

FOOD STUFF

A Traveler From the Aegean Finds Its Way to Orchard Street



Marilynn K. Yee/The New York Times

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New York has hundreds of specialized stores, but only one that puts the spotlight on mastic, the aromatic resin of an evergreen that grows on the island of Chios in the eastern Aegean.

Artemis and Kalliopi Kohas, sisters from Chios (pronounced HEE-ohss), opened the bright green Mastihashop on Orchard Street a few months ago. (In Greece, mastic is known as mastiha.) They sell a wide range of food products made with mastic, including delicious honey, preserves, spoon sweets to add to yogurt, chocolates, teas, mustard, eggplant chutney, cookies and pasta (\$1 to \$21.50). Mastic is used in many Greek recipes, especially sweets like festive breads, cakes and cookies. The resin is said to have anti-inflammatory and other healing properties.

A co-op in Greece, the Chios Gum Mastic Growers Association, which sponsors the store, makes the mastic by first slitting the bark of the Pistacia lentiscus tree, allowing the resin to flow out in drops. Pieces of it, which look like bits of golden rock sugar, have a fresh, slightly piney aroma and flavor, and can be chewed like gum.

The Mastihashop is at 145 Orchard Street (Rivington Street), (212) 253-0895, info@mastihashopny.com.