

SPINACH EMPANADILLAS

LITTLE PIES ARE PART OF THE MOORISH TRADITION IN SPAIN. THE ARABS FIRST BROUGHT SPINACH TO EUROPE AND PINE NUTS AND RAISINS ARE TYPICAL ARAB FLAVOURINGS. IN SPAIN THE DOUGH FOR THESE PASTRIES IS SOLD READY-CUT INTO ROUNDS, AND THEY ARE DEEP-FRIED.

MAKES TWENTY

INGREDIENTS

- 25g/1oz/¼ cup raisins
- 25ml/1½ tbsp olive oil
- 450g/1lb fresh spinach
leaves, washed, drained
and chopped
- 6 canned anchovies, drained
and chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 25g/1oz/¼ cup pine nuts,
roughly chopped
- 1 egg, beaten
- 350g/12oz puff pastry
- salt and ground black pepper



1 To make the filling, soak the raisins in a little warm water for 10 minutes. Drain well, then chop roughly.

2 Heat the olive oil in a large pan, add the spinach, stir, then cover and cook over a low heat for about 2 minutes until the spinach starts to wilt. Remove the lid, turn up the heat and cook until any liquid has evaporated.

3 Add the chopped anchovies, garlic and seasoning to the spinach and cook, stirring, for about 1 minute.

4 Remove the pan from the heat, then stir in the soaked raisins and pine nuts, and set aside to cool.

5 Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas 4. Roll out the pastry on a lightly floured surface to a 3mm/¼in thickness.



6 Using a 7.5cm/3in pastry cutter, cut the pastry into 20 rounds, re-rolling any scraps if necessary. Place about 10ml/2 tsp filling in the middle of each round, then brush the edges with a little water.



7 Bring up the sides of the pastry and seal well. Press the edges together with the back of a fork. Brush with egg.

8 Place the pies, slightly apart, on a lightly greased baking sheet and bake for about 15 minutes, until puffed up and golden brown.

9 Transfer the pies to a wire rack to cool. They are best served while still slightly warm, but not hot.

VARIATIONS

- Little stuffed pies such as these are typical of Catalonia and the Balearic Islands. Elsewhere in Spain these pies are usually plain, deep-fried and then sugared – the one sweet tapas.
- In the Barcelona food markets, pies filled with a canned tuna and vegetable stuffing are a popular hot snack.