

Artemis' Baklava

Ingredients:

- ▷ 1 lb walnuts
- ▷ 1/4 cup graham cracker crumbs
- ▷ 1 cup sugar
- ▷ 1 tablespoon cinnamon
- ▷ 1 teaspoon cloves
- ▷ 1 teaspoon allspice
- ▷ 2 sticks melted butter
- ▷ 1 lb filo, thawed according to package directions

For syrup:

- ▷ 3 cups granulated sugar
- ▷ 1½ cups water
- ▷ 1/4 cup honey
- ▷ 1 cinnamon stick
- ▷ 3 slices lemon

Preparation:

Preheat oven to 325° convection. Melt butter in saucepan on low. Prepare baking pan by generously buttering a 9 x 13 inch bake pan with some melted butter. In a food processor, combine all ingredients together. Gently pulse walnuts (about 10 times) to chop walnuts but allow small pieces to remain. Place in a bowl and set aside. Cut filo into four equal portions (you can measure if desired), so each quarter is equal in width. Set aside three of the four portions of dough in a ziploc bag or under a damp cloth to keep fresh and prevent drying. Working quickly, lay out about 10 strips of the filo and with a pastry brush, butter each strip generously. Place about a couple of teaspoons of baklava mixture at one end of the filo strip and then begin to tightly roll each piece by folding in each side initially, so the filling does not spill out, and then create a small cigarette like shape. Place each baklava roll onto the greased baking sheet, aligning each roll closely with its neighbor. Continue to roll the baklava and filling in the same manner, until you have used all the filo. Use remaining butter to brush the tops of the baklava rolls. Place in middle rack of oven, and bake for about 15-20 minutes until golden in color.

Make the baklava syrup:

While the baklava is cooking, dissolve the sugar in the water and add the other ingredients. Bring to a gentle boil and continue to cook, being sure not to caramelize the syrup as this will make the baklava candied. Ideally the consistency should be like a syrup. If you over boil, add a bit more water and return to a simmer. You can test the syrup by taking a teaspoon of syrup and drip it on a plate. Once it cools, you want a liquidy, runny consistency.

Final steps:

When Baklava comes out of the oven, immediately pour all the syrup over the baklava. There will be extra sauce which will get absorbed. After a couple of minutes, flip the baklava so it can absorb the sauce on the other side as well. Let cool completely. To serve baklava, place individual pieces in muffin liners if desired. Baklava can be stored in an air tight container for several days.

