

RECIPE

Garides Saganaki

(Shrimp with Feta)

SERVES 2

THIS RECIPE is an adaptation of one in Diane Kochilas's *The Glorious Foods of Greece* (William Morrow, 2001).

2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
 ½ small yellow onion, peeled and chopped
 ½ medium hot green chile, stemmed and chopped
 1 ¼ cups chopped peeled ripe tomatoes, including the juice
 Salt and freshly ground black pepper
 6 large heads-on shrimp (about 12 oz.), bodies peeled (heads and tail shells left intact), deveined
 4 oz. quality Greek feta, coarsely crumbled
 2 tbsp. ouzo
 1 tbsp. chopped parsley leaves

1. Preheat broiler. Heat olive oil in an 8" round metal gratin dish or a heavy ovenproof skillet over medium heat. Add onions and chiles and cook, stirring often, until soft, about 5 minutes. Stir in tomatoes and season to taste with salt and pepper. Simmer sauce until slightly thickened, 3–4 minutes.

2. Arrange shrimp in dish, spoon some sauce on top, and continue to simmer until shrimp are pink and just cooked through, 1–2 minutes per side. Scatter feta around shrimp, then transfer dish to broiler and broil until feta begins to melt, 1–2 minutes. Remove dish from broiler. Warm *ouzo* in a ramekin over some low heat.



SEASIDE SAGANAKI

Shrimp with feta is a modern Greek specialty with ancient roots

THE FAMOUS GREEK dish known as garides saganaki, or shrimp with feta, may be considered traditional fare in Greece today, but the bubbling concoction of shrimp, tomatoes, onions, peppers, and feta spiked with a shot of brandy or ouzo wasn't invented until the mid-20th century. The basic elements of the dish had, of course, already been around for centuries. Versions of the round, shallow, two-handled skillet that is called a saganaki have existed in Greece since ancient times. Fried or baked cheese, now also called saganaki because it too is cooked in that kind of vessel, was described by several classical Greek writers. Seafood, sometimes sprinkled with cheese, has long been commonly eaten in

Yet even in the 1921 edition of the classic Greek cookbook *Odigos Mageirikis* (*Guide to Cooking*) by Nikolaos Tselementes (the Escoffier of Greece), a recipe for garides saganaki is nowhere to be found.

It wasn't until the 1950s that an enterprising cook, most likely at a restaurant in a thriving seaport like Thessaloniki or Piraeus, tossed shrimp into a saganaki pan along with feta and vegetables. Then, because the Greeks have a tendency to make all things in life dramatic, other cooks began adding a dash of alcohol and flambéing the dish tableside—a touch that probably helped popularize the appetizer among tourists seeking to sample the country's fresh seafood. It's now a standard item on Greek menus across the globe, but be-