

Spinach Cheese Empanadas

<http://userealbutter.com/2012/07/03/spinach-cheese-empanadas-recipe/>
partly based on [this recipe](#)

empanada dough

1 cup water
3/4 cup lard (I used butter)
2 3/4 cups flour
2 tsp salt
pinch paprika

spinach cheese filling

1 tbsp butter
2 tbsps olive oil
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 tsp chile powder
5-8 oz fresh spinach, stems removed, washed, chiffonade
1 cup ricotta cheese
8 oz whole milk mozzarella cheese, or similar white cheese such as queso quesadilla, shredded or crumbled
2 tbsps Parmesan cheese, grated
salt and pepper to taste

Make the dough: Heat water and lard (butter) in a medium saucepan over medium heat until lard (butter) has melted. Mix flour and salt in a large mixing bowl and make a well in the center and sprinkle a pinch of paprika in the well. Pour a little of the warm liquid in and stir with fingertips to make a wet paste. Pour in remaining liquid and work the flour into the dough with your hand until you get a wet, oily dough. Wrap the dough in plastic and refrigerate for at least 2 hours.

Make the filling: Heat the butter and olive oil in a medium saucepan or sauté pan over medium-high heat until melted. Add the minced garlic and chile powder (not cayenne, but red *chile* powder) and sauté until the garlic becomes fragrant. Add the spinach and sauté until all the greens are wilted. Remove from heat. Stir the ricotta cheese, mozzarella cheese, Parmesan cheese, and cooked spinach together. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Assemble the empanadas: Preheat the oven to 375°F. Tear off pieces of dough to roll about 12 large or 24 small balls of dough. Using a rolling pin, roll out dough balls on lightly floured surface into circles with a 3/8-inch thickness. Just don't roll the dough too thin because this filling (unlike the meat filling in the [Argentine empanadas](#)) can expand and burst the pastry if the dough is too thin or the empanada is over-stuffed with filling. Place 2-3 tbsp of filling in the center of each dough circle (depending on the size of the empanadas you are making). Fold over and press edges firmly to seal. Rope pinch the edges tightly. In this case, a good tight seal will also prevent oozing of cheese during

the baking process. Place empanadas on cookie sheet and bake until golden brown, 20-25 minutes. Makes 12 large or 24 small empanadas.