

Rodanchas de Kalavasa (pumpkin-filled filo roses)

A Sephardi autumn pastry adapted from Joyce Goldstein

This is a Mediterranean squash pastry that is part of the traditional Jewish Turkish and Greek cuisine for the Yom Tovim that can be prepared as a sweet or savory pastry.

1 butternut squash, about 2 pounds
½ cup sugar
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
2 Tablespoons olive or vegetable oil
1 cup finely chopped toasted walnuts
Pinch of salt
½ cup crumbled feta (optional)
¼ cup chopped fresh mint or chopped parsley (optional)
About 8 filo sheets, thawed in the refrigerator
About ½ cup olive oil
1 large egg, beaten with 1 Tablespoon water (egg wash)
Cinnamon sugar or chopped walnuts for sprinkling

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Halve a butternut squash lengthwise and scoop out the seeds. On a baking pan with parchment paper, put down the two halves skin facing up and bake for about 1 hour or a bit more until tender. Scoop out the pulp and puree in the food processor. Place the puree in a saucepan. You will have about 2 cups.
2. Add the sugar, cinnamon and oil and place over low heat, stirring a bit for about five minutes. Drain the puree in a strainer for a few minutes to thicken the puree. (These first two steps can be done a few days ahead.)
3. Fold in the walnuts. (If you decide to make a dairy savory filling, this is the time to add a bit of salt, feta cheese and mint or parsley.)
4. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Cover two baking sheets with parchment. Cut each filo sheet into thirds so that you have rectangles measuring 6 by 12 inches. When you are not working with the filo sheets, keep the rest covered under a moistened towel to prevent them from drying out.
5. Brush one filo rectangle with oil, layer another rectangle on top and brush with oil. Place a narrow line of squash filling just inside a long edge. Fold over the edge to cover the filling and continue to roll, until you have a long snake. Coil the snake into a spiral and do not form too tightly. Lay the rodanchas on the baking sheet. Brush with egg wash and sprinkle lightly with cinnamon sugar or finely chopped walnuts. Bake for about 25 minutes or until they are golden brown.