

Lebanese Meat Pies

Makes about 24



Ingredients

For the basic dough

- 4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon Kosher salt
- ¼ teaspoon mahleeb (available online)
- ½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, large cubes
- ½ teaspoon active dry yeast
- ½ cup warm (110°F) water

For the filling

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 medium brown onion, chopped fine
- 1 pound lean ground beef
- 1 teaspoon Kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- ½ teaspoon allspice
- ½ cup toasted pine nuts
- ½ cup lebni
- Juice from one lemon

Steps

1. Combine water and yeast in a measuring cup. Let stand until yeast starts to froth and foam (about 5 minutes).
2. Add 4 cups of flour, salt and mahleeb in a large bowl. Whisk to combine.
3. Add butter and rub it into flour until the mixture resembles large bread crumbs. Make a well in the center and pour in yeast/water. With your hands bring dough together into one ball. If dough is too dry, add 1 tablespoon of warm water in at a time until dough comes together. Leave dough to rest for 45 minutes in the same bowl making sure to cover well with a few kitchen towels. Put in a warm part of your kitchen.
4. To make the meat filling begin sauteing the butter and onion together in a large pan over medium-high heat until the onion is translucent. Remove onion from pan and set aside. Add the meat to the same pan and cook until the meat is no longer pink. Drain any liquid. Season with salt, pepper and allspice (taste to make sure you have enough salt). Add the onions back in as well as the pine nuts and cook for a few more minutes. Off the heat add the lebni and lemon juice.
5. Divide the dough that's rested into three equal balls. Cover the balls again with a clean towel and let the dough rest again for another 15 minutes.
6. Preheat oven to 400°F. Once dough has rested again, take each ball and roll it out on a lightly-floured surface. The dough should be about 1/4 " thick. Cut the dough in circles (we use an empty coffee can). Then take each circle and gently roll it out a bit more. Fill one half of each circle with the meat mixture and using a little water on your fingertip, fold the dough over itself to seal.
7. Use your fingers to pinch and roll the edges (or the tines of a fork to ensure the pie is sealed). Place formed pies on a baking sheet pan and bake for 25 minutes, or until the tops are golden brown. Serve warm or at room temperature. These are best eaten fresh.