

Banica with Leeks & Cheese

Баница со Праз и Сирење

Macedonia - recipe by Dragi Spasovski for EEFC Virtual Camp West Coast 2021

EQUIPMENT

Large skillet

Large mixing bowl

Flour sifter

Rolling pin

Clean tablecloth (see recipe step 2)

Pastry brush

Baking pan 10" x 15"

Small mixing bowl

INGREDIENTS

Dough:

Unbleached white flour – 500 g / 18 oz (1 ¼ lb / 3 c + 2 Tbsp)

Warm water – 350 ml / 1 ⅓ c.

Olive oil, light (NOT extra virgin) – 250 ml / 1 c.

Salt – 1 Tbsp

Filling:

Leeks – 2 medium (about 450 g / 1 lb)

Sour cream – 3-4 Tbsp (45-60 ml)

Feta, cow's milk preferred, but any will do – 200 g / 8 oz

Topping:

Egg – 1

Mineral or sparkling water – 8-10 Tbsp (120-150 ml)

Buttermilk – 8-10 Tbsp (120-150 ml)

Olive oil, light – 2 Tbsp (30 ml)

TO ASSEMBLE:

1. Trim leeks, keeping both green and white parts, cut lengthwise and wash thoroughly under running water to remove any sand or dirt. Chop coarsely. Transfer to the large skillet and set aside.
2. Sift the flour directly into a large bowl, then add salt and combine. Add warm water gradually, mixing the dough with your hand. If the dough is too thin or sticky, add more

- flour. When the dough has come together so that you can handle it, remove to a clean counter or alternatively, to a counter or table spread with a clean tablecloth; or to a large, lightly floured cutting board, and knead until soft, but not sticky. The softer the dough is, the easier it will be to stretch it. Form dough into a ball, return it to the bowl, cover with a towel and let rest for 10 to 15 min.
3. Add cooking oil to the leeks in the skillet and sauté for about 10 min. Remove from heat, season with salt to taste.
 4. Remove the dough from the bowl and knead it for a minute, enough to make a smooth ball. With a sharp knife, divide it into 4 equal pieces. Roll each piece into a smooth ball. Set them aside. Pour some oil into a small dish and set to one side. Take one ball, and using a rolling pin, make a flat circle about 9 to 10 in in diameter. Using the pastry brush, brush the circle on one side with oil, fold it in half, and set aside. Repeat with the remaining three dough balls. When finished rolling and oiling, cover the dough pieces with plastic wrap, then with a cloth, and let them rest for 10 to 15 min.
 5. Stir the sour cream into the sautéed leeks, then crumble the feta cheese and add to the leek mixture. Combine gently. Divide into four equal portions.
 6. Flour your hands and begin to stretch the dough: over your work surface unfold one of the rolled dough circles, place the back of your hands underneath the dough and start pulling and stretching it gently from the middle to the outer edges, eventually laying it on the surface and pulling the edges to thin it out, to form a circle about 25 to 26 inches in diameter. Sprinkle some oil on the top of the sheet, and taking somewhat less than the quarter-portion of the leek-cheese mixture, spread it out with your hands evenly over the sheet. Fold the sides to the center over the filling. Sprinkle more oil over the top, then spread the rest of the quarter-portion of leek-cheese mixture on top. Roll the sheet into a long cylinder that fits the length of your baking pan; place in the pan with the long edge down. Repeat this procedure with the remaining dough pieces, placing them side by side to fill the pan.
 7. Preheat the oven to 450° F.
 8. In a small mixing bowl, whisk together the egg, oil, buttermilk and mineral water. Spoon over the dough rolls in the pan, then brush the topping to distribute evenly across the surface.
 9. Bake for about 30 minutes. Remove from oven, cover with a cloth, and let rest 20 minutes. Cut into pieces and serve with buttermilk or yogurt.

Nazdravje!