

Spanakopita

Phyllo layers:

Use store bought phyllo dough. (14" x 9" sheets)
7 tablespoons extra virgin oil
8 ounces phyllo dough, thawed
1 ½ ounces pecorino romano cheese grated (¾ cup)
2 teaspoons sesame seeds (optional)

Filling:

20 ounces curly leaf spinach, stemmed
¼ cup water
8 ounces feta cheese, crumbled (2 cups)
¾ cup whole milk greek yogurt
4 scallions, sliced thin
2 large eggs, lightly beaten
¼ cup minced fresh mint
2 tablespoons minced fresh dill
3 garlic cloves, minced
1 teaspoon grated zest plus 1 tablespoon juice
1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
½ teaspoon pepper
¼ teaspoon salt
1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper

For the filling:

Place spinach and water in a bowl, cover and microwave until spinach is wilted and volume is halved about 5 minutes. Remove bowl from microwave and keep covered for 1 minute. Transfer spinach to colander and gently press to release liquid. Transfer spinach to cutting board and chop coarse. Return to colander and press again. Stir spinach and remaining ingredients in bowl until thoroughly combined.

For the phyllo layers:

Adjust oven rack to lower middle position and heat oven to 425 degrees. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. Using pastry brush, lightly brush 14 by 9 inch rectangle in center of parchment with oil to cover same size as phyllo. Lay 1 phyllo sheet on oiled parchment and brush thoroughly with oil. Repeat with 9 more phyllo sheets brushing each with oil (you should have 10 layers of phyllo). Spread spinach mixture evenly on phyllo, leaving a quarter inch border on all sides. Cover spinach with 6 more phyllo sheets, brushing each with oil and sprinkling with about 2 tablespoons pecorino. Lay 2 more sheets on top. Brushing each with oil (these layers should not be sprinkled with pecorino).

Working from center outward, use palms of your hands to compress layers and press out any air pockets. Using a sharp knife, score spanakopita through top 3 layers of phyllo into 24 equal pieces. Sprinkle with sesame seeds (if using). Bake until phyllo is golden and crisp. 20 to 25 minutes. Let spanakopita cool on sheet for at least 10 minutes or up to 2 hours. Slide spanakopita still on parchment, to cutting board. Cut into squares and serve.