthian Currant

The history of the "black gold" in Sikyonia deserves a deeper look. For centuries, the Corinthian currant (Vostizza or black raisin) was the primary export of the region, fueling the local economy and shaping the landscape. These small, seedless grapes are spread out on large "alonia" (drying floors) under the Mediterranean sun. The result is a nutrient-dense superfood with a deep, concentrated sweetness.

Locally, these currants find their way into "stafidopsomo" (raisin bread) found in every village bakery, as well as in savory dishes. It is not uncommon to find currants added to stuffing for poultry or mixed with rice in traditional "gemista" (stuffed vegetables), providing a subtle sweetness that balances the acidity of the tomatoes and the richness of the olive oil.

The Highland Bounty of Feneos and Stymfalia

As you move away from the coast and ascend into the mountainous regions of the Sikyonia municipality, the gastronomy undergoes a dramatic shift. The fertile plateau of Feneos and the wetlands of Stymfalia provide a microclimate that is radically different from the plains, resulting in unique PGI (Protected Geographical Indication) products that are sought after across Greece.

The Feneos "Vanilies" and Gigantes

The high-altitude plains of Feneos are famous for their pulses. The "Feneos Vanilies" (Vanilla Beans) are a specific variety of small, white, kidney-shaped beans known for their exceptionally thin skin and creamy texture. Unlike standard beans, they cook quickly and have a sweet, delicate flavor that gives them their "vanilla" name. These are often prepared as a traditional "fasolada" (bean soup) or served as a salad with plenty of fresh parsley and spring onions.

Similarly, the "Gigantes" (Giant Beans) of Feneos are celebrated for their size and ability to remain firm yet tender when baked in the oven with tomato sauce and local herbs. These pulses are a staple of the "Lenten" diet and a testament to the region's ability to produce world-class ingredients from its rich, volcanic soil.

Stymfalia Dairy and Lake Traditions

The area surrounding Lake Stymfalia is the heart of Sikyonia’s pastoral tradition. Here, sheep and goats graze on the slopes of Mount Ziria, producing milk with a high fat content and complex herbal notes. This milk is transformed into artisanal cheeses, most notably Feta and "Manouri," as well as thick, traditional yogurt sold in clay pots. The local "Mizithra," a whey cheese, is often served grated over handmade pasta or used as a filling for mountain pies.

Interestingly, despite being a mountain region, Stymfalia has its own "seafood" tradition. The lake and the nearby springs support freshwater fish, including trout. In the tavernas of the Stymfalia villages, you can find grilled trout seasoned with wild oregano, offering a distinct flavor profile compared to the saltwater fish found back in Kiato.

The Art of the Mountain Grill and Traditional Doughs

Sunday lunch in the mountain villages of Sikyonia is an institution. The air is often filled with the aroma of "paidakia" (lamb chops) and "kokoretsi" roasting over open coals. The meat in these parts is of exceptional quality, sourced from local herds that roam the highlands. Beyond the grill, look for "gkioulmpasi"—three types of meat slow-cooked in parchment paper with garlic and cheese—which is a specialty of the inland tavernas.

Handmade Pasta and "Pites"

The women of Sikyonia’s villages have preserved the art of handmade dough. "Hilopites" (small square noodles) and "Trahanas" (a fermented grain and dairy pasta) are still produced the traditional way during the summer months, dried in the sun, and stored for the winter. These are often served with a simple red sauce or "kokkinisto" rooster.

The "pites" (pies) of the region are another highlight. Depending on the season, you might find "hortopita" filled with wild greens foraged from the mountainside, or "stafidopita" (currant pie). The crust is typically thick

and crunchy, made with local olive oil, and baked in wood-fired ovens that lend a smoky depth to the pastry.

Spirits and Local Vines

No meal in Sikyonia is complete without the local beverages. While neighboring Nemea is famous for its Agiorgitiko, Sikyonia has its own flourishing vineyards, particularly in the mid-altitude hills. Local producers focus on varieties that thrive in the Corinthian climate, producing crisp whites and robust reds that are often served as "hima" (bulk wine) in local carafes.

For something stronger, the production of "Tsipouro" is a deeply social event in the villages. Following the grape harvest, the "kazania" (stills) are fired up. This pomace brandy is served as a gesture of hospitality, usually accompanied by "meze" like spicy peppers, olives, and local cheese. In some mountain areas, you may also find "meloino," a traditional local concoction of wine and honey, perfect for the colder winter evenings.

The Seasonal Market Experience

To truly understand the gastronomy of Sikyonia, a visit to the "Laiki Agora" (open-air market) in Kiato is essential. Here, the producers from the mountain villages descend to the coast to sell their goods. It is a sensory explosion of seasonal colors: mountains of bright oranges and lemons in the winter, crates of succulent grapes and figs in the late summer, and sacks of Feneos beans and walnuts in the autumn.

Visitors can also find wild mountain tea (Sideritis) and jars of honey. The honey of Sikyonia ranges from the dark, thick fir honey produced in the high forests to the lighter, floral thyme honey from the lower slopes. These products represent the literal essence of the Sikyonia landscape, bottled or dried to be taken home as a reminder of the region’s fertile abundance.

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Enjoy Kiato and Sikyonia!