

- Juice of 1 small lemon
- 2 cloves of garlic, chopped
- ¼ cup Greek yogurt or Lebni (American yogurts will be too watery)
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 Tablespoons pine nuts

1. Wash the whole eggplants and pierce with a small, sharp knife in one or two places.
2. Place them on a cookie sheet and broil (alternatively, grill on an outdoor hot charcoal grill), turning the eggplants every 10 minutes until they are deflated and their skins are charred.
3. Transfer the eggplants to a colander placed in the sink and slit the skins open. Allow the eggplants to drain for at least 10 minutes, until they are cool enough to handle.
4. Remove some of the seeds (not all) and discard the stem and skin.
5. Scoop the eggplant pulp into a processor workbowl (or a regular workbowl if a processor is not available).
6. Add the olive oil, lemon juice, and garlic.
7. Pulse the processor on and off 7 times until the mixture is fairly smooth but still a little chunky. Pour the mixture into a bowl. Alternatively, stir briskly with a fork and/or wire whisk.
8. Whisk in the Greek yogurt, salt, and pepper. If the mixture appears too dry, add more olive oil or lemon juice. Adjust seasoning to taste.
9. Toast the pine nuts on a cookie



sheet in a 350°F oven until lightly golden (approximately 5 minutes).

10. Just before serving, fold the toasted nuts into the eggplant, reserving a few for garnish. Serve at room temperature or cold. Serves 6 or more as a *meze*, or appetizer.

Tina's Tidbit

• If you can, roast your eggplant outdoors—it imparts a unique flavor to the eggplant. Otherwise, indoor broiling works fine.

Greek Avgolemono Soup

Using eggs instead of butter or cream as a binding agent in sauces was a hallmark of Jewish cooks in Greece. While many Greeks thickened and enhanced the flavor of their meat dishes with a thick béchamel or cream sauce, Greek Jews who observed *kashrut* often substituted an *avgolemono* sauce—a mixture of eggs and lemon—instead. *Avgolemono* is also used as the base for more complex sauces and custard toppings, or incorporated into soups as a flavoring/thickening agent.

- 3 Tablespoons extra virgin olive oil (preferably Greek oil)
- 1 large onion, cut into ¼ inch dice
- 8 cups chicken broth
- ½ cup raw long grain rice
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 2 eggs, separated
- 2–3 Tablespoons fresh lemon juice

- 1 Tablespoon chopped fresh dill
- Sprig of dill for garnish (optional)
- Zest of 1 lemon cut into long, fine strips for garnish (optional)

1. Heat the oil in a 3-quart saucepan. Sauté the onions over moderate heat until they're soft

and very lightly golden.

2. Add the chicken broth and bring to a boil. Pour in the rice.

3. Simmer the soup, covered, for 20 minutes or until the rice is tender. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

4. Begin the lemon-egg mixture by whisking the egg whites until they form soft peaks. Set aside.

5. In a medium-sized bowl, whisk the egg yolks until they're lemon colored. Add the lemon juice and combine. Fold the egg whites into the mixture.

6. Whisking constantly, add ½ cup of the hot soup to the egg mixture to gently raise its temperature (so it won't "seize" and curdle when combined with the remaining hot soup).

7. With the soup on the lowest flame (if the soup is too hot the eggs will curdle), slowly add the lemon mixture into the pot. Whisk constantly until the mixture is thoroughly incorporated.

8. Add the chopped dill. Refrigerate if serving cold.

9. Garnish with thin strips of lemon zest and a sprig of dill. Serves 4–6.

Tina's Tidbits:

- Never allow raw egg yolks to "sit" with an acidic food for more than a few minutes. The acid will "cook" the yolk and make it grainy.
- Never use bottled lemon juice. The flavor bears no resemblance to "real" lemon!

Psari Saganaki

Until World War II, the largest Jewish fishing fleet in the world was based in Thessaloniki. With more than 250 varieties of kosher fish swimming in the Mediterranean, Jewish cooks were only constrained by the size of the fish as to which cooking technique to employ. Small fish such as sardines and anchovies tended to be deep-fried whole; medium-sized fish such as sea bass and red porgy were baked, sautéed, and grilled; and Mediterranean swordfish and tuna were baked or grilled.

In this recipe, thicker fish such as branzino (Mediterranean sea bass), tuna, or Mediterranean swordfish are