

# dining & entertainment



## Ploes Estiatorio And Mezedopolio

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### Journey To Greece At Ploes Estiatorio And Mezedopolio

**P**loes Estiatorio and Mezedopolio opened about six months ago, replacing a restaurant that had been at 33-04 Broadway in Astoria for many years. Estiatorio means “restaurant” in Greek, a mezedopolio is a restaurant that serves appetizers, somewhat like Spanish tapas, and ploes (pronounced PLO-eez) means journeys in the sea. The name fits—a visit to Ploes Estiatorio and Mezedopolio will take you on a journey to a gastronomic wonderland.

Massive renovations have created a unique and gorgeous restaurant with a curved, brick ceiling forged iron gate and charming French doors visible from the street. Ochre-colored, stucco walls, soft lighting and wood tables topped with small ceramic tiles are just some of the details of Ploes’ gorgeous dining room. There are intimate tables for two and



four as well as banquettes that hold eight or more for larger gatherings of friends and families. Owners John Kapetanios and Nick Rallis, along with manager Mike Manatakis, invite you to enjoy anything from a light appetizer and wine to a full meal at Ploes.

Manatakis began our culinary journey with a bottle of fine wine and two fresh salads. One was ingeniously composed of roasted red and yellow beets, baby arugula and creamy goat cheese, dressed with tangy raspberry vinaigrette (\$10). I had never seen yellow beets and roasting made them sweet, a nice counterpoint to the goat cheese. The other salad was a classic Greek, made extra special with tomatoes from one of New York’s finest produce purveyors. Next time I’ll order the seafood salad, composed of marinated grilled scallops and shrimp tossed with shaved fennel, frisee, tomatoes and a special dressing.

As the word “mezedopolio” in its name indicates, Ploes offers an incredible variety of appetizers, both cold and hot, an assortment of which makes for a fine meal. Cold mezeds include an array of handmade dips and spreads, such as tirokafteri, a spicy blend of creamy cheeses and fire-roasted red peppers. This treat is truly at home on a slice of Ploes’ olive bread or pita bread, both made on the premises and served warm. Do the same with thick and tangy tzatziki yogurt dip, creamy eggplant dip or enjoy an assortment of all of these tasty spreads for \$11.

A variety of hot appetizers, too many to list them all in this article, runs from \$7 to \$12 and includes plenty of choices in seafood, meat and more. Prince Edward Island mussels, vegetables and cheese are wrapped in crisp phyllo dough, while tender calamari are stuffed with a savory combination of tomatoes and Greek cheese that oozes onto a fork when cut into. Charcoal grilled octopus dressed in extra virgin olive oil and red wine vinegar is incredibly tender. Fresh Mediterranean sardines, grilled and served with olive oil and a squeeze of fresh lemon, are perfect, especially when warm olive bread serves as an eating utensil instead of a fork or spoon. Fresh clams, sweet on their own, are filled with lump crabmeat and subtle seasonings.

The service at Ploes is wonderful—efficient, yet unobtrusive, allowing diners to linger as long as they like and enjoy dish after beautifully presented dish. Chef Christos Philipou, a graduate of the Culinary Institute of America, performs his magic in the kitchen, preparing fine meats and poultry for all to enjoy. My visit to Ploes was the first time I had seen lamb ribs on any menu. This unique treat provides a neatly stacked portion of tiny, tender, juicy lamb ribs that are picked up with two fingers and cleaned

off with a pass through your lips. For a dinner entrée, I highly recommend the baby lamb chops, grilled to order and served with wedges of lemon-roasted potatoes (\$23). Other dinner entrees



include seafood souvlaki, consisting of huge marinated scallops, shrimp and chunks of flaky white swordfish, served on a bed of fluffy rice pilaf (\$17). Chicken souvlaki is served in much the same way and is presented in generous portions. Whole fresh fish of the day, including red snapper, orata and barbounia, are given the right amount of time on the charcoal grill and dressed in lemon and olive oil.

Tiny semi-boneless quail are marinated then grilled to juicy perfection, making them very easy to eat and enjoy. Vegetable lovers will delight in gigantes, huge fava beans stewed for hours in tomato and herbs. Shredded zucchini croquettes or fried zucchini chips—never greasy—are addictive. Savory cheese croquettes called tyrokeftedes are drizzled with thyme honey and sweet wine.

For dessert, traditional baklava is given new life with the addition of baked figs. Rich walnut cake, cheese pastries, robust coffee and after-dinner wine complete your gastronomic journey.

I highly recommend a visit to Ploes Estiatorio and Mezedopolio, where you’ll be treated to a journey in fine Greek cuisine in a beautiful setting, with professional service. The dining room holds 87 people and fine wines and beers are served. Ploes is open for lunch and dinner, from noon until 11:30 p.m., seven days a week. Yasou!