

# ***Meaningful Meals***

**Cookbook**

**Melanie Stilson**







**Dedicating to:**

**My Majka (Michele Miheve-Stilson)**

**My Stric (Michael Miheve)**

**My Baka (Dorothy Perkovich-Miheve)**

**Thank you all for teaching me to love to cook and  
keeping our traditions alive through food and music!**

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**Credits** 15.



Stric:  
Uncle Mike

Cousin:  
Sue

Majka:  
Michele

Me:  
Melanie

# Introduction:

*Inspiration and design for this cookbook is from the dishes my family was brought up on. Many of these recipes my Baka (Grandmother) Dorthy who is Croatian; made for my Majka (Mother) Michele Miheve-Stilson and Stric (Uncle) Michael Miheve when they were younger. This encouraged me to start making these my go to dishes all the time. Making my Baka's meals keeps her livin, after she died in 1989. Gives me great thanks to my several cultures. Learning that Yugoslavians (Croatians and Slovenians) stuff peppers, stuff cabbage and the Greeks stuff grape leaves. Shows that these neighboring countries called Balkans/Slavics all have a connection with similar techniques and ingredients. Brought all of my favorite foods I was raised on, which I am excited to share with you!!*

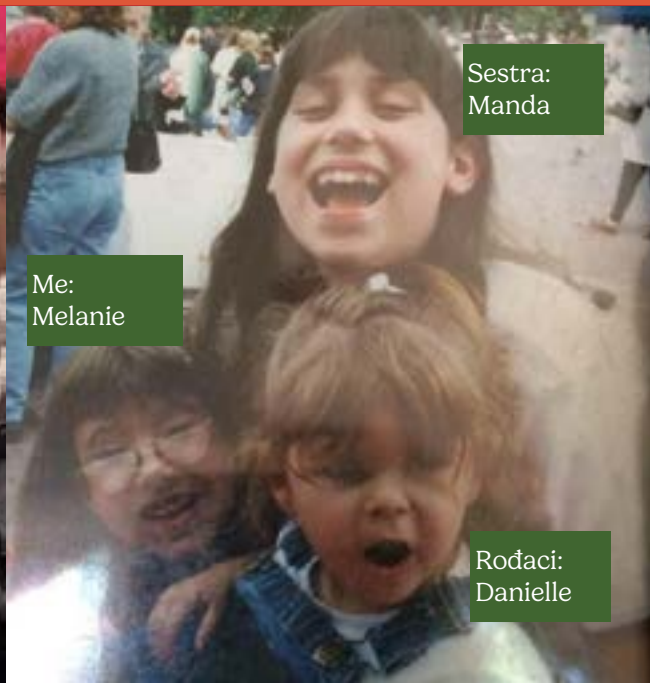


Sestra:  
Manda

Rođaci:  
Danielle

Me:  
Melanie

Majka/Tetka:  
Michele



Sestra:  
Manda

Me:  
Melanie

Rođaci:  
Danielle



Baka Dorthy





# Cucumber Dill Salad

*Prleške murke* (Slovenian)

## Ingredients:

- 1 Cucumber
- 1/4 Cup Apple Cider Vinegar
- 1/3 olive oil
- 3/4 cup Sour Cream
- 3/4 cup Dill
- 1 large mixing bowl
- 1/4 of red onion
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp pepper
- 1 Bowl
- 2 cloves of garlic

## Directions:

Slice Cucumbers and red onion thinly. Place cucumbers in bowl. Fill bowl with water till slightly above cucumbers add 1 tsp salt. Leave in water for twenty minutes



# Greek Salad

*Horiatiki Saláta* Greek

## Ingredients:

- 1 Cucumber
- 1/4 Cup Red Wine Vinegar
- 1/3 olive oil
- 1 Greek Feta in Brine
- 3/4 cup Oregano
- 1 Red/Green Heirloom Tomato
- 1 Yellow Heirloom Tomato
- 1 Roma Tomato
- 1/4 Red onion
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp pepper
- 3/4 cup Sliced Kalamata Olives
- Half Lemon

## Directions:

Slice Cucumbers, and red onion chunky. Slice Feta in chunks. Slice tomatoes in wedges. Fill bowl with cucumbers, red onion, feta, tomatoes, and kalamata olives. Add red wine vinegar, oregano, olive oil, salt, and pepper. Let sit for 20 minutes in bowl. Serve on plate drizzle more olive oil and splash with lemon





## Ingredients:

3 Heirloom Tomatoes  
1/4 Cup Red Wine Vinegar  
1/3 Extra Virgin Olive oil

1/2 Red Onion  
3/4 cup Fresh Dill  
1 tsp salt  
1 tsp pepper  
3 Cloves of Garlic

# Blanched Tomato Salad

*Horiatiki Saláta* (Greek)

## Directions:

Slice tomatoes in wedges. Fill bowl with sliced red onion, dill, garlic, and tomatoes. Add red wine vinegar, olive oil, salt, and pepper. Let sit for 20 minutes in bowl. Serve on plate drizzle more olive oil on top.



# Flaming Goat Cheese

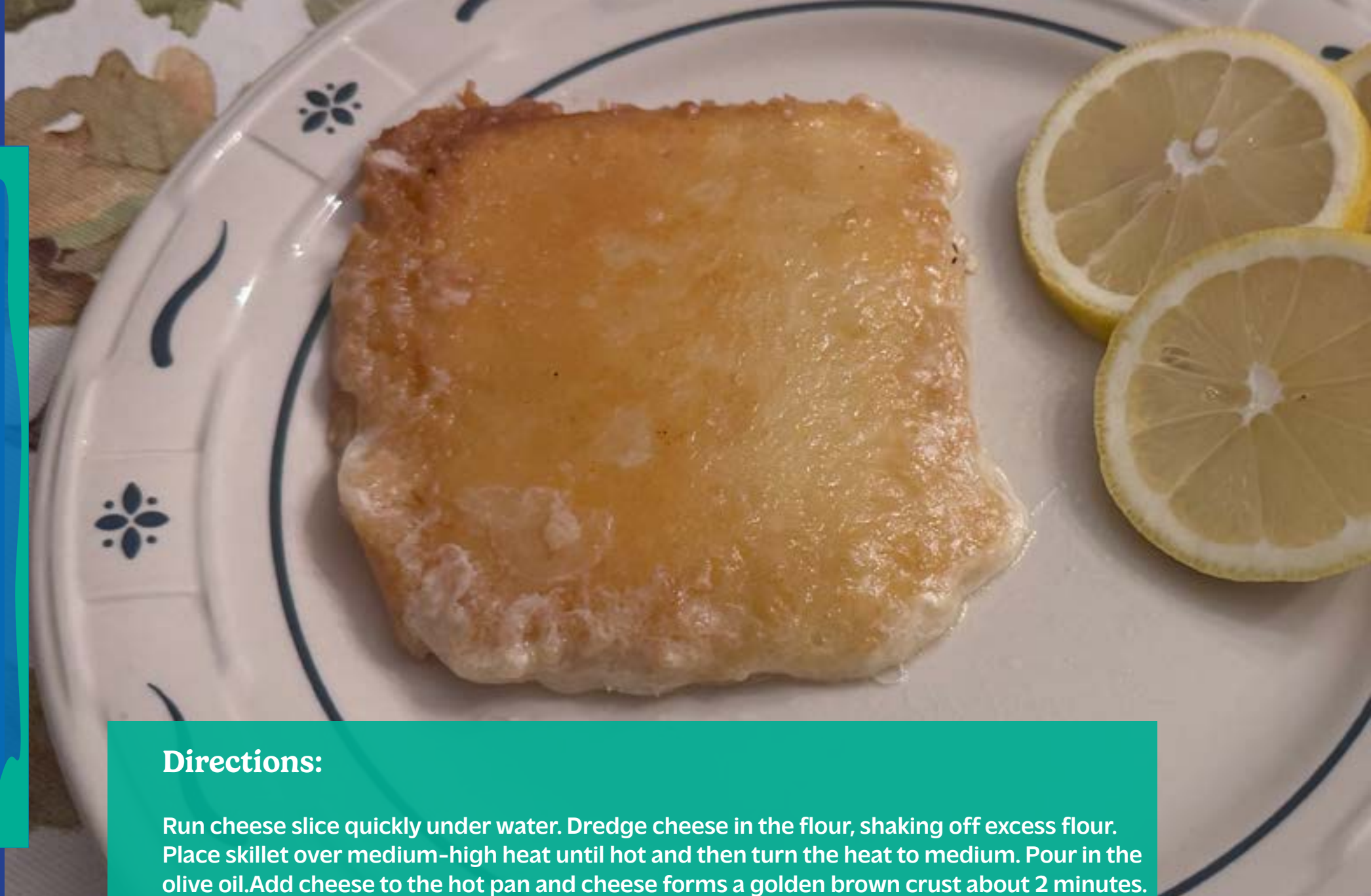
(Greek) *Saganaki*

## Ingredients:

1/2 cup Flour  
1/4 cup Extra Virgin Olive Oil  
1/4 cup olive oil  
1 Kasseri Sheep's Milk  
2 Lemon wedges  
1/2 cup of water  
1 Shot Brandy  
1 Bowl  
1 Skillet  
1 Lighter

## Directions:

Run cheese slice quickly under water. Dredge cheese in the flour, shaking off excess flour. Place skillet over medium-high heat until hot and then turn the heat to medium. Pour in the olive oil. Add cheese to the hot pan and cheese forms a golden brown crust about 2 minutes. Quickly flip the cheese and cook another 1-2 minutes until golden brown. Go outside, add brandy and light the dish with lighter. Squeeze lemon over flaming cheese to douse the flame. Say "OPA"





# Stuffed Cabbage Roll

(Croatian) *Sarma*

## Roux:

For the roux

1.5 tablespoon lard

1.5-2 tablespoon flour

1/4 tsp Hungarian paprika

## Ingredients:

1 whole sour cabbage head

2 pounds ground meat (beef + pork)

1 yellow onion

3 cloves garlic

1 egg

1/2 cup white rice

1/4 cup bread crumbs

1 tsp salt

1 tsp ground black pepper

2 tsp hungarian paprika



## Directions:

Carefully separate 15-20 cabbage leaves and cut spine vein of cabbage leaf. Prepare cooking pot by coating the bottom with a thin layer of lard. Chop roughly the leftover and torn cabbage leaves and spread them on the bottom of the cooking pot. This step will prevent the sarma from burning during the cooking. Mince the onion and garlic and add to a bowl with ground meat, rice, eggs, bread crumbs, salt, black pepper, and Hungarian paprika. Mix everything using hands. Place cabbage leaf in hand, spine end facing you, take a piece of the meat stuffing, and wrap it tightly in a roll. Repeat with stuffing and cabbage leaves. When you finish rolling up all of your sarma rolls, layer them tightly next to each other seam-side down in the cooking pot. Pour water over the sarma is completely covered with it and bring it to a boil. Reduce the heat and let it cook for at least 2-2.5 hours, adding more water if necessary. When sarma is cooked, make your roux. In a saucepan add lard and let it melt. Stir the flour with a whisk or wooden spoon for a few minutes over low heat. When the roux gets a light golden color, turn off the heat and stir in Hungarian paprika. If necessary, add some salt. Add the roux to the sarma and let it simmer for about 10 minutes.

# Stuffed Red Pepper

*Punjene Paprike (Slovenian)*

## Ingredients:

4 Red Peppers	1/4 tsp Oregano
2 tbsp Olive oil	1 Eggs
1 Onion	1 can Diced tomatoes
5 Garlic clove	1/4 cup Water
1/4 cup Arborio rice	1/4 cup Cream cheese
1 1/2 pound ground meat (80% beef, 20% pork)	1/4 tsp Salt and pepper
1/4 tsp Thyme	1 Bowl
	1 Skillet
	1 Pot

## Directions:

Place a skillet with olive oil over medium heat. Add diced onion and saute for 6 minutes. Add the minced garlic and rice. Saute for another 2 minutes. Set aside for 5 minutes for the mixture to cool slightly. Add ground meat to skillet till crispy brown and the rest of the ingredients from the skillet to a large bowl. Season with pepper, thyme, oregano, and salt. Add egg and cream cheese, with the meat mixture in a bowl. Slice the tops off the peppers and remove the seeds inside. Fill each bell pepper with mixture. Place the top of the pepper on top of the filling and close with two toothpicks. Transfer the peppers to a large plate. Place skillet over medium heat, and add a tablespoon of oil and stuffed peppers. Pan-fry them on two sides for 3 minutes on each side. Add two tablespoons of oil into pot. Add crushed garlic clove. Set over medium-high heat and pan-fry for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add diced tomatoes stir and cook for another minute. Add the water and season with oregano, salt, and pepper. Bring to a boil, then simmer for 15 minutes. Add stuffed peppers to pot covered for 90 mins. Serve pepper on plate then add sauce on top.







# Stuffed Grape Leaves

*Dolmades (Greek)*

## Ingredients:

1 Lemon	12-15 Greek Grape Leaves
Extra Virgin Olive Oil	1 1/4 cup Arborio Rice
1 tsp salt	1 LB Ground Lamb
1 tsp pepper	3/4 Greek Yogurt
2 bowls	1/2 cup Dill
1 pot	1/2 cup Mint
1 plate	1/2 cup Oregano
	1/2 Cucumber

## Directions:

Slice Cucumbers and. Remove leaves the jar and rinse well. Combine cooked rice, cooked ground beef, 3 tbs EVVO, half of herbs, half of lemon juice, dash of salt. Place pot on medium low temperature with 2 tbs EVVO.

Add a few layers of grape leaves to bottom of pot to prevent burning. Lay the leaf flat with textured side facing you, put 1 tbs of filling in center.

Cut off the stem. Fold leaves sides over the filling and roll, keep tucking the left and right sides as you roll. Arrange leaves in rows, seam-side down in pot. Put plate on top of rolls. Pour water just above the rolls and lower temperture to low for 30-45 minutes. Combine shredded cucmber yogurt, rest of herbs, half lemon, 2 tbs EVVO, salt and pepper





## Directions:

Dice 5 garlic, oregano, rosemary, half lemon juice, and combine in a bowl with 1/2 cup olive oil. Set oven to 350 degrees. Dry lamb off with paper towel. Cut 10 slits into lamb randomly and put garlic cloves in. Spray Pam all over pan and roasting rack. Place lamb on roasting rack. Massage garlic-herb marinade on top and bottom of lamb for 15 minutes. Sprinkle salt on top. Place in oven for 3-4 hours. Add water every 30 minutes to keep bottom from burning herbs, you will need it for the potatoes. Take lamb out and let sit for 30 minutes. Slice lamb parallel to bone on both sides. Squeeze lemon on top and sprinkle more salt on top.

# Balkan Blend

## Leg of Lamb

*Dobre Janjeće Noge* (Croatian)

*Kleftiko* (Greek)

*Jagnječje Stegno* (Slovenian)

## Ingredients:

3- 4 LB Leg of Lamb

1/2 cup Oregano

1 cup Rosemary

1 Lemon

15 Garlic cloves

Extra Virgin Olive Oil

1 tsp Salt and pepper

Paper towel

Pairing Knife

1 Bowl

14" x 10" x 3" Roasting pan

Pam

Roasting Rack



# Balkan Blend

## Potatoes

*Dobre Janjeće Noge* (Croatian)

*Kleftiko* (Greek)

*Jagnječje Stegno* (Slovenian)

### Ingredients:

1 LB Rustic Potatoes

1 Half Lemon

Cooked Marinade from Balkan  
Lamb

Roasting Pan

Pot

Water

Salt and Pepper

### Directions:

Place pan with cooked marinade on stovetop. Put pot on stovetop at high heat with 3/4 full of water. Cubed potatoes and put in pot. Bring to boil for 10-15 minutes. Drain and add to pan with marinade on low heat for 20 minutes. Add more salt and pepper to taste. Mix well and squeeze lemon on top. Serve with lamb.





# Lemon & Poppyseed Rolled Pastry

*Potica (Croatian/Slovenian)*



## Ingredients:

2 Cups Milk Scalded	5-6 Cups Flour	1 KitchenAid - Coated
3 Pkg. Dry Yeast	1 Poppyseed Can	Flat Beater
3/4 Cups Sugar	1 Pam Can	1 Cooling rack
1 Lemon - Zested	1 Spatula	1 12.8x10x2.5 Baking
2 Sticks of Butter	1 Bowl	Pan
2 Eggs	1 KitchenAid	1 Pot

## Directions:

Put attachment on Kitchenaid. Set oven to lowest heat. Set stovetop to low heat, place pot, pour milk in pot (do not let boil), dip finger in milk to test warmth, and then put 1 stick of butter in till melted. Let milk cool off to not kill yeast. In kitchenaid bowl put 5 cups of flour, sugar, and dry yeast. Keep mixing, then add 1 egg. Add milk and other egg gradually. If dough is wet add flour, do not put 6 cups of flour in you will add the last cup when you roll it out later on. Pam top of dough, place pastry towel over Kitchenaid then turn oven off, and put into oven to rise. Let rise for hour and fifteen minutes. Melt 1 stick of butter in microwave. Punch dough and knead for 10 minutes while adding last cup of flour. Set oven to 350 degrees. Put pastry towel down. Pam baking pan. Take half of dough and roll it out in a circle. Pour half of butter in a spiral. Use spatula to spread butter to edge. Open can of poppyseed. Place globs all over dough. Spread poppyseed to the edges. Zest half of lemon all over on top of poppyseed. Put hands on edges of towel as wide as dough, lift towel, allow the dough to start rolling (be confident). Fold sides under and in. Use entire forearm to lift potica dough into pan. Repeat steps for a second loaf. Put baking pan into oven for 1-1.5 hours till golden brown. When golden brown take out and put on cooling rack. Separate loaves apart then slice into 1/4 inch slices. Have with coffee and ENJOY!





## **Credits**

**Book Author: Melanie Stilson**

**Food cooked by: Melanie Stilson**

**Photographs by: Melanie Stilson**

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**Design by: Melanie Stilson**

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Lamb and Potatoes, Red Peppers, Dolmadas,  
Saganaki, and Greek Salad**

**Dorothy Percovich-Miheve -  
Cucumber Salad and Potica**

**Michael Miheve - Blanched Tomatoes  
and Sarma**

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