

Baklava

Ingredients:

500 g filo dough
400 g butter, melted
1 tablespoon ground cinnamon
1 teaspoon ground cloves
400 g walnuts (or 200 g walnuts and 200 g almonds)
50 g breadcrumbs

For syrup:

600 g granulated sugar
400 ml water
60 g corn syrup
1 cinnamon stick
3 whole cloves
1 whole orange cut in half

Method:

Baklava is a rich, buttery sweet pastry consisting of many layers of crunchy filo, filled with chopped nuts and sweetened with aromatic syrup. It is absolutely delicious!

Preheat oven to 150° C (300° F) Fan.

To make the syrup, place a pot over high heat and add the sugar, water, corn syrup, cinnamon stick, cloves and orange.

Bring the mixture to a boil and stir. As soon as the sugar melts, remove from heat and set aside to cool completely.

The syrup needs to be cool when poured over the hot baklava. Discard orange halves before using.

To make the filling, beat the walnuts, breadcrumbs, ground cinnamon and ground cloves in a food processor, until they are broken down. Do not finely grind.

Transfer filling to a bowl.

Generously brush a 35x25 cm baking pan with butter.

Position it in front of you so that the long side is directly in front of you.

Begin spreading the filo dough in to the pan to create the bottom crust.

Carefully spread the first sheet of filo dough in to the pan, making sure it covers 2/3 of the pan and letting the long ends hang over the edges of the pan.

Gently press down on the filo with your hands to spread it out nicely all the way to the corners of the pan.

Repeat the same process with the second sheet of filo dough, only this time start spreading it on the other side of the pan, slightly covering the first sheet.

Drizzle the filo with butter, **DO NOT** brush butter directly onto it. This will make the filo turn out much crunchier.

Spread the third sheet of filo dough directly over the first two sheets, making it fit nicely in the pan all the way to the edges.

Sprinkle about a handful of filling over them.

Spread the fourth sheet of filo dough, directly in to the pan, just like the previous one, making sure it is covering the filling.

Drizzle with butter.

Sprinkle a handful of filling over it.

Add another sheet of filo dough, placing the two top corners of the filo at the top corners of the pan and letting the other end hang over the pan, directly in front of you.

Drizzle with butter.

Sprinkle a handful of filling over it.

Add another sheet of filo dough, this time placing the two top corners of the filo at the bottom corners of the pan, that are directly in front of you and letting the other end hang over the pan, which is away from you.

Drizzle with butter.

Sprinkle with another handful of filling over it.

Repeat the same process with all but 3 of the remaining sheets of filo dough, which will be used to make the top crust. Make sure you add all of the filling!

Fold the overhanging ends of the filo over and drizzle with butter.

Add 2 of the 3 remaining sheets of filo folded in half, to fit nicely and exactly in the pan without any ends hanging over. Drizzle each one with butter.

Spread the final sheet nicely over the top, covering the whole pan.

Carefully use your brush to tuck it in all around the sides of the baklava, creating a nice top layer.

Add all of the remaining butter over the top and you can now brush it over the filo dough.

Refrigerate for 20 minutes to chill.

When ready, remove and score the top with a sharp knife, creating diamond shaped pieces. Do not score all the way down.

Bake for 2-2 ½ hours until golden and super crunchy.

When the baklava is ready, remove from oven and immediately pour the cooled syrup over it.

Set it aside to soak up all of the syrup and cool.

When ready, cut into pieces and serve.

