

BAKLAVA

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Ingredients:

1 lb fillo dough
1/2 lb sweet butter
2 cup ground pistachios

Instructions:

Preheat oven to 200 F. (You may want to use a higher setting. I found that it takes too long to bake and the center stays a little doughy tasting at 200 F. I use 275 F.) Melt butter, grease 11x16 jelly roll pan. Lay 1 sheet of fillo on bottom of pan and brush with butter. (If it doesn't fit exactly just fold edges over to make it fit.) Repeat until you have used approx. half the sheets. Spread nuts evenly over entire surface. Continue layering sheets of fillo on top of nut layer. Pour any remaining butter over top. Cut into diagonal strips to form diamond shapes. Bake 2 1/2 hours. (Watch carefully after 2 hours to make sure it doesn't get overdone. The top should be a light golden brown.)

Syrup:

3 cup sugar
2 cup apricot nectar
2 tblsp honey
1 tblsp lemon juice

Instructions:

Bring to boil and then simmer to a heavy syrup (approx. 20-25 min). When baklava is done drain any excess butter from pastry. (I have never done this but if you find it necessary, be very careful the whole thing doesn't come out of the pan.) Brush surface lightly with butter. Pour warm syrup over pastry a little at a time until all is absorbed. Allow to cool several hours. Makes approx. 30 diamonds. (Baklava freezes very successfully.)

Note:

Don't let the fillo dough intimidate you. I doesn't matter how messed up the lower layers get cause you can't see them and by the time you get to the top you will be an expert. If possible use a goose feather baster rather than a basting brush which can tear the sheets if you are rough. But if they tear it's no big deal, just patch. I always use pistachio (this is the Turkish version) rather than walnuts (the Greek version) because I don't like walnuts. If I can't afford pistachios I use almonds, or half-and-half.

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Ingredients:

Fillo dough (pastry leaves).
1 1/4 cups butter/margarine
1/4 cup sugar
1-2 tsp cinnamon (ground)
4 cups almonds, slivered and chopped.
doves (NOT ground)

For syrup:

4 cups sugar
3 cups water
1/2 cup honey
1 stick cinnamon
5-6 doves (NOT ground)

Instructions:

Mix sugar, cinnamon, sugar, and almonds.

Lay the fillo dough out on a table. Fillo dough will dry quickly, so you'll need to work fast, so what spills out of the pan doesn't dry (although it will anyway), and keep a damp towel on the rest of it (that you had laid on the table) so it doesn't dry.

On a medium-sized, buttered pan (you'll need to melt the butter) lay one of the sheets of dough. Butter it, and lay another on top of that. Continue until you have 5-6 sheets of dough on the bottom of the pan. Then lay another sheet, and do NOT butter it. On that, put some of the almond mix, enough to cover it evenly, but not making a thick layer. On that, lay another sheet of dough, butter it, and then another, unbuttered. On that place some almond mix again. Repeat until all the mix is gone, or you have only 4-5 sheets of dough left.

Fold in the dough that hangs from the side of the pan. Some of them will be dry, so just cut them and discard them. Make sure to butter all of them (except, of course, if they have almonds on them). Lay down some more sheets of dough, buttering every one, and cutting off the edges, that hang from the sides of the pan. here, I've found it easier if you just lay the dough down, width of dough to length of pan. That is to say, the width of the dough is sometimes about the same size as the length of the pan, and the length of the dough about twice the height of the pan, so lay the short side of the dough down along the length of the pan, so that some (about half) of it will hang out the end. Then butter it, and fold what hangs back in the

pan, buttering that. This way you get it to look better, and stick better.

When you're done with laying the sheets of dough down, make sure you butter the first one VERY well, and sprinkle some water on it before you put it in the oven. Also, with a sharp, pointy knife, cut the top few sheets of dough, not getting all the way through, just sort of "scratching" the top layer and marking the pieces, in rhombus-shaped pieces. I find it easier to cut along lengthwise, and then sideways, from corner to corner, and lines parallel to that:

Then, at the center of each rhombus, stick a dove, so that it keeps the sheets of dough together. Bake at 350 degrees for 15-20 minutes, until golden-brown, and the edges no longer touch the wall of the pan.

Syrup:

Heat honey, sugar, water, cinnamon and doves in a pan over medium heat until all is melted and combined well. Bring to a boil, then let simmer for a while, 10 minutes maybe, enough for the spices to give off flavor. Retain the syrup hot until the baklava comes out of the oven and cools. Pour the hot syrup over the cold baklava. (some do it the other way, I don't think it matters, as long as one is hot and the other cold, so that it "boils" into the baklava and it saturates it well, while at the same time keeps the top layer of filo dough crispy).

Note:

I usually put in along with the spices a piece of lemon peel. A friend of mine, on the other hand, uses 1-2 tbsp rosewater. They both work well, and I suggest one of them.

Note 2:

(On syrup/baklava hot/cold thing): I think you can save yourself some time if you just take the baklava out, and then start the syrup, so that by the time you're done, the baklava will have cooled down enough.

Note 3:

You may use walnuts or baking pistachios instead of almonds, or any walnut/almond or pistachio/almond combo. I've never tried pistachio/almond/walnut all in one, but I don't think it would be good. Anyway, I usually prefer not to put any walnuts because they give off walnut oil, which I don't think is fitting. (I guess I could roast them first, so they wouldn't give off the oil, but I'm not a big walnut fan as it is.) Pistachios make it

extra-special. Make sure that, no matter what you use, they're ground coarsely.

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Ingredients:

1 pkg philo dough
1 bag (the larger of the 2 kinds of bags, I think 8 oz)
walnuts
1/2 tsp cinnamon
1/4 tsp nutmeg
almonds (optional, if I add them, I do 2 parts walnuts to 1 part almonds)
3 sticks butter (not margarine!)
3/4 cups sugar

Syrup:

1/2 water
1/2 cup sugar
1 1/2 cups honey
3 or 4 lemon slices
1 cinnamon stick

Instructions:

Make Syrup:

Dissolve sugar in water, bring to boil. Add honey, cinnamon stick and lemon slices, reduce heat and let simmer for about 20 minutes. Strain and leave to cool.

Assemble Baklava:

Preheat oven to 325-350 (depends on how hot your oven is).

In a food processor, grind nuts, mix with sugar, cinnamon and nutmeg. Set aside. Melt butter. In a large pan (I use a roasting pan that is about the size of a sheet of philo) place 2 layers philo, butter them lightly, then 2 more sheets, repeating this until you have about 8 or 10 layers. Add 1/3 of the nut mixture. Cover with 2 more layers, lightly butter, repeat until you have about 6 layers, add another third of the nut mixture. Repeat this until you have used all the nut mixture, then layer the remaining philo and butter on top.

Take a sharp knife and cut diagonal through the top layers of philo (not past the top nut layer, and about 1 1/2 - 2 inches wide). Turn and do the same on the opposite diagonal, to form diamond shapes. Bake for 1

hour, or until golden. Turn oven off and let baklava sit in oven for 1 more hour.

Remove, pour cooled syrup over hot baklava. Take knife and slice all the way through the cuts you made previously. Let cool, and enjoy!

P.S. Until you get very fast at assembling the baklava, you might want to cover the sheets with a damp towel while you are putting it together.

BAKLAVA

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Ingredients:

Syrup:

1.5 cups sugar
0.5 cup water
1 tblsp mazher (orange blossom water)
squeeze of lemon

Baklava:

1 box phillo dough
3 cups chopped walnuts
1 tblsp cinnamon
2 tblsp mazher
2 sticks melted unsalted butter
honey

Instructions:

1. Cook syrup first so that, if you mess up the syrup, you can make another batch.

Combine all syrup ingredients and cook over medium heat and after it has come to a boil cook for 5 minutes and remove from the heat. Do not let it get too thick when it's still cooking or it won't be absorbed by the phillo dough. Place syrup in the refrigerator.

2. For the walnut mix - mix walnuts, mazher and honey. Mix honey in so that the walnuts stick together but are not dripping.

3. Using a pastry brush, put a coat of butter on cookie sheet. Carefully place 1 sheet of phillo on top of butter. Brush sheet with butter then put another sheet on top of that one. Continue until you've used 1/3 of the phillo.

4. Spread the walnut mixture on the phillo, leaving a tiny bit of space at the edges. Cover with the rest of the phillo, spreading butter between each sheet.

5. Make sure the top of the baklava has butter spread all over it. Then, cut the baklava in squares.

6. Place in oven at 350 degrees for about 15 minutes - but watch it closely.

7. When the Baklava is done cooking pour the syrup on top - a little at a time using a spoon or ladle.

The thing to remember about the syrup is hot baklava/cold syrup or cold baklava/hot syrup. You want the maximum amount of syrup to be absorbed.

GREEK BAKLAVA

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Ingredients:

1 lb butter
1 lb filo, thawed
1/4 cup sugar
1 Tblsp cinnamon
3 cups finely chopped pecans

Syrup:

2 cup sugar
1 cup water
1/4 cup honey
slice of lemon
strip of orange rind (optional)
stick of cinnamon

Instructions:

Combine nuts, sugar, and cinnamon and set aside. Melt butter and brush bottom of pan. Add 7-8 sheets of filo brushing each with butter. Sprinkle with nut mixture and repeat process until all the nut mixture is used. Add remaining filo and brush top sheet with butter. Cut into diamond shapes. Bake at 325 degrees F. for 45min. Lower heat to 300 degrees and bake 15min until golden.

Boil all syrup ingredients, except honey to form a light syrup—about 20min. Remove from heat and add honey. Remove lemon, orange, and cinnamon. Let cool some and spoon over pastry.

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