

Pumpkin and Cheese Coiled Pastries

Boyos de kalavasa – rodanchas

Pumpkin or butternut filo-like coiled pastries are delectable, fragrant with warming spices of cinnamon and cloves. The distinctive coil or ‘rose’ shape is said to be symbolic of the Island of Roses (the name the Italians gave to the beautiful island of Roses - *Rhodes*).

These flaky ‘*boyos*’ are wonderful served at brunch, with coffee, or even as part of a *meze* with drinks. Traditionally, pumpkin-filled pastries are offered at the Sephardic New Year table and would also make a great addition to a festive Thanksgiving dinner!

Prepare ahead the pumpkin and cheese filling.

For the filling:

1kg (2¼lb) pumpkin or butternut, peeled, seeded and cut into 5cm (2in) cubes

1 tsp caster (superfine) sugar

½ tsp salt

1 tsp ground cinnamon

a pinch of ground cloves

1 cup grated kefaloriri or Parmesan cheese

½ cup grated feta cheese

For brushing:

1-2 tbsp olive oil

Preheat the oven to 190°C (375°F).

To roast the pumpkin: Line a baking tray with foil and brush with oil. Put the pumpkin on the tray. Toss to coat lightly in the oil and bake for about 1 hour or until soft.

Alternatively to steam the pumpkin: Pour water into a pan to a depth of about 2.5cm (1in). Place a steamer basket in the pan. The water should come just up to the bottom of the steamer. Cover and bring to a boil. Place the pumpkin in the basket. Cover the pan and let steam for 30-40 minutes or until tender. Place the hot pumpkin in a clean tea towel and squeeze out excess liquid.

Put the cooked pumpkin in a bowl and mash. Add the sugar, salt, spices, cheeses and mix thoroughly

For the starter:

¼ tsp active dry yeast (rapid-rise)

1 tsp sugar

1 cup warm water(about 55°C/110°F)

For the dough:

3¼ cups plain (all-purpose) flour, or as needed

a pinch of salt

2 tsp unsalted butter

½ cup warm water

For brushing:

mix ½ cup melted butter with ½ cup olive oil in a small bowl

For sprinkling:

mix ½ cup of flour with 1 tbsp grated kefalotiri or Parmesan cheese

For the topping:

½ cup grated kefalotiri or Parmesan

You will need:

1 rectangular dish, 30 x 24cm (12 x 9½”) with enough vegetable oil to cover 20 balls of dough

Prepare the starter: Dissolve the yeast and sugar in the warm water in a small bowl. Stir, cover with plastic wrap and let stand for 5-10 minutes, until frothy.

Prepare the dough: Put 2½ cups flour with the salt in a large bowl. Work the butter into the flour with your fingertips. Make a well in the centre of the flour and add the starter. Add the warm water and mix well until a sticky dough mass begins to form. Transfer the dough onto a lightly floured surface. Knead the dough for about 10 minutes until smooth and elastic, adding a little flour if still sticky.

Divide the dough into 20 golf ball-sized pieces. Roll each piece into smooth balls between your palms and immerse in the prepared dish of oil. Turn balls over once to coat well and let sit in the oil.

Take one ball at a time, starting with the ones first placed in the oil and press between your palms to flatten. Place on a work surface and, with the fingertips of both hands, press the dough outwards as much as possible. Then, working around the flattened dough, gently lift and stretch the edges outwards with your fingertips until paper thin and about 30cm (12in) in diameter. Brush lightly with the melted butter and oil mixture and cut off any thick edges with a sharp knife and discard. Sprinkle with a little of the prepared flour and cheese mixture.

Shape and fill the dough: Spread about 3 tbsp of filling evenly along the long edge of the stretched dough and roll gently into one long cylinder about 3.5cm (1½in) in diameter. Then coil the roll into a spiral shape

with the seam-side down. Repeat until all the pastry and filling are used up. Brush the tops lightly with the melted butter and oil mixture and sprinkle with cheese.

Preheat the oven to 190°C (375°F). Line 2 baking trays with baking paper.

Transfer the filled pastries to the baking trays, leaving a little space between them. Bake for 30-40 minutes until golden brown and crisp. Transfer to a wire rack. Serve warm. Makes 20.

Twist on tradition:

- For a simpler method use ready-made filo with the pumpkin filling and fold into triangles