

Easter in Crete and generally in Greece, is a very big celebration – even bigger than Christmas. The Holy Week (1 week before Easter) starts today Monday 13th April in which the complete family keeps home preparing for the Easter celebration. I remember my Grandmother cleaning the whole house and painting it wait to wait for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Everything should be clean and prepared for it. This is a tradition which we all try to keep.



In the evenings we mostly go to the church – which this year is unfortunately not possible due to the curfew – and we fast. Definition of fast for the Greek orthodox is, that we completely go without meat and fish or its products (eggs, milk, cheese, butter, etc.). Allowed is only seafood and snails. On Wednesday and Friday they go also completely without oil, which means only vegetables, fruits, bread, pasta, rice, seafood etc. are allowed, but prepared without any oil.



Always on Holy Thursday, the families prepare together with their children the red eggs – the eggs symbolizes fertility and start of something new, the colour red symbolizes the blood of Jesus Christ. This days, according to tradition, we have as lunch stuffed vegetables and vine leaves with rice. In the villages, men are slaughter the lambs for Easter.



On Holy Friday the families do excursions to monasteries, not only to worship Christ, but also help see the epitaph. The epitaph is prepared on Holy Thursday after the ceremony in the churches/monasteries in the night. In the night of Friday to Saturday, the Greek tsoureki and Crete kalitsounia are prepared. Tsoureki is a sweet braided yeast bread and kalitsounia are staffed with Cretan Cheese – Myzithra – which all also sweets. This is a must for the Easter dinner/lunch as also the red

eggs.



Holy Saturday is the day of celebration so everything has to be clean and ready. The Resurrection is in the night and after midnight, when the families returns home from church with the Holy Light, they have dinner. The dinner mostly consist of soup – magiritsa – prepared from the innards of the lamb and of course other traditional foods made by innards and lamb, as e.g. kokoretsi, frikase, etc. This is the time also for the red eggs. Each other tries to crack the egg of the other. The one

which keeps it without a crack, is blessed. The festivities go on Sunday, with the grilled lamb, which we here on Crete don't keep it on a whole, but separate it into 4 pieces and roast it opposite the fire – which means “antikristo”.

