

PHYLLO DOUGH

(following [this video tutorial](#) from Shereen Pavlides)

353 grams all purpose flour (3 cups)
1 teaspoon kosher salt
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 tablespoon olive oil
2 teaspoons white distilled vinegar
3/4 cup – 15 tablespoons warm water
corn starch – to roll out and dust the dough

Make the dough by adding all ingredients and HALF the amount of water to a KitchenAid type mixer fitted with the dough hook.

Knead for a few minutes, then start adding the other half volume of the water, tablespoon by tablespoon until the dough starts to clean the sides of the bowl. Once a smooth dough forms, remove it from the machine, knead it by hand for a couple of minutes, form a smooth ball and place in a large oiled bowl for one hour.

Divide the dough into 20 equal pieces (mine were 28g each). Place each little ball over a parchment covered baking sheet. Leave for one hour at room temperature.

Start working the dough, first one little ball at a time, following her instructions on the video. My main change was to work with FOUR sheets at a time instead of TEN. I had too much trouble keeping them easier to separate, and decided ten was just too much for a first time. Four sheets at a time worked very nicely. That required 5 full cycles of rolling out to work on all 20 balls of dough. Another change I did was to separate each two sheets of phyllo fully rolled out with parchment paper, because I was afraid keeping them all together would result in severe sticking. I kept them in the fridge for a couple of hours before proceeding with the spanakopita and the crackers.

SPANAKOPITA

(adapted from several sources)

8 sheets of phyllo dough (if using commercial you probably get by with 6)

500 g spinach (preferably not baby spinach)

1 tablespoon olive oil

2 ribs of celery, finely diced

1 shallot, finely diced

salt and pepper to taste

nutmeg to taste

200 g full-fat ricotta cheese

100 g feta cheese, crumbled in large pieces

1 egg, beaten

olive oil spray

Boil water in a very large pan, add the spinach and press it down with a wooden spoon until the leaves wilt, 30 seconds or less. Drain into a large colander and place under running cold water to cool quickly. Drain well – squeeze out any excess water by pressing the spinach down with the wooden spoon, then squeezing with your hands. Using kitchen paper, pat the spinach dry into a compact shape, lay it on a board and roughly chop, then set aside.

Heat the olive oil in a large non-stick frying pan. Add the shallot, celery, and fry over a high-ish heat for 3–4 mins, stirring often, until softened and just starting to brown. Lower the heat, add the chopped spinach and stir for a few minutes to finish drying. Season with salt, pepper and nutmeg, and leave to cool.

Heat oven to 375F and put a baking sheet in to heat up. In a bowl, stir the ricotta into the beaten egg and season with pepper and a pinch of salt.

Lightly oil an 8 inch square baking pan. Lay one or two filo pastry sheets over the pan, spray with olive oil, and add two more, leaving a nice overhang on all sides. The pan should be completely covered, with a pastry overhang all round. Repeat the criss-cross layering with 2 more oiled filo sheets.

Stir the ricotta mixture into the spinach, then crumble in the feta. Lightly stir it in so you leave a few chunky pieces. Spoon this filling into the pan and level it. Bring the pastry sides up and over the filling, then brush a little oil over them. Add one or two more sheets sprayed with olive oil to top the spanakopita.

Bake for 30 to 35 mins until the pastry is crisp and golden. Leave to cool for 10–15 mins. Carefully remove from the pan, slice and serve.