

Banitsa (Bulgarian Feta Cheese Triangles)

(Bulgaria)

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“Banitsa”(Баница) is a savory feta cheese pie made with Bulgarian feta cheese and phyllo pastry sheets. Like the Greek Spanakopita, Banitsa can be made with spinach, leeks, or even nettle leaves as additional fold-ins. My mom used to make her own homemade phyllo dough that she would pull and stretch over the dining room table to make into paper-thin sheets. She would then drop the feta-egg mixture and roll the sheets into strudel rectangles. All good strudels are a bit labor intensive -- but well worth it! This recipe is for appetizer-sized triangles and can be made in advance to store in the freezer. Though banitsa is a “street food” in Bulgaria, homemade banitsa is always prepared for holidays and special occasions.



Makes about 30 appetizers.

Ingredients:

1 1/2 lbs. sheep's milk feta (Bulgarian or Greek preferable) coarsely chopped and crumbled

3 eggs

2 sticks unsalted butter, melted in a bowl

1 package phyllo pastry sheets

Instructions:

In a large bowl, mix feta and eggs, mixture should not be smooth, but not overly lumpy.

On a countertop, unfold 4 sheets of phyllo pastry, taking care to work quickly so sheets do not dry out. Lay out sheets in a stack.

Keep remaining sheets in plastic wrap under a damp and cool kitchen towel.

Using a pastry brush, quickly brush both sides of *each* phyllo sheet by folding one side of stack and brushing each sheet individually.

Using a sharp knife, cut into the stack to have 5-6 columns.

Put one tablespoon of filling at the bottom of each phyllo column.

Starting with one column, fold filling over to make a triangle, repeat up the column until you have folded over to the top of the phyllo column.

Repeat with all the phyllo columns.

Put in plastic container to freeze.

Repeat process with phyllo sheets and filling.

If planning to bake and serve same day, preheat oven to 400 degrees.

Place triangles on baking sheet, and bake for 20 min or until light golden brown.

Let cool on rack. Then serve!

