



Fried Sambousak (Middle Eastern Turnovers)

YIELD: 15-20 SAMBOUSA
TIME: 2 HOURS 15 MINUTES, PLUS 5 1/2 HOURS CHILLING

Ingredients

FOR THE TEDBILEH (MEAT FILLING):

- 2 tablespoons neutral oil
- 1 pound lean ground beef (10 percent fat)
- 2 medium onions, finely chopped
- Kosher salt to taste
- 1 teaspoon ground allspice
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground cinnamon

FOR THE DOUGH:

- 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups (282 g) all-purpose flour, plus more as needed
- 3 tablespoons (40 ml) neutral oil
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoon kosher salt

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (175 ml) room-temperature water

FOR THE FRYING:

- Neutral oil for frying (enough to fill half of your pot)

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT:

- Candy/frying thermometer (optional)

Preparation

- STEP 1

Prepare the filling (tedbileh): Heat 2 tablespoons of neutral oil in a deep pot. Add onions and cook over medium heat until golden, 7–10 minutes. Season with salt.

- STEP 2

Increase the heat to high, add the meat, and break it into little pieces with a fork. Aim for a fine and soft texture, if the pieces are too big they will tear the delicate dough.

- STEP 3

When the meat is fully cooked, season with ground allspice and cinnamon. Taste and adjust salt. Transfer the meat to a strainer and set aside to cool.

- STEP 4

Prepare the dough: In a bowl, combine flour, oil, salt, and water. Mix by hand until a dough forms.

- STEP 5

Transfer to a clean work surface and knead until smooth and elastic, 10–15 minutes. If sticky, add a tablespoon of flour.

- STEP 6

Return dough to the bowl, cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes and no more than one hour.

- STEP 7

Fill the sambousak: Roll dough on a floured surface into a rectangle about 18×15 inches and $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch thick.

- STEP 8

Cut out circles with a 4-inch cookie cutter. Gather the dough scraps and set them aside, covered in plastic wrap.

- STEP 9

Place 1½–2 tablespoons of filling in each circle. Fold into a half-moon shape, leaving a $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch border. Press edges to seal. Arrange the sambousak on a

parchment-lined tray, leaving a small space between them so they don't stick to one another.

- STEP 10

Continue with the dough scraps: roll them out, fill, and repeat until all the filling is used.

- STEP 11

Wrap the tray of sambousak in plastic and freeze for at least 5 hours, or overnight, until firm. For longer storage, transfer the frozen sambousak to an airtight container or zip-top bag.

- STEP 12

Fry the sambousak: Heat oil in a deep pot until the surface shimmers but does not smoke. To check if the oil is hot enough, insert the end of a wooden spoon into the oil — if it bubbles gently around the wood, the oil is ready. If it bubbles vigorously, it's too hot. If using a thermometer, aim for 365–375°F. Fry the sambousak from frozen in small batches, a few minutes per side, until golden brown. Do not overcrowd the pot and keep the sambousak separated to prevent sticking.

- STEP 13

Transfer to a metal strainer to drain excess oil. Serve immediately.