

Almost all the peoples of the Middle East, Eastern Mediterranean, Balkans, Caucasia; Turks, Arabs, Jews, Greeks, Armenians, Bulgarians introduce baklava as their national dessert. When we consider that all of these regions once belonged to the Ottoman Empire, it is possible to think of Baklava as an Ottoman dessert. But because Ottoman is mostly equivalent with ?Turks?, the modern day Greeks and Arabs don?t like this suggestion.

Greeks claim that Turks had borrowed Baklava from Byzantine . It has been suggested that Baklava is very like the dessert kopte or kopton (koptoplakous) very much liked during the Byzantine period.

Ingredients:-

30 sheets of phyllo pastry

500g (17 oz.) chopped mix of walnuts, pistachios and almonds

1 tsp cinnamon powder

1 tsp grounded clove

1 tsp sugar

300g butter, melted (10 oz.)

For the syrup:-

650g sugar (23 oz.)

400g water (14 oz.)

80g glucose or honey (2.8 oz.)

zest of 1 lemon or orange

1 cinnamon stick

Method:-

1. To prepare this baklava recipe, start by melting the butter in a saucepan over low heat, being careful not to burn it. Using a cooking brush butter the bottom and sides of a baking pan. (For this baklava recipe you will need a large baking pan approx. 40*30cm). Begin by layering the sheets of phyllo on the bottom of the baking dish to form the base of the baklava. Layer the sheets one at a time, making sure to sprinkle each one with melted butter.

2. In a large bowl, mix the chopped nuts, the sugar, the cinnamon and grounded clove. Sprinkle the nut mixture over the phyllo base and continue forming the top of the baklava. Top the nuts with the rest phyllo sheets, sprinkling each one with melted butter and brush the top of the baklava with enough butter.

3. Place the baklava in the fridge for 15 minutes to make it easier to cut into pieces. Remove the baklava from the fridge and using a sharp knife cut the cut the pastry all the way down into pieces. If you fancy the taste of clove, place one whole clove berry into the middle of each baklava piece and sprinkle the top with some cold water.

4. Place the baklava in preheated oven at 150C on the lower rack (both top and bottom heating elements on) and bake for about 1 hour 30 minutes, until all the phyllo layers are crisp and golden.

5. Prepare the syrup for the baklava. Into a small pot mix all the ingredients for the syrup and bring to the boil. Boil fro about 2 minutes until the sugar is dissolved. As soon as the baklava is ready, ladle slowly the hot syrup over the hot baklava, enabling it to be absorbed.

6. Let the baklava cool down completely and serve after the syrup is absorbed. Enjoy!