

eggplant mixed with olive oil, garlic, and lemon juice and enjoyed on toasted pita. Alternatively, you may choose to have "bougiordi," a baked dish consisting of sausage, tomato, feta cheese and oregano that is spread on toasted ciabatta-style bread. Both menus offer hummus (pureed chickpeas mixed with olive oil, lemon, and garlic that is spread on toasted pita), a dish common to much Mediterranean and Middle-Eastern cuisine and increasingly popular in the United States. The menus also offer "kalamarakia," lightly fried squid served with lemon and "tzatziki," a delicious spread mixing cucumber, yogurt, garlic, and dill that you can also order by itself and eat on toasted pita. (Of course, fried squid is commonplace in the Mediterranean diet and familiar to most Americans as an Italian dish—"calamari"—that is served with tomato sauce instead of tzatziki and appears frequently as an appetizer item in local restaurants.) Finally, both lunch and dinner menus include "garites saganaki," shrimp sautéed in butter and mixed with lemon and feta cheese, then served on toasted ciabatta-like bread. You may find it difficult to choose among these items. Our suggestion is to order several and be nice enough to share each with your table companion(s).

The full lunch menu at Taverna Mythos includes sandwiches, pizzas, and salads, some of which are regulars on other restaurant menus on the Crystal Coast. These include the hamburger, shrimp burger, turkey and bacon, and prime rib sandwiches. So the "plain American food, please" types among us will find sufficient choice in the sandwich menu. Beyond this, however, the menu proffers at least three wonderful sandwiches with clearly Greek roots: "gyro" sandwiches, a national specialty in Greece that is sometimes (but increasingly) found in restaurants

in the United States. The "gyro" on the menu that is most familiar to Americans is made up of shaved lamb and beef topped with "tzatziki" sauce and lettuce, tomato, and onion, then placed in an envelope of toasted pita bread. (It is truly delicious.) Two additional variations on the "gyro" are also on the menu. These innovations include a marinated chicken version and a "souvlaki" version that uses marinated pork. In fact, these "gyro" sandwiches are also available for dinner, along with a version that uses shrimp. Choices, wonderful choices!

Also available for the choosing from both the lunch and dinner menu are specialty pizzas (apparently where Greece meets Italy.). Two are particularly worth mention here. One is the "Greek Pizza," whose toppings include fresh spinach, onion, tomato, and feta and mozzarella cheese. The second, more unusual and inventive, is the "Mythos Special," topped with spicy lamb, tomato, onion, and, of course, feta cheese. (Please note that the "Mythos Special" is only available for dinner.)

By now, some among you are saying, "what about salad options?" at Taverna Mythos. Have no fear, the restaurant offers a full Greek salad composed of romaine lettuce (said to have originated on the Greek Aegean island of Cos), carrots, cucumbers, tomatoes, Greek olives, and feta cheese. This delicious possibility is available at both lunch and dinner. Also available, only at dinner, is the "horiatiki salata" or "Greek village salad," which brings together tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, onions, kalamata olives, and scallions, finishing this healthy combination with feta cheese and a homemade Greek salad dressing. These ethnic salads, plus a regular garden salad and a Caesar salad, can be enhanced by adding scallops, shrimp, or chicken, making

them into full meals (at least full for the "food-virtuous" among us.)

The complete dinner menu at Taverna Mythos continues to bring the great flavors of Greece to those of us living on the Crystal Coast. Appetizers found only on the dinner menu include "spanakopita," a spinach, feta cheese, dill, and onion mixture wrapped in flaky phyllo pastry (absolutely delicious!); "tiropita," a three cheese combination likewise wrapped in phyllo pastry; and saganaki, a fried Greek cheese (again truly delicious!). Also among the choices on the dinner menu are nicely inventive "pastas" (not all, in fact, contain pasta) and grilled meats. The "pastas" on the menu are especially mouth-watering. For instance, you will find a "Greek spaghetti"—pasta topped with ham, tomatoes, garlic, and mozzarella and feta cheeses, then baked in the oven. Or you may prefer the "makaronada tou psara," that is, linguine pasta laced with scallops, shrimp, and mussels in a basil-tomato sauce. Then again, you might consider the "Greek lasagna"—described as "layered thick macaroni with meat sauce and topped with creamy bechamel (sauce) and cheese" (clearly a close relative of the Italian version.). And, of course, you can (should?) elect to eat a variation on the traditionally delicious Greek dish "mousakas," effectively a casserole bringing together layers of potato and roasted eggplant that is covered with bechamel sauce and cheese. (This originally Greek dish has many variations and has become a staple dish throughout the Near East.)

From the grill, Taverna Mythos offers nicely prepared beef, chicken, pork, and lamb. Those among us who insist that they "always eat beef" when they dine out will be pleased by the "mosharisia brizola," a center-cut ribeye steak seasoned lightly and then charbroiled. (This steak is not recognizably Greek,

but it will please the palate that is not ready for seriously ethnic cuisine.) For the more adventuresome, menu options include the "Greek grill"—the familiar center-cut ribeye steak that is charbroiled and then covered with spinach, feta cheese, and shrimp (sort of a Greek "surf and turf"). Equally adventuresome (and delectable) is the choice of seasoned and charbroiled pork chops topped with sautéed spinach, mushrooms, and feta cheese. Also nicely available is "paedakia arnesia," lamb chops (what Greek restaurant worth its ethnicity would be without lamb) that are seasoned and charbroiled; and "kota tis sharas," which is "chops of chicken" seasoned and charbroiled. All items from the grill, even if prepared with an ethnic touch, will satisfy almost any American palate.

Wine is available to accompany your dinner. The wine list, though not extensive, offers about a half-dozen options among both white and red wines. Two of the possibilities, a white and a red, are table wines from Greece.

Dessert options at Taverna Mythos are two: cheesecake with fruit topping and "baklava" dipped in chocolate. "Baklava" consists of layered, butter-infused phyllo pastry, chopped nuts, honey, and spices. It is, for very good reason, a popular sweet in both Greece and Turkey. The Mythos version, dipped as it is in chocolate, is fantastic. Be sure to try it when you dine there.

Taverna Mythos occupies the space at 711 Evans Street that previously housed the Williams Restaurant. Mythos is presently open for lunch only on Saturday and Sunday, starting at 11 a.m. Dinner is served from Wednesday through Sunday beginning at 5 p.m. Reservations may be made by calling 240-1755. Menu information is available at www.moreheadcityrestaurants.com. The restaurant does not yet have its own separate website.

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