

# The Sweet Sound of the Frappe Machine

By Ethan K. Owen

So what is a frappe anyway?

If the ancient Greeks had known about frappe I am sure that they would have built a temple on the Acropolis for Frappe, rivaling that of Athena's. The great Greek god Frappe would have put Dionysus to shame with the great parties thrown in his honor. It seems as though most modern Greeks place the ubiquitous frappe right up there in importance with that of the holy trinity. You will be hard pressed to find a Greek who does not spend at least several hours each morning slowly, ritually sipping an ice-cold frappe.

The frappe (pronounced fra-pay), an ice coffee drink, is now as much a part of Greek culture as feta cheese and olives. A frappe is made with four basic ingredients: Nescafe (instant coffee), sugar, water, and milk. Each ingredient on its own would be okay with the exception of the Nescafe, but it is the combination, in closely guarded proportions of all four, that have won the hearts of nearly the entire Greek populace. Most recently, Starbucks adopted the idea of serving frappe to the masses (marketed as 'Frappachino') and it is quickly winning over the hearts of caffeine addicted Americans too.

Mixing the Nescafe, sugar, and a little bit of water together is the first step in the delicate process of frappe creation. The mixture is then given a quick spin in the frappe machine (yes, they have developed a special frappe machine) to stir up the ingredients and create a thick foamy head. Finally, milk is added along with a couple of ice cubes. Add a straw and prepare yourself for the long, slow, relaxing process of drinking the fabled frappe.

Drinking a frappe is an art in itself and one that the Greeks have perfected over many years. When a frappe arrives at your table on a hot summer's day, your first impulse will be to slurp down the cold refreshing coffee drink as quickly as possible. If your goal is to shock your Greek hosts into disbelief, this will most likely have the desired effect. However, if you are trying to blend in with the local culture you'll have to pace yourself. Sit back, relax, take extremely small sips, and stretch out your drinking pleasure for at least an hour. At this pace, no one will point or stare and you won't be mocked as an amateur frappe drinker.

While the frappe doesn't have the late night allure or the associated revelry promoted by its rival Dionysus, it does have the unbridled respect and adoration of all Greeks. As the saying goes: "When in Rome do as the Romans do." So, upon arrival in Greece, find a coffee shop, sit down, order a frappe, and enjoy it like the Greeks do.