



Baklava

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS

We wanted our baklava recipe to produce crisp, flaky, buttery lozenges, light yet rich, filled with fragrant nuts and spices, and sweetened just assertively enough to pair with a Turkish coffee. To achieve this goal, we sprinkled store-bought phyllo dough with three separate layers of nuts (a combination of almonds and walnuts) flavored with cinnamon and cloves. We clarified the butter for even browning. We found that cutting the baklava rather than just scoring it before baking helped it absorb the sugar syrup. Finally, allowing the baklava to sit overnight before serving improved its the flavor of our baklava recipe and was worth the wait.



INGREDIENTS

SUGAR SYRUP

- 1 ¼ cups granulated sugar
- ¾ cup water
- ⅓ cup honey
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice from 1 lemon
- 3 strips lemon zest, removed in large strips with vegetable peeler
- 1 cinnamon stick

INSTRUCTIONS

A straight-sided traditional (not nonstick) metal baking pan works best for making baklava; the straight sides ensure that the pieces will have nicely shaped edges, and the surface of a traditional pan will not be marred by the knife during cutting, as would a nonstick surface. If you don't have this type of pan, a glass baking dish will work. Make sure that the phyllo is fully thawed before use; leave it in the refrigerator overnight or on the countertop for four to five hours. When assembling, use the nicest, most intact phyllo sheets for the bottom and top layers; use sheets with tears or ones that are smaller than the size of the pan in the middle layers, where their imperfections will go unnoticed. If, after assembly, you have remaining clarified butter, store it in an airtight

**MAKES 32 TO 40
PIECES**

- 5 whole cloves
- $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon table salt

NUT FILLING

- 8 ounces blanched slivered almonds
- 4 ounces walnuts
- 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoons ground cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground cloves
- 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
- $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon table salt

PASTRY AND BUTTER

- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups unsalted butter (3 sticks), clarified per instructions below, melted, and cooled slightly (about 1 cup)
- 1 pound frozen phyllo, thawed (see note)

container in the refrigerator; it can be used for sautéing.

1. **For the sugar syrup:** Combine syrup ingredients in small saucepan and bring to full boil over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally to ensure that sugar dissolves. Transfer to 2-cup measuring cup and set aside to cool while making and baking baklava; when syrup is cool, discard spices and lemon zest. (Cooled syrup can be refrigerated in airtight container up to 4 days.)

2. **For the nut filling:** Pulse almonds in food processor until very finely chopped, about twenty 1-second pulses; transfer to medium bowl. Pulse walnuts in food processor until very finely chopped, about fifteen 1-second pulses; transfer to bowl with almonds and toss to combine. Measure out 1 tablespoon nuts and set aside for garnish. Add cinnamon, cloves, sugar, and salt; toss well to combine.

3. **To assemble and bake:** Brush 13- by 9-inch traditional (not nonstick) baking pan with butter. Adjust oven rack to lower-middle position and heat oven to 300 degrees. Unwrap and unfold phyllo on large cutting board; carefully smooth with hands to flatten. Following illustration 1 below, and using baking pan as guide, cut sheets crosswise with chef's knife, yielding two roughly evenly sized stacks of phyllo (one may be narrower than other). Cover with plastic wrap, then damp kitchen towel to prevent drying.

4. Following illustration 3, place one phyllo sheet (from wider stack) in bottom of baking pan and brush until completely coated with butter. Repeat with 7 more phyllo sheets (from wider stack), brushing each with butter.

5. Following illustration 4, evenly distribute about 1 cup nuts over phyllo. Cover nuts with phyllo sheet (from narrower stack) and dab with butter (phyllo will slip if butter is brushed on). Repeat with 5 more phyllo sheets (from

narrower stack), staggering sheets slightly if necessary to cover nuts, and brushing each with butter. Repeat layering with additional 1 cup nuts, 6 sheets phyllo, and remaining 1 cup nuts. Finish with 8 to 10 sheets phyllo (from wider stack), using nicest and most intact sheets for uppermost layers and brushing each except final sheet with butter. Following illustration 6, use palms of hands to compress layers, working from center outward to press out any air pockets. Spoon 4 tablespoons butter on top layer and brush to cover all surfaces. Following illustration 7, use bread knife or other serrated knife with pointed tip in gentle sawing motion to cut baklava into diamonds, rotating pan as necessary to complete cuts. (Cut on bias into eighths on both diagonals.)

6. Bake until golden and crisped, about 1 ½ hours, rotating baking pan halfway through baking. Immediately after removing baklava from oven, pour cooled syrup over cut lines until about 2 tablespoons remain (syrup will sizzle when it hits hot pan); drizzle remaining syrup over surface. Garnish center of each piece with pinch of reserved ground nuts. Cool to room temperature on wire rack, about 3 hours, then cover with foil and let stand at least 8 hours before serving. (Once cooled, baklava can be served, but flavor and texture improve if left to stand at least 8 hours. Baklava can be wrapped tightly in foil and kept at room temperature up to 10 days.)

Step-by-Step

Assembling Baklava



1. Cover phyllo to keep moist.



2. But phyllo to fit in pan.



3. Butter bottom layers.



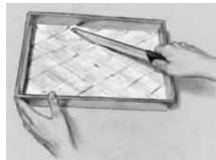
4. Spread nut Filling.



5. Butter more layers.



6. Compress layers.



7. Cut into diamonds, then bake.



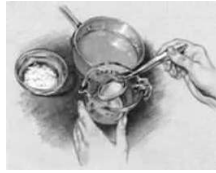
8. Pour syrup over cut lines and garnish each piece with nuts.

Step-by-Step

Clarifying Butter



1. Let melted butter settle for 10 minutes. With soup spoon, carefully skim off foam from surface.



2. Spoon butterfat into small cup, tipping saucepan gently and only when it becomes necessary.



3. Make sure to leave water and milk solids behind in saucepan so they can be discarded.