

Türchen 3 | Advent Calendar Door 3

Recipe for "Banitsa" – A Bulgarian Christmas dish (and for holidays in general)

Ingredients

- 1 package phyllo dough 400 g
- 3/4 pound feta cheese 350 g
- 7 eggs
- 1 cup plain yogurt 250 g
- ½ cup water
- 4 tablespoons melted butter or avocado oil
- ½ teaspoon baking soda

Preparation

1. In a large bowl, mash the feta cheese with a fork as much as possible. Add the eggs and mix well. Then add the yogurt along with the baking soda and mix again. Then add the melted butter or oil and mix well. Finally, add the water and mix again.
2. Taking the largest baking pan you have (a 13" round pan is traditional, but you can also use a 9"x13" pan), use two spoons of the mixture to lightly cover the bottom from edge to edge. The idea is to have the phyllo stick so when the banitsa is flipped upside down after baking, it doesn't fall out.
3. Grab one sheet of phyllo dough, crinkle it into a loose ball and place it in the pan. Continue doing this until the bottom of the pan is covered (you'll need about 7 sheets). Using a spoon add about half of the egg mixture making sure to cover the phyllo layer nicely. Then add more crinkled phyllo sheets on top (you'll need about 5 sheets) for this second layer. Spoon over the rest of the egg mixture (making sure to save 4-5 tablespoons). Add 3 more sheets of phyllo flat across the top of the pan and tuck the edges of the phyllo along the edge of the pan. Spoon over the rest of the egg mixture from edge to edge making sure the top layer is quite wet.
4. Preheat the oven to 390F (200°C). Let the banitsa rest at room temperature for 15 minutes, then bake for 26-30 minutes, or until the top is deep golden brown. If the top gets too dark, place a sheet of tin foil or parchment paper over it.
5. Remove banitsa from oven and carefully flip it upside down. It's easier if you balance the pan on a couple of bowls so there is a gap between the pan and the counter while it is hanging upside down. You may skip this step of flipping the banitsa over, but it will deflate and won't get fluffy.
6. Let cool upside down for 20 minutes and then: Enjoy!