

Cretan Cheese Pies with Thyme and Honey (Kalitsounia)



Ingredients

FOR THE PHYLLO

- 3 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tbsp. white vinegar
- 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups all-purpose flour, plus more for rolling
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. kosher salt

FOR THE FILLING AND TOPPING

- 12 oz. Cretan mizithra cheese, or substitute ricotta salata
- 5 oz. Cretan tiromalama cheese, or substitute feta
- 1 tsp. finely chopped mint
- 1 large egg
- 1 tbsp. black sesame seeds
- 1 tbsp. white sesame seeds
- Thyme honey, for serving

Method

STEP 1

Make the dough: In a small bowl, combine 1 cup cold water, the olive oil, and vinegar. Set aside.

STEP 2

In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a dough hook, add the flour and salt. With the mixer on low speed, drizzle the wet ingredients into the flour a few tablespoons at a time, mixing until the dough is tight and smooth, 3–4 minutes. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap; let rest 1 hour.

STEP 3

Meanwhile, make the filling: In the bowl of a food processor, blend the cheeses until smooth. Add the mint and pulse until combined. Set aside.

STEP 4

Preheat the oven to 350°. Line 2 large baking sheets with parchment paper and set them aside. In a small bowl, beat the egg with 1 teaspoon water and set aside.

STEP 5

Lightly dust a work surface with flour. Use a rolling pin to roll the dough to a 16x20-inch rectangle. Use a pizza wheel or a sharp knife to cut the dough into twenty 4-inch squares. Add 1 heaping tablespoon of filling to the center of each, then bring all four corners of the squares up to meet at the center, pinching along all of the edges to seal. Leave or prick a tiny hole in the centermost part of the seam to prevent the pies from puffing while baking.

STEP 6

Place the pies on the prepared baking sheets, spacing them evenly. Brush the tops and sides with the egg wash, then sprinkle with the black and white sesame seeds.

STEP 7

Bake until golden brown, 22–25 minutes. Serve warm, drizzled with thyme honey.