

Bougatsa - Μπουγάτσα (bougatsa)



Bougatsa is a Greek breakfast pastry consisting of semolina custard.

SERVES	PREP	COOK	TOTAL	CUISINE
Serves 8	30 minutes	45 minutes	1 hour 15 minutes	Greek

Ingredients

- 1.2 litres (2 pints 2 fl oz) whole milk
- 200 g (7 oz) fine semolina
- 150 g (5½ oz) caster sugar
- 1 large egg
- 2 large egg yolks
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 40 g (1½ oz) unsalted butter
- 1 strip lemon peel
- 1 pinch fine sea salt
- 12 sheets filo pastry
- 150 g (5½ oz) unsalted butter, melted, plus extra for the tin



- 2 tbsp icing sugar, to serve
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon, to serve

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C fan (200°C / 400°F / gas 6). Butter a shallow baking tin or ovenproof dish measuring about 30 x 20 cm, and keep the filo covered with a clean damp tea towel so it does not dry out.
2. For the custard, pour the milk into a medium saucepan with the lemon peel and place over medium heat. Bring it just to the point of steaming, then remove from the heat and discard the lemon peel.
3. In a separate bowl, whisk together the egg, egg yolks, sugar, vanilla and salt until smooth and slightly paler. Whisk in the semolina to make a thick, even paste.
4. Return the milk to medium heat and pour in the semolina mixture in a steady stream, whisking constantly to prevent lumps. Cook for 4-6 minutes, stirring with a wooden spoon, until the custard thickens, bubbles gently and loses any raw flour taste.
5. Remove the pan from the heat and beat in the butter until fully melted and incorporated. Transfer the custard to a shallow bowl or tray and press baking paper directly onto the surface to stop a skin forming; leave to cool until just warm.
6. Lay one sheet of filo in the prepared tin, letting the edges overhang, and brush lightly with melted butter. Repeat with five more sheets, brushing each sheet and offsetting them so the base and sides are well layered.
7. Spoon in the custard and spread it into an even layer. Fold the overhanging filo over the filling, then top with the remaining six sheets, brushing each sheet with butter and tucking the edges neatly around the pastry to enclose the custard.
8. Trim any excess if needed, then score the top lightly into portions with a sharp knife, cutting only through the top layers so steam can escape. Brush the surface generously with the remaining melted butter.
9. Bake on the middle oven shelf for 35-40 minutes, until deeply golden, crisp and puffed, and the base is firm rather than pale and soft. If the top browns too quickly, cover loosely with foil for the last 10 minutes.
10. Leave to rest for 10-15 minutes so the filling settles slightly and the pastry stays crisp. Dust generously with icing sugar and cinnamon just before serving.

To serve



Serve bougatsa warm, cut into squares or diamonds, with the icing sugar and cinnamon added at the last minute. It is excellent on its own for breakfast or with strong coffee; a light glass of dessert wine also suits the sweet, milky filling.

