

09/08/09 - Pastelicos (meat and rice borekas)

Pastelicos are triangular borekas with a savory meat and rice filling. As with other Sephardic pastry, you can find versions in different shapes, with different dough and different spice blends. This is the recipe my mother always made, but with the addition of the cinnamon and allspice. A Pastel is a pie in Ladino or Judeo Spanish, and these individual small 'pies' use the suffix indicating smallness. Crispy, savory, and beautiful,

Rosh Hashanah, Jewish New Year and Sukkot, Feast of the Tabernacles. Be sure and count more than one per person when planning how many to bake.









2 pounds ground chuck meat

2 large onions finely chopped

2 tablespoons oil

1 cup finely chopped parsley

1 teaspoon salt

Freshly ground pepper

2 teaspoons cinnamon

2 teaspoons allspice

½ cup toasted pine nuts

1/3 cup long grain rice

1 and ½ cup water

Dough

4 cups flour

1 teaspoon salt

1 cup ice water

¾ cup safflower oil

Topping

1 beaten egg

½ cup sesame seeds

Preheat a large sauté pan until hot. Add the oil and then the onions and turn the temperature down to medium. Occasionally stir the onions with a wooden spoon, sautéing on medium heat until sweet and golden. Push the onions aside and add the ground chuck and sauté until browned and starting to stick. As you stir the onions and chuck meat, break it up with your spoons, so it becomes crumbly with no large chunks of ground meat intact.

Stir in the parsley; add the seasoning, and the pine nuts. Next, mix the uncooked rice with the meat and onions. Add the water to cover the mixture and place a lid on the pan. Reduce the heat to low and let steam until all the water is absorbed and the rice cooks, about 15 minutes. Cool the filling down before using. It is best to make it the night before and refrigerate. This much filling will require 2 batches of dough.

For the dough measure the flour into a bowl and add the salt. In a two cup glass measuring pitcher, combine the liquids. Beat the liquids with a small whisk to

emulsify. Pour the liquid into the flour and stir with a fork. When the dough holds together, use your hands to finish gathering the dough into a ball. All the flour will incorporate and the dough should be soft and pliable. Separate the dough into 42 to 44 walnut size pieces. Roll each small piece into a smooth ball. With a rolling pin, roll each ball into a circle, no bigger than 3 inches in diameter, taking care not to go over the edges with the rolling pin and make them thin.

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees and prepare 4 rimmed baking sheets. Place a heaping teaspoon of filling in each circle. Close the filled circles by folding the dough in a triangle shape. Place the Pastelicos on the prepared baking sheets. Brush all the Pastelicos with beaten egg and sprinkle with sesame seeds. Bake in a 400 degree oven until golden and crispy about 15 to 17 minutes.

After the Pastelicos cool, they keep well for two days in the refrigerator or I freeze them in airtight containers. Reheat in a 300 degree oven for 10-15 minutes to re-crisp.

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