

Baklava

Makes one 11" x 17" sheet pan



Ingredients

- 2 pounds (2 boxes) filo/phylo dough, thawed in refrigerator overnight
- 2 pounds walnuts or pistachio nuts, chopped
- ¾ cup sugar
- 3 tablespoons orange flower water
- 2 pounds rendered butter (or ghee), melted
- Sugar syrup (see below)

For the Syrup

In a large sauce pot combine 8 cups sugar, 4 cups water and 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice over high heat and bring to boil. Stir. Continue cooking until the temperature on a candy thermometer reaches 225°F. Remove from heat and allow to cool before adding in 2 teaspoons of orange flower water.

Steps

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Using one box of filo dough at a time, remove the pastry sheets from the box and lay them flat. Cover them with a damp (but wrung very dry) clean towel.
2. In a medium-sized bowl stir together the chopped nuts, sugar and orange flower water. Set aside.
3. In an 11" x 17" baking sheet pan brush a generous amount of rendered butter at the bottom.
4. Carefully lay one sheet of filo dough on the buttered pan. Lightly brush the filo with melted rendered butter. Take another filo sheet and place it on top carefully ensuring that the sheet is on top of the first one. Lightly brush with melted rendered butter. Continue this process until you have laid one whole box of filo dough on the baking sheet pan.
5. Cover the buttered filo dough with the chopped nut/sugar mixture spreading it out evenly. Press it down ensuring an even layer.
6. Proceed with the second pound (box) of filo dough in the same manner as above. Laying one sheet at a time brushing melted rendered butter between every sheet.
7. With a sharp knife cut into diamond shapes. Bake at 350°F on the middle rack of oven for about 20 minutes. Lower temperature to 250°F and continue baking for another 1 ½ hours or until the top of the filo is golden brown. Remove from oven and carefully using a bulb baster, remove the melted butter from the bottom of the pan (you have to turn the pan at an angle to remove it all).
8. While baklava is still very hot begin pouring syrup all over the pastry. Use a measuring cup or ladle, pour 2 ½ - 4 cups of the syrup to make sure the filo is saturated. Immediately after that, remove the excess syrup (like the butter) with a bulb baster. Allow pastry to fully cool. To serve, remove each piece and place in cupcake liners. Covered baklava in an airtight lasts one month.