

Sticky Fingers Cooking®



Middle Eastern Apple "Bourekas" Hand Pies

By Dylan Sabuco

Prep Time 25 / **Cook Time** 20 / **Serves** 4 - 6

Fun-Da-Mentals Kitchen Skills

dice: to cut foods into small pieces of equal size so that the food is cooked evenly or looks uniform and pleasant when used in the recipe.

knife skills: Bear Claw (growl), Pinch, Plank, and Bridge (look out for trolls).

seal: to close tightly, keeping filling inside.

shape: to form food into a specific shape by hand or with a cutting tool—examples are cutting cookie dough into shapes with cookie cutters, forming bread dough into a roll or crescent shape, and rolling ground meat into a meatball.

toss: to lightly lift and drop food items together or coat food items with flour, or a sauce or dressing, as in a salad.

Equipment

- Oven
- Baking sheet
- Parchment paper (optional)
- Dry measuring cups
- Measuring spoons
- Whisk
- Liquid measuring cup
- Fork (to mix)
- Cutting board

- Kid-safe knife

Ingredients

Middle Eastern Apple "Bourekas" Hand Pies

- No-Roll Pie Crust Dough:

- 1 2/3 C all-purpose flour + more for work surface ******(for GLUTEN ALLERGY sub gluten-free/nut-free all-purpose flour)******

- 1/4 tsp salt

- 1 tsp brown sugar

- 1/2 tsp baking powder

- 7 T vegetable oil ******

- 1/4 C cold water

- 1 pinch ground cinnamon

- 1 egg + a splash of water for egg wash ******(Omit for EGG ALLERGY or sub milk, dairy-free/nut-free milk, or vegetable oil)******

- Apple Filling:

- 3 large apples (your choice of variety)

- 1/3 C brown sugar

- 2 tsp all-purpose flour ******(for GLUTEN ALLERGY sub gluten-free/nut-free all-purpose flour)******

- 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon

- 1/4 tsp salt

Food Allergen Substitutions

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Gluten/Wheat: Substitute gluten-free/nut-free all-purpose flour.

Soy: Substitute canola oil or other nut-free high-smoking point oil for vegetable oil.

Egg: For the egg wash, substitute milk, dairy-free/nut-free milk, or vegetable oil.

Instructions

Middle Eastern Apple "Bourekas" Hand Pies

intro

"Bourekas" (BOOR-eh-kahs) are traditional Middle Eastern hand-held pies, similar to a Spanish empanada, but made with phyllo dough. Bourekas can be found in many Middle Eastern countries, each preparing the dish slightly differently. The version you will be creating today is most closely related to the Turkish or Sephardic bourekas because the Turkish or Sephardic version typically uses a rich pie crust instead of phyllo.

preheat + measure + whisk

We'll start with the pie dough! Preheat your oven to 425 F. Have kids measure and whisk together **1 2/3 cups flour**, **1/4 teaspoon salt**, **1 teaspoon brown sugar**, **1/2 teaspoon baking powder**, and **1 pinch of cinnamon** in a large bowl.

add + mix + divide

Make a well in the center and add **7 tablespoons vegetable oil**, and **1/4 cup cold water**. Mix with a fork until it makes a ball. Set aside to rest while you make the apple filling, then divide into about 12 small dough balls.

dice + measure + stir

Time to make the filling! Have kids dice **3 apples** into small bits. Add the diced apples, **1/3 cup brown sugar**, **2 teaspoons flour**, **1/2 teaspoon cinnamon**, and **1/4 teaspoon salt** to a medium bowl and stir to combine. Set to the side and fill the pie crust when ready.

shape + fill + seal

Have your kids flatten the dough balls and press the crust into triangle or rectangle shapes and fill with the apple filling. Then, fold the dough in half and pinch the edges. Some of the apples can even be poking out of the dough a tiny bit. This recipe is very forgiving. You can also crumb up the leftover dough and top the bourekas with the extra dough before baking.

crack + whisk + brush

Crack **1 egg** into a small bowl. Whisk with a splash of water until combined. Brush each of the bourekas with a bit of egg wash before baking.

bake + cool

Place your bourekas on a greased or parchment-lined baking sheet and bake in your preheated oven for about 20 minutes or until puffed and golden brown, rotating the pan after 10 minutes for even browning. Remove and drizzle **Brown Sugar Glaze** over the pies if you'd like. Let cool for a bit, and then eat!

Featured Ingredient: Apples!

Hi! I'm Apple!

"I'm delighted to be part of your recipe! Not only does "an apple a day keep the doctor away," but I'm also versatile and delicious in both sweet and savory dishes, like pies, cakes, breads, salads, and casseroles, and added to vegetables and roasted meats. Not to brag, but I have a fabulous, round(ish) figure and come in several colors and varieties of sweet and tart flavors!"

History

Here's a story about the Granny Smith apple that is long but cute: In the year 1868, near Sydney, Australia, a grandma named Marie Smith had been testing different types of French crabapples for cooking, and she ended up throwing the used apple cores out her window as she worked. Granny Smith saw that a new apple tree (or cultivar) had sprung up below her kitchen windowsill. She cultivated the tree and found that the apples it produced were good for cooking and eating. They were tart, sweet, and crisp. Grandma Marie Smith took a stall at a farmer's market in Sydney, where her apples stored exceptionally well and became very popular. She sold her apples once a week and called them Granny Smith's Apples. Smart (and enterprising) fruit merchants in the 1890s and 1900s experimented with methods to transport the Granny Smith apples overseas in cold storage. Because of its excellent shelf life, they could export the Granny Smith apple long distances and most times of the year. Since growing fruit from the seeds of the Granny Smith apple produces trees with fruit that isn't as good as the original, grafting or cuttings are required instead. All Granny Smith apples grown today are from grafts of Grandma Marie Smith's original tree in Sydney.

Apple trees were domesticated thousands of years ago. A wild apple native to the mountains of southern Kazakhstan in Central Asia is considered the ancestor of most domestic apple varieties.

Worldwide, 7,500 varieties of apples are grown! If just 12 kids were growing that many, each of them would end up with 625 different kinds!

Apples are victims of (or blessed by, depending on how you look at it) their own genetic creativity. An apple from a tree grown from a seed will be nothing like its parents. And because of this, historically, thousands upon thousands of varieties of apples have come into existence. Apples have evolved to adapt to all environments. They can be grown all over the world. Now, the number of apple varieties is much more narrow due to farming practices and consumers' desire for the "perfect red apple." The only way to ensure genetic repeats of apples is to "graft" the trees.

Grafting apple trees involves combining a bottom rootstock of one tree to the scion, or budding branch, of another tree to grow a new successful apple tree.

Anatomy & Etymology

Apples come in all shades of reds, greens, and yellows. They are members of the Rose family. Other members include strawberries, pears, plums, peaches, and raspberries.

Every spring, apple trees bloom or flower. At the bottom and inside each blossom is an ovule. Inside the

ovule are the seeds that will eventually turn into an apple! It takes about 4 to 5 months from the time the blossoms are pollinated for the apples to be ready to pick.

New apple trees take four to five years to produce their first fruit!

A raw apple can contain 86 percent water!

If you put an apple in water, do you think it will sink or float? It will float! That's because about 25 percent of an apple's volume is air. And that's why you can play a game of "bobbing for apples" at Halloween parties!

An apple tree can grow to more than forty feet and live over a hundred years!

A Japanese farmer picked the heaviest apple on record in 2005. It weighed 4.1 pounds!

The word "apple" came from the Old English "æppel," which is Germanic in origin. Until the 17th century, "apple" could refer generically to any nut or fruit other than berries.

How to Pick, Buy, & Eat

August marks the beginning of apple season. Apple season peaks in September—some of the most delicious apple varieties are available then: the Honeycrisp (our fave!), Cortland, Macintosh, and Gala.

October apples are perfect for baking.

Apples are picked by hand when it's time to harvest them. Choose apples that have smooth skin and are free from blemishes. They should feel heavy for their size and feel firm. Then, give it a sniff—fresh apples smell almost floral-like and super pleasant.

It is so fun to go to an orchard in the fall and pick apples for yourself. Of course, apples are available year-round in most grocery stores and are most affordable during the months when they're in season (August through October).

Farmers often use honeybees to pollinate apple trees.

You can eat apples in so many ways. Try dicing half an apple and adding it to a spinach salad with walnuts or pecans, red onion, and goat cheese. Stuff and bake them for a cozy autumn treat. You can juice, blend, or grind apples to make juice, cider, or smoothies. Slice, chop, or mash them and add them to a variety of apple treats: pie, strudel, cake, donuts, tortes, turnovers, dumplings, galettes, fritters, muffins, and crisps or crumbles. You can thinly slice and dehydrate apples to make chips or cook and mash them to make applesauce, adding a dash of cinnamon for extra flavor. Apple marries beautifully with a ton of different sweet AND savory foods like fennel, cheddar, caramel, cinnamon, butternut squash, rooibos, sauerkraut, and sausage.

Nutrition

"An Apple a Day Keeps the Doctor Away." This saying originated because people believed fruits were important to a nutritious diet. A 2015 study found that people who ate an apple a day took fewer prescriptions.

Red Delicious and Fuji apples contain the most polyphenols, micronutrients found naturally in plants with

antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. They can help prevent heart disease, control blood sugar, lower cancer risk, and help your immune system function properly. More polyphenols are found in an apple's peel than its flesh, so be sure to eat the peel, which will also add to your fiber intake!

Isn't it amazing to think that our bodies are hard at work keeping us strong and healthy while we go about our daily activities? Think of it: just now, your body is pumping blood through your veins and arteries, delivering nutrients to your cells to create energy, building proteins to protect you from getting sick, and so much more. That's why it's so important to eat nutritious foods, like apples!