



sharing our Greek culinary heritage

Miltiadis Polyhronidis shares his Yiayia Sofia's Saraigli

A recipe from Kozani, Greece

You will need...

For the syrup

4 cups sugar

4 cups warm water

1/2 lemon, sliced into 4-5 rounds

For the saraigli

2 packets fillo pasty (375g per packet)

350g walnuts, ground (not too fine, not too coarse, somewhere in between)

1 teaspoon cinnamon (add more or less, to your taste)

50g caster sugar (less, if you prefer)

100ml extra virgin olive oil (EVOO)

500g unsalted butter, clarified

Equipment

- Round 38cm diameter pan
- Piece of curtain dowel - 45cm long and 5-8mm in diameter
- Wide pastry brush - 7.5cm wide

Preparing the syrup

- Cut 4 thin-medium slices of lemon from the cut side of half a lemon
- Put the sugar, warm water and lemon slices into a medium sized pot (the warm water will help the sugar dissolve more quickly)
- Squeeze a little lemon juice from the remaining lemon piece into the pot
- Stir the syrup ingredients until the sugar dissolves completely
- Bring the syrup ingredients to the boil
- Boil until the bubbles in the syrup are large and the syrup feels thick and sticky between your fingers (just quickly dip the tip of your index finger into the syrup and then rub your index finger and thumb together to test the syrup)
- Allow the syrup to cool completely and remove the lemon slices

Preparing the basting mixture

- Place the butter in a small pot over **very low heat**
- Allow the butter to melt completely. The butter will form two layers: a bottom layer of white milk solids and a top layer of clarified butter
- Very slowly pour the clarified butter into a bowl, being very careful not to allow any of the milk solids to follow
- Add the EVOO to the clarified butter and mix well

Preparing the nut mixture

- Combine the walnuts, sugar and cinnamon together
- Taste the nut mixture for spice and add more cinnamon if needed

Preparing the saraigli

- Baste your pan with the basting mixture - not too heavy, not too light!
- Take 2 sheets of fillo pastry and lay them in front of you lengthways (portrait orientation)
- Place your dowel widthways across the fillo, about 1/3 of the way up from the bottom of the fillo sheet
- Baste the centre of the area of fillo above the dowel with 1-2 heavy brush strokes of the basting mixture
- Fold the lower 1/3 of the fillo over the dowel
- Take a handful of the walnut mixture (approximately 25-30g) and spread it evenly across the entire width of the fillo sheet, just above the dowel
- Holding on to both ends of the dowel, roll the fillo away from you to form a tight log
- Push both ends of the log inwards towards each other, to create a concertina effect in the log

- Keeping the log in this concertina shape by holding both ends of the log in place, carefully remove the dowel
- Keeping the log in the concertina shape, carefully pick it up and lay it down in the centre of the pan, in a tight coil
- Repeat this process and place the next coil in the pan so that it forms a continuous spiral with the first coiled log. Continue until the entire pan is full
- Baste all the coils generously with the basting mixture
- Sprinkle some water on top

Baking the saraigli

- Bake the saraigli at 180°C for about an hour or until it bakes to a deep golden-brown colour
- Remove from the oven and immediately pour 5-6 ladles of cooled syrup over the saraigli

Serving the saraigli

- Wait till all the syrup has been absorbed by the saraigli (1 hour or so) and serve with some iced water or a nice frappé!

...I have to admit, I loved having it even sooner, while it was warm and syrupy!! Pure sweet bliss!!!

Key success tips

- Melt the butter over very low heat, so the clarified butter and milk solids do not remix through any boiling
- Not all of the butter-oil mixture will be used in this preparation. You can refrigerate any excess and keep it for your next fillo bake (good for a year)
- Any left over syrup can also be refrigerated and saved for later use