

Pastry Puffs Topped with Honey, Nuts and Cinnamon

Piticas

During *Hanukkah*, *Festival of Lights*, fried foods dominate the menu to emphasise the miraculous oil that is central to this holiday.

Piticas are crisp, thin, deep-fried pastries, drizzled with a fragrant floral honey just before serving, sprinkled with nuts and toasted sesame seeds and dusted with ground cinnamon. They make a magnificent dessert stacked high on a large platter, and are delicious served on their own or with rice pudding or a scoop of your favourite ice cream and berries.

For the Piticas:

2 cups cake flour, as needed

1/4 tsp bicarbonate of soda

1/4 cup vegetable oil

1/2 cup water

For deep frying:

vegetable oil

For the topping:

1 cup Greek thyme or floral clear honey

1/2 cup unsalted pistachios or blanched and toasted almonds, finely chopped

1/2 cup toasted sesame seeds

ground cinnamon

Sift the flour and bicarbonate of soda into a bowl and make a well in the centre. Pour in the oil and water and bring together with your hands, and then knead to make a smooth firm dough. Add more flour if necessary. Roll into walnut-sized balls, cover with plastic wrap and allow to rest for 1 1/2 hours at room temperature. Roll out one ball at a time as thinly as possible on a work surface. Keep the remaining balls of dough covered with a tea towel.

Heat enough oil for deep-frying in a large, heavy-based pan over a medium-high heat. When the oil is very hot, slowly lower one piece of dough into the oil and deep-fry. With a large spoon, continuously scoop hot oil over the pastry to make it puff up until it is crisp and pale golden (30–40 seconds). With a slotted spoon carefully transfer onto a tray lined with paper towels to drain. Repeat with another rolled piece of dough until all the dough is used. Reduce the heat if the oil becomes too hot.

Gently stack the fragile pastries on a large platter.

Spoon the honey over the top, making sure each *pitica* is well covered. Sprinkle with chopped nuts, sesame seeds and ground cinnamon and serve.