

Empanadas



Empanadas are a popular and versatile hand-held pastry originating from Latin America, featuring a flaky, golden crust filled with a variety of savory or sweet fillings. Perfect for snacks, appetizers, or even a main meal, these delicious pastries can be filled with ingredients like seasoned ground beef, shredded chicken, cheese, or even fruits like apples and peaches. The dough is folded over the filling to create a half-moon shape, then baked or fried until perfectly crispy. Empanadas are often enjoyed with a side of dipping sauce, such as chimichurri or salsa, for an extra burst of flavor. Simple to make and fun to eat, empanadas are a crowd-pleasing favorite for any occasion.

Ingredients:

For the Dough:

- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup unsalted butter, cold and cut into small cubes
- 1 egg
- 1/2 cup cold water
- 1 tablespoon white vinegar

For the Filling:

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 pound ground beef or chicken
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon chili powder
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1/4 cup tomato sauce
- 1/4 cup green olives, chopped (optional)
- 1/4 cup raisins (optional)
- 1 hard-boiled egg, chopped (optional)

For Assembly:

- 1 egg, beaten (for egg wash)

Instructions:

1. Prepare the Dough:

- In a large bowl, combine the flour and salt. Add the cold butter and use your fingers or a pastry cutter to blend the butter into the flour until the mixture resembles coarse crumbs. In a small bowl, whisk together the egg, water, and vinegar. Add the wet ingredients to the flour mixture and mix until a dough forms. Wrap the dough in plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes.

2. Make the Filling:

- Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the chopped onion and sauté for 3-4 minutes until softened. Add the minced garlic and cook for another 30 seconds. Add the ground beef or chicken and cook until browned and fully cooked. Stir in the cumin, paprika, chili powder, salt, and pepper. Add the tomato sauce and simmer for 5 minutes. Stir in the chopped olives, raisins, and hard-boiled egg, if using. Remove from heat and let the filling cool.

3. Assemble the Empanadas:

- Preheat the oven to 375°F (190°C). Roll out the dough on a floured surface to about 1/8-inch thickness. Cut out circles using a round cutter or a small bowl (about 4-5 inches in diameter). Place a spoonful of filling in the center of each dough circle. Fold the dough over the filling to create a half-moon shape. Press the edges together with a fork to seal.

4. Bake the Empanadas:

- Place the assembled empanadas on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Brush the tops with the beaten egg for a golden finish. Bake in the preheated oven for 20-25 minutes, or until the empanadas are golden brown.

5. Serve:

- Let the empanadas cool slightly before serving. Enjoy them warm, with your favorite dipping sauce, such as chimichurri or salsa.

Empanadas are a delicious and versatile dish that's perfect for any occasion. Their flaky crust and flavorful filling make them a satisfying and portable meal that's loved by all.