

BAKLAVA

Ingredients:

Syrup

- 2 cups honey
- 1 cup water
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 cinnamon sticks (CBI # 140079)
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- Lemon peel (without pith - 4 inch-long piece)
- Orange peel (without pith - 4 inch-long piece)

Pastry

- 4 cups coarsely ground walnuts (CBI # 10015947)
- 2 cups coarsely ground almonds (CBI # 10015841)
- 4 tablespoons sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon (CBI # 140088)
- 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg (CBI # 140167)
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1 lb unsalted butter, melted
- Whole cloves (CBI # 140091)

Directions:

1. Make syrup first so that it can come to room temperature: In a small saucepan, combine honey, sugar and water. Bring to a slow boil, stirring occasionally, until the sugar is dissolved. Add lemon juice, cinnamon sticks and peels and cook over a medium heat for 10 minutes, until slightly thickened. Remove peels and cinnamon sticks and allow cooling to room temperature before using.
2. Combine walnuts, almonds, sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg, ground cloves and 3 tablespoons melted butter together in a bowl and mix thoroughly.
3. Place phyllo between sheets of waxed paper and cover with a slightly damp towel to prevent phyllo from drying out. Brush bottom and sides of an 18 x12 inch pan generously with melted butter.
4. Place 8 phyllo sheets into bottom of pan, brushing each sheet generously with butter. Take an additional 4 sheets of phyllo and place in pan allowing sheets to drape over each of the 4 sides of pan. Brush these with melted butter.
5. Spread 2 cups of nut mixture into pan, distributing evenly over bottom. Fold over the overlapping phyllo sheets brushing each with butter, to envelop the nut mixture.
6. Repeat layering process 2 more times to form 3 nut layers.
7. Top pastry with remaining phyllo dough and generously brush top layer with melted butter. Tuck in the buttered phyllo neatly around.
8. Score through top layers of pastry with a sharp knife making 6 strips lengthwise then cut 10 strips diagonally to form diamond shaped pieces. Stud each diamond-shaped piece (and any odd looking ones near the ends of the pan) in the centre with a whole clove per piece. Pour remaining melted butter over pastry and lightly sprinkle some water on top too (wet your hand under the tap twice and shake this out over the pastry).
9. Bake pastry in a 325°F oven for 1 hour to 75 minutes, until nicely golden-brown. Allow to cool for 5 minutes. Carefully spoon cool syrup over pastry. Allow to stand at least 3 hours or overnight. Cut through the scored pieces and serve.
10. Note: The clove studding each piece is not traditionally eaten, it is removed by the person whose piece it is before eating. The clove is there to add its 'perfume' to the piece as it bakes (and it looks pretty, too).

Yields 60 Servings

Traditionally Greek. Always good. Once baked, the baklava has to stand for 3 hours to overnight to absorb the syrup into its layers. Whereas it is most common to find baklava made entirely with walnuts here in Greece, I prefer a combination with almonds (CBI # 1005881) . Sometimes I'll make the baklava using pistachios, or sometimes a 1/2-1/2 mixture of pistachios (CBI # 10016024) and almonds. They're all great variations on a delicious theme.

