

Steve Adams' Sorta-Easy Baklava

Coarsely chop similar amounts of walnuts, pecans, and almonds so that you have a total of about four cups' chopped nuts. Add six crushed Zwieback crackers or a half tube of Town House crackers. A cheap meat or nut grinder does this well (see your local flea market). Whole almonds are very difficult to grind, so I use sliced almonds instead. Add to this ½ cup sugar and one teaspoon cinnamon. Don't get too aggressive if using a food processor or the nut pieces will be too fine and you won't get good results; you want the nut pieces big enough to count...

Melt one-half cup Crisco with one stick of butter (Baklava made with margarine is for sissies). Keep it warm during the remainder of the process and have a wide pastry brush handy.

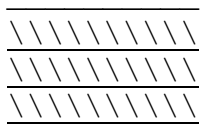
Thaw Filo dough according to directions. I always buy an extra package just-in-case, because most stores will let it thaw and re-freeze it, which introduces moisture into the packages. If your Filo dough gets wet, you'll know it; it will stick together in a soft mushy mess and is worthless (dogs love the stuff, so give the mushy Filo to Fido).

Brush down a 9"x13" pan with butter/Crisco (hereafter referred to as "shortening") and lay two sheets of Filo in the pan. Brush with shortening and repeat twice (you'll have six sheets of dough). Start the oven; pre-heat to 350 degrees.

Spread about 1/3 cup of nut mix evenly on the dough. Cover with two sheets of Filo and brush with shortening. Isn't this fun? Use your fingers to spread the nuts around, but licking is bad manners. Don't let the Filo on the counter get wet!

Keep going until all the nut mixture is gone. Lay an extra two layers of Filo on top and thoroughly brush with shortening. Repeat with two more sheets. Cut the Baklava into three slices lengthwise and then cut diagonally into 1" wide strips.

Your Baklava should look like this in the pan:



Put into oven, set timer for 30 minutes. Prepare syrup by mixing one cup sugar in one-half cup water. When Baklava is almost ready, bring syrup to slow boil for five minutes. If you're good, the Baklava will be nice and brown about the time the five minutes are up. Put one tablespoon of lemon juice in the syrup & stir. Pour hot syrup over hot Baklava (it'll sizzle). When the syrup starts to cover the Baklava, quit. You'll probably have a little left over; get over it. Let cool. Pretend you're Albanian; enjoy.