



Samosas are Indian snacks made with thin pastry and spicy fillings, served hot or cold, with relishes or dips. Try them with tomato ketchup!

Snacks like this are, in fact, made all around the world, but are especially popular in northern Africa, across Southern and Eastern Europe and throughout Asia.

The special pastry they are made of, 'filo' pastry, is made from flour, water, a small amount of oil and vinegar. It is rolled out as thin as paper, sold in sheets and used in layers to create a light, crunchy texture when fried or baked. The word 'filo', or phyllo, comes from the Greek word for leaf.

Filo parcels have many different fillings. Samosas tend to be filled with spiced potatoes and peas, because many people across Asia are vegetarian. In Greece, parcels of filo are filled with feta cheese and fresh herbs or spinach. Spring rolls, found in Asian cooking, are filled with crunchy vegetables and bean sprouts. Baklava, a dessert from Eastern Europe, is filled with honey, nuts, spices and rose-water syrup.

Filo needs to be kept damp. When it dries out, it is brittle and falls to pieces. Make sure you rest a clean damp, tea towel under the pastry while you are using it.

Ingredients

1 pack filo pastry (6 or 12 sheets, depending on how many you would like to make)

100ml cooking oil

Tin/container LABELLED WITH YOUR NAME

Clean tea towel (you will use this too keep the pastry damp)

Fillings – to make 6 samosas

Option 1 – potato and pea/sweetcorn

1 large or 2 medium potatoes

Handful of peas and/or sweetcorn

Option 2 – meat

250g minced meat

1 small onion or equivalent spring onions/shallots

Option 3 – beans

1 tin chickpeas/kidney beans/butterbeans

1 small onion

Option 4 – cheese and spinach

200g cream cheese/ricotta/feta/mixed cheeses

Small bag of spinach

Method

Prepare the equipment

1. Check the inside of the oven is clean and that the shelves are in the right place for your baking tray.
2. Preheat the oven to 200C/400F/Gas 6

Option 1 – potato and pea/sweetcorn

Peel and dice the potatoes, boil until soft, drain, put in a bowl, stir in half teaspoon of salt + pinch of pepper, 2 teaspoons of curry powder and the handful of peas/sweetcorn.

Option 2 – meat.

Peel and finely chop the onion, warm a tablespoon of oil in a pan, soften the onions, add the meat, fry the meat until brown, drain off the oils into a cup (to go in the bin when cool), put in a bowl, stir in 2 teaspoons of curry powder, stir in half teaspoon of salt + pinch of pepper.

Option 3 – beans

Drain the beans/chickpeas in a sieve and rinse with cold water, put in a bowl, add 2 teaspoons of curry powder, stir in half teaspoon of salt + pinch of pepper, mash with a fork until broken.

Option 4 – cheese and spinach

Grate or crumble the cheese into a bowl, stir in half teaspoon of salt + pinch of pepper, put spinach in a pan with a little water, warm until the spinach has wilted (become dark and lost its shape!), drain over the sink, press the water out of the spinach with the back of a spoon, add to the bowl and stir.

Prepare the pastry You will need a pastry board, cling film (2 sheets), 100ml oil in a bowl, a pastry brush, a baking tray, clean and damp tea towel, egg wash (optional)

1. Unroll the pastry and cover with cling film and the damp tea towel. Peel off one piece and keep the rest covered so that it doesn't dry out. Lay the pastry sheet flat on a clean surface and brush with oil. Fold in one third of the pastry lengthways towards the middle. Brush again with the oil and fold in the other side to make a long triple-layered strip.
2. Place one rounded teaspoon of the filling mixture at one end of the strip, leaving a 2cm border. Take the right corner and fold diagonally to the left, enclosing the filling and forming a triangle. Fold again along the upper crease of the triangle. Keep folding in this way until you reach the end of the strip. Brush the outer surface with more oil or egg wash. Place onto a baking sheet and cover while you make the rest of the samosas.
3. Bake in the centre of the oven for 30 minutes, or until golden and crisp.

