

Scent and memories from Smyrna

Halva production company "Argoudelis" continues manufacturing the product the exact same way as 87 years ago, when it first started at Kaminia (Piraeus). Vassilis Argoudelis, in continuation of the family business, explains what it means to preserve and also evolve the tradition...

...now, together with his aunt Georgia and uncle Theodoros Argoudelis, he plans to lead the business to its 100 year old birthday!

...Even if someone gets lost at Kaminia when in search for the plant, the freshly baked halva scent will blindly lead him outside the door. Despite the age of the building, the interior space is well taken care of and impeccably clean, both at the retail reception area, inside the production and at the warehousing space. "Products are traditional but we have to adapt to the new era standards. Production process is based on strict quality assurance standards HACCP" Vassilis states. "We are careful on everything, especially on the raw materials selection. Tahini, the base for halva, comes exclusively from our own production process. Only with Vertical production we can fully control the quality of raw material".

Just about time....! A little dessert plate with warm, steaming halva that's just out of the "cooking", comes as a temptation on the table. "It's Ariston, our newest halva launch", says Georgia Argoudeli. It's a halva that replaces sugar with maltitol (natural substitute of sugar). With 90% of sugar's sweetening power and 60% of its calories, maltitol enables consumers being on a diet to consume this new product without a difference in taste, when comparing to the regular halva line of Argoudelis.

Our products can be found in several areas of Greece. Main retail store of Argoudelis is situated at the port of Piraeus, in Stoa Politou. You can find our full product portfolio there, as well as in many mini-markets, grocery stores and other convenience stores, not only in Attica but also Greece's central mainland, Peloponnese and the islands. "For the time being we're pleased that our sales are almost in line with last year, under such an economic crisis. People love our products, ask for them and demand goes word-of-mouth", says V. Argoudelis.

Has he ever thought about exports? His answer is surprising: "Our company was export focused, with significant volumes during the '50s-60's. However, some wrong managerial decisions hampered the growth and created profit gaps that were hard to recover from. Just imagine that once upon a time, the plant's surface was double. With a history dating 90years and through 4 generations of people, it's tough to have continuous growth. What's key is to improve as much as you can. And, that's what we try to do today".