

Baklava

Posted by [Garrett McCord](#) of [Vanilla Garlic](#) on Feb 20, 2008
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Please welcome *Simply Recipes* guest author [Garrett McCord](#) who brought us some of the best baklava we've ever tasted. ~Elise

Have I ever mentioned that I'm a baklava addict? It's true, I have a problem and should be taken to the Betty Crocker Clinic so I can get help. Last year I bought a 30 serving pan of the stuff, intent on bringing it to work to share. Four hours later the entire pan was gone and I was a sticky mess. As such, it was only a matter of time before I learned to make my own.

Baklava is a delicious phyllo pastry popular in Middle Eastern countries. Its supposed origins are Turkish, dating to the Byzantine Empire (or even further), though many cultures claim it for their own. Many Greek and Lebanese restaurants serve it, and it is now a featured dessert of several former Ottoman countries. In baklava, layers of crisp phyllo dough alternate with a sugary spiced nut mixture, and the whole thing is then soaked in fragrant sweet syrup made with honey, lemon and cinnamon. It's an exotic and decadent treat to be sure.

The recipe can be a bit time consuming, and isn't really a first-time baker's recipe, but if you can put together a cake well enough on your own then this is a good next step in your baking education. The tissue paper-thin phyllo dough is fragile and breaks easily if not handled properly, but the end product is forgiving so don't fret if it all falls apart. My first time I just made a mess of dried out phyllo and butter and the baklava tasted wonderful regardless.

Baklava Recipe



INGREDIENTS

For the baklava:

- 1 lb. of chopped nuts (almonds, walnuts, or pistachios are best, or use a combination of them)
- 1 lb of phyllo dough
- 1 cup of butter, melted
- 1/3 cup of sugar
- 1 teaspoon of ground cinnamon
- 1/3 teaspoon of ground cloves

For the syrup:

- 1 cup of water
- 1 cup of sugar
- 1/2 cup of honey
- 2 tablespoons of lemon juice
- 1 cinnamon stick

Finely ground pistachios for garnish (optional)

METHOD

- 1** Lightly grease a 9x13 pan and set the oven to 350°F.
- 2** Thaw the phyllo dough according to manufacturer's directions (this may take overnight). When thawed, roll out the dough and cut the dough in half so the sheets will fit in the pan. Cover with a damp towel to keep it from drying out.
- 3** Process the nuts until in small, even sized pieces. Combine with sugar, cinnamon, and cloves. In a separate bowl, melt the butter in the microwave.
- 4** Place a sheet of phyllo dough into the pan. Using a pastry brush, brush the phyllo sheet with melted butter. Repeat 7 more times until it is 8 sheets thick, each sheet being "painted" with the butter.
- 5** Spoon on a thin layer of the nut mixture. Cover with two more sheets of phyllo, brushing each one with butter. Continue to repeat the nut mixture and two buttered sheets of phyllo until the nut mixture is all used up. The top layer should be 8 phyllo sheets thick, each sheet being individually buttered. Do not worry if the sheets crinkle up a bit, it will just add more texture.
- 6** Cut into 24 equal sized squares using a sharp knife. Bake at 350°F for 30-35 minutes or until lightly golden brown, and edges appear slightly crisp.
- 7** While baking, make the syrup. Combine the cinnamon stick, sugar, lemon juice, honey, and water in a saucepan. Bring to a boil, then reduce to medium low heat and let simmer for 7 minutes and slightly thickened. Remove the cinnamon stick and allow to cool.
- 8** Spoon the cooled syrup over the hot baklava and let cool for at least 4 hours. Garnish with some finely crushed pistachios if desired.

All families have their own recipe, and this is just one. If you have an interesting take on baklava, please tell us in the comments section! ~Garrett

