

Coiled Spinach (Swiss Chard), Fresh Herb, Cheese and Egg Filo Pie

Pastel de pazi y kezo

For a Jewish New Year, I am creating an easy alternative to the traditional yeasted pie “*boyo*” that appears at the Sephardic Rosh Hashanah table customarily made with Swiss chard – one of the symbolic foods. I combine spinach (Swiss chard) with Greek cheese, eggs, scallions (spring onions) and fragrant herbs delicately wrapped in store-bought filo pastry and coiled into a large pie.

Try this wholesome pie brimming with Mediterranean flavours for brunch, or as a delicious vegetarian meal accompanied with a chopped tomato salad.

For the pastry:

1 packet (250g) filo pastry

For the filling:

1 kg (2¼lb) spinach or Swiss chard, coarse stalks removed, washed, drained and roughly chopped

1 cup (7-8) finely chopped scallions (spring onions), trimmed, white and tender green parts

½ cup roughly chopped fresh dill

1 cup roughly chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley (use leaves and tender stems)

2 cups crumbled Greek feta cheese

1 cup crumbled kefalotiri cheese

4 tbsp milk

4 eggs, lightly beaten

3 tbsp melted butter or olive oil or a mixture of both
salt and freshly ground white pepper, to taste

For brushing:

¼ cup melted butter or olive oil or a mixture of both

For the topping:

1 tbsp melted butter or olive oil or a mixture of both
sesame seeds

Preheat the oven to 180°C (350°F). Lightly brush a baking tray with oil.

Blanch the spinach for 1 minute, drain, and squeeze out the excess water. Combine the spinach, scallions, dill, parsley, cheeses, milk, eggs, and melted butter in a bowl and season with salt and pepper.

To shape the coiled pie: Open a filo sheet on a flat work surface with the wide end nearest you.

Keep the remainder covered with a damp tea towel. Brush with the melted butter and oil mixture.

Spread about 4 tbsp of the filling evenly along the long edge of the filo and carefully roll the pastry up into one long cylinder about 3.5cm (1.5in) in diameter, tucking the filling in on the edges.

Holding the roll in both hands, gently twist it almost the way one wrings wet laundry. Place one end of the twisted roll in the centre of the prepared tray and coil it tightly into a spiral shape. Repeat until all the pastry and filling are used up, placing each twisted roll next to each other, working your way coil-like towards the rim of the tray.

Brush the top of the pastry coil with the melted butter and oil mixture and sprinkle liberally with sesame seeds.

Bake until the filling is set and the top is golden brown, 1 to 1½ hours. Serve warm or at room temperature.

To serve: Cut into wedges like a pie so that each piece is comprised of part of the several rolls.