

empanadas

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Empanadas

Filled, folded pastries baked or fried, found from Galicia through the whole of Latin America with a different dough and filling in every country. Argentine empanadas are baked, wheat-flour, and beef with olive and egg; Colombian ones are fried and made of corn masa; Chilean *pino* includes a whole olive and a piece of hard-boiled egg by convention.

The Argentine baked version is here because it is the most useful to learn.

What makes it work

- **Chill the filling overnight.** A fat-rich beef filling must be solid when it goes into the dough, or it leaks. Argentine cooks always make the *relleno* the day before.
- **Fat in the filling is deliberate.** It melts in the oven and makes the filling juicy. The chill is what keeps it inside.
- **The dough is not flaky.** Wheat flour, a modest amount of fat, and water — worked to a soft, elastic, tortilla-like dough that seals reliably. Puff pastry is a shortcut, and it does not hold the *repulgue*.
- **The *repulgue* is the twisted rope crimp** along the curved edge, and it is both the seal and the traditional signal of what is inside — each filling has its own pattern.
- **Bake very hot: 220 °C, 15 minutes.** Or deep fry at 180 °C for four minutes.

Ingredients

Makes 16.

Dough:

- 500 g all-purpose flour
- 100 g lard, [shortening](#) or butter, melted
- 200 ml warm water
- 10 g fine salt

Beef filling:

- 500 g ground beef, or hand-chopped skirt
- 2 onions, finely diced
- 1 red pepper, diced
- 3 tbsp [olive oil](#)
- 8 g sweet paprika
- 4 g ground cumin
- 2 g chilli flakes
- 2 tsp dried oregano
- 3 [eggs](#), hard-boiled and chopped
- 100 g green [table olives](#), chopped
- 4 spring onions, sliced
- salt and black pepper
- 1 [egg](#), beaten, to glaze

Method

Cook the onions and pepper in the oil over low heat for 15 minutes until sweet. Raise the heat, add the beef, and cook until browned. Stir in the paprika, cumin, chilli, oregano and plenty of salt.

Cool, then refrigerate **overnight**. Fold in the boiled egg, olives and spring onion just before filling.

For the dough, mix the flour and salt, work in the melted fat, then the warm water, and knead five minutes to a smooth soft dough. Rest 30 minutes.

Roll to 2 mm and cut 13 cm rounds.

Put a heaped tablespoon of cold filling on each, damp the rim, fold, and press out the air. Crimp: fold the corner over, then roll the edge over itself in small overlapping folds along the curve.

Chill 20 minutes. Glaze with egg.

Bake **220 °C / 425 °F for 13–16 minutes**, until blistered and gold.

Notes

- **Ham and cheese, chicken, spinach and ricotta, and *humita*** — sweet corn in a béchamel — are the other standard Argentine fillings. See [corn](#).
- Fried empanadas need a slightly wetter dough and are eaten immediately.
- **Freeze raw**, on a tray then bagged, and bake from frozen with five minutes added.

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