

LAUREN STEPHENS AND FREDERICK MORA

Avgolemono, two ways (Greece/Australia)

Melbourne is considered to have the largest Greek population of any city outside Athens; by this brilliant virtue, we have found ourselves garrisoned among many Hellenes. One who has my affections is my partner Leon. The other is our dear friend Coco. As a matter of ongoing survival within these relationships, we sought the wisdom of their *yiayias*. Each matriarch offered a different approach yet the same dish: *avgolemono*. A tart soupa seasoned with lemon and thickened with eggs. Olimpia's *kotosoupa* uses a whole chicken with the meat stripped to serve, whereas Lefkoula's *yuvarlakia* uses veal meatballs as the centrepiece. The life lesson? Choose your preferred style then tenderly apply to sickness, heartache, and inclement weather.

INGREDIENTS

For Olimpia's kotosoupa

1 whole chicken, skinned

1 carrot, skin on

1 stick celery, whole

1 onion, whole

5 peppercorns, whole

10 cups water

To serve: cracked pepper, lemon juice, and shredded chicken

For Lefkoula's yuvarlakia

5kg veal mince

1/2 cup long-grain rice, rinsed

2 eggs

8 cups water

1 handful mint, ripped

1 glug olive oil

To serve: chilli flakes and a side of *rakemelo*

For the avgolemono

3 eggs, beaten

1 cup long-grain rice, rinsed

2 lemons, juiced

Serves XX

METHOD

For Olimpia's *kotosoupa*, cook chicken in a large pot for 2 hours+ with peppercorns, celery, carrot, and water, skimming intermittently. Discard vegetables, cool chicken, then remove and shred meat. Strain chicken stock, add the 1 cup of rice for the *avgolemono*, and season. Simmer rice for 15-20 minutes, until cooked. Remove soupa from heat. If you go with Lefkoula's *yuvarlakia* instead, combine oil, mince, rice, mint, pepper, salt, and eggs in a bowl, use hands to combine for around 5 minutes, then transfer to the fridge for 30 minutes. Next, apply olive oil to hands to roll 3-4mm meatballs. Heat some oil in a frying pan and seal the meatballs for 2 minutes or less. Prepare a large pot with meatballs and 8 cups water, bring to boil, add the 1 cup of rice for the *avgolemono*, lower heat, and cook until rice is soft. Remove soupa from heat. To finish off either version, place eggs and lemon into a bowl and whisk until foamy. While whisking, add a few ladles of soupa. Slowly increase the temperature of the egg mixture to meet the soupa. Continue to whisk as you slowly transfer back to the pot. Note: leftovers should be reheated gently so as not to curdle the egg.

