

Flaky filo-like savoury pastries

Boyos de fila kon livadura

Boyos are the mainstay of the *meze* and buffet tables of Judeo-Spanish cuisine and are simply scrumptious with tea or coffee. Try not to be put off by the fact that this recipe uses yeast. In fact in this particular recipe you do not have to wait for the dough to rise - simply start making the pastries as soon as the dough has been made.

Prepare ahead the Swiss chard or potato and cheese filling

For the starter:

¼ tsp active dry yeast (rapid-rise)

1 cup warm water (about 55°C/110°F)

1 tsp sugar

For the dough:

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

pinch of salt

2 tsp unsalted butter

½ cup warm water

For brushing:

mix ½ cup melted butter with ½ cup vegetable 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, 30x24cm (12x9½") with enough vegetable oil to cover 20 balls of dough

Prepare the starter: Dissolve the yeast in the warm water with the sugar. 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 proved yeast. 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 size 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 (12”) in diameter. Brush lightly with the melted butter and oil mixture over the stretched dough 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: Fold a third of one side over to the centre of the stretched dough. Fold the remaining third to overlap, making three layers into a narrow rectangle. With the narrow side facing you place a generously heaped tablespoon of your chosen filling on the narrow edge of the rectangle and fold the dough parcel into triangles.

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

Transfer the filled pastries onto the baking trays, leaving a little space between them. Brush the tops lightly with the remaining melted butter and oil mixture and sprinkle with grated cheese. Bake for about 30-40 minutes, until golden brown and crisp. Serve immediately or at room temperature, traditionally with hard-boiled eggs and olives. Makes 20.

Stella's Hints:

- When stretching the dough, do not worry if tears or holes open – they will not be noticed once the pastry is folded.
- To reheat and crisp the pastries: Preheat the oven to 180°C (350°F), then switch off the oven. Place the pastries in the oven for about 15 minutes.
- To freeze the baked pastries: Interleave the pastries between layers of baking paper and freeze in an airtight container for up to 1 month. To reheat place the frozen pastries in a 180°C (350°F) preheated oven for about 20 minutes.

Swiss chard and cheese filling

Gomo de pasi i keso

750g (1½lb) Swiss chard, stalks removed,

¾ cup grated feta cheese washed, drained and finely shredded

3 tbsp dried breadcrumbs

1½ cups grated kefalotiri or Parmesan

salt and finely ground white pepper; cheese

Dry the shredded Swiss chard in a salad spinner and then spread out on paper towels to dry thoroughly.

When completely dry, place on a tray and lightly mix in the cheeses and breadcrumbs. Season with salt and pepper. Turn the mixture over thoroughly with your hands as the cheese tends to sink to the bottom. Once the cheese has been added use immediately to avoid the chard becoming soggy.