

FRUIT-FILLED HAMANTASCHEN (PURIM)

From *Jewish Cooking in America* by Joan Nathan

Haman's pockets, or *Hamantaschen* were brought to this country by Jews from the eastern part of Germany and Eastern Europe. Hamantaschen are so popular here that at many academic institutions there is an annual Hamantaschen versus latke debate. The filling for the following Hamantaschen recipe comes from the *Taste of History: Recipes Old and New* put out by Philadelphia's Historic Spanish and Portuguese Congregation, Kahal Kadosh Midveh Israel, founded in 1740. With the filling I used my own butter cookie dough, which everyone in my family loves. Although adults like fruit or poppy-seed fillings, my children do not, and they fill the dough with chocolate chips and even make a Hamantaschen with chocolate chips and peanut butter. I'll stick to this prune filling and leave the chocolate-chip Hamantaschen to them.

Regional Variation: A similar and equally delicious Hamantaschen filling comes from Natchez, Mississippi. Naturally, it includes pecans rather than walnuts.

Fruit Filling

3/4 cup pitted prunes
1/3 cup seedless raisins
1/4 cup water
1/4 cup shelled walnuts
1/4 apple with peel
Juice and rind of 1/4 lemon
2 tablespoons sugar

Dough

2/3 cup pareve margarine or butter
1/2 cup sugar
1 large egg
1/2 teaspoon vanilla
1/2 to 3 cups unbleached all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
Dash of salt

1. To make the filling, simmer the prunes and raisins together in the water, covered, for 15 minutes or until the prunes are softened but still firm.
2. Add the nuts, then put the mixture through a grinder or chop in a food processor with the apple. Add the lemon juice and rind and sugar and mix well.
3. To make the dough, cream the margarine or butter with the sugar. Add the egg and vanilla and continue creaming until smooth. A food processor is great for this.
4. Add the flour, baking powder, and salt. Process until a ball of dough is formed.
5. Chill for 2 to 3 hours, or overnight.
6. Taking one fourth of the dough, roll out on a lightly floured board to a thickness of 1/8 inch. Cut into 2 1/2-inch circles. With your finger, brush water around the rim of the circle. Drop 1 teaspoon of filling in the center. Then bring the dough around the filling and press 3 ends together.
7. Bake in a preheated 375-degree oven on a well-greased cookie sheet for 10 to 15 minutes or until the tips are golden.

Yield: 36 cookies (P) with margarine; (D) with butter