



THE WAY THE COOKIE CRUMBLES

A FOOD BLOG

Chicken Empanadas (adapted from Smitten Kitchen and epicurious)

Makes about 18 empanadas

I didn't actually measure anything in the filling. I had to leave the olives out because Dave hates them.

As I formed each empanada, I put it in the freezer while I worked with the rest. That way the dough didn't get too soft and it baked up flaky.

After forming the empanadas, I baked about half of them immediately. I froze the rest for a couple of months, then baked them straight from the freezer. They were perfect.

Dough:

4½ cups (21.6 ounces) unbleached all-purpose flour
3 teaspoons salt
16 tablespoons (2 sticks) cold unsalted butter, cut into ½-inch cubes
2 large eggs
⅔ cup ice water
2 tablespoons distilled white vinegar

Filling:

3 whole chicken legs, including thighs (2 to 2¼ pounds total)
1 teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon black pepper
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
2 large onions, halved lengthwise, diced
2 large garlic cloves, minced
2 Turkish bay leaves or 1 California
⅓ cup (1½ ounces) finely diced Spanish chorizo
½ teaspoon Spanish smoked paprika (not hot)
¼ cup chopped pitted green olives
¼ cup golden raisins
½ cup dry white wine
½ cup reduced-sodium chicken broth

Egg wash:

1 egg
water
salt

1. For the dough: Mix the flour and salt in a large bowl; blend in the butter with your fingertips or a pastry blender until the mixture resembles coarse meal with some roughly pea-sized butter lumps. Beat together the egg, water, and vinegar in a small bowl. Add it to the flour mixture, stirring until just incorporated. The mixture will look shaggy. Turn out the mixture onto a lightly floured surface and gather it together, kneading gently with heel of your hand once or twice, just enough to bring the dough together. Form the dough into two flat rectangles and chill them, each wrapped in plastic wrap, at least 1 hour or overnight.

2. For the filling: Pat the chicken dry and season it with salt and pepper. Heat 1 tablespoon oil in a 12-inch heavy skillet over medium-high heat until hot but not smoking, then add the chicken, skin-side down. Cook it without moving for about 3 minutes, until dark golden brown, then turn it and continue cooking for another 3 minutes. Remove the chicken from the pan and set it aside.
3. Add the onions, garlic, and bay leaves to the skillet and sauté, stirring frequently, until the onions are softened, 4 to 5 minutes. Add the chorizo and paprika and cook, stirring, for 1 minute. Add the olives, raisins, wine, and broth and bring the mixture to a boil, stirring and scraping up any brown bits. Return the chicken to the skillet along with any juices accumulated on the plate, then reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer, covered, turning the chicken once, until the chicken is tender, 25 to 30 minutes total.
4. Transfer the chicken to a clean plate. The sauce remaining in the skillet should be the consistency of heavy cream; if it isn't, briskly simmer until it's slightly thickened, about 5 minutes. When the chicken is cool enough to handle, discard the skin and bones and coarsely chop the meat. Stir the chicken back into the sauce. Discard the bay leaves and season the filling with salt and pepper. Let the filling cool for 30 minutes, uncovered.
5. To form and bake the empanadas: Adjust an oven rack to the middle position and preheat the oven to 400°F. Line a baking pan with a parchment paper or a silicone mat. Divide the dough into 24 equal pieces and from each into a disc. Keeping remaining pieces covered, roll out 1 piece on a lightly floured surface with a lightly floured rolling pin into a 5-inch round (about 1/8 inch thick).
6. Spoon about 2 tablespoons filling onto the center of each round of dough and fold the dough in half, enclosing the filling. Press the edges together to seal, then crimp decoratively with your fingers or the tines of a fork. Transfer the empanada to the prepared pan. Repeat with the remaining dough. You might have extra dough.
7. Beat the egg with 1 tablespoon of water and a pinch of salt. Brush the empanadas with the egg wash, then bake one sheet at a time until the empanadas are golden brown, about 25 minutes. Transfer them to a cooling rack and let them cool for at least 10 minutes. Serve warm.