

**Loukoumades Me Mayia
(Honey Puffs with Yeast)**

These popular honey puffs are served in kafenia or coffee shops throughout Greece and Cyprus and fetes. They are accompanied with a glass of cold water or a small cup of thick Greek coffee. They are fried and sprinkled with icing sugar or dipped in cold honey. As they come out hot from deep frying they are sprinkled with cinnamon and sometimes chopped walnut, almond or pistachio nuts.

Serve them with a good quality honey.

The secret of loukoumades is to make the dough in such a way that when fried they are light like a feather. There are variations to the recipe as some people use yeast and others use yoghurt or milk and eggs to make the dough. Whichever way you make them they are still tasty especially on a winter's night next to the fire.

Ingredients

15g fresh yeast or 7g dried yeast
350ml warm water
½ tsp sugar
250g plain flour
½ tsp salt
1 ltr sunflower oil for deep frying

For coating-

100g honey and 1 tbsp ground cinnamon
Or 50g icing sugar
Or 50g pistachio nuts

For the syrup-

350g honey
350g sugar
300ml water
1 cinnamon stick
3-4 cloves
Rind of 1 lemon
1 tsp lemon juice



Makes 45-50

Method

- In a bowl, dissolve the fresh yeast in 100g warm water, add the sugar to activate it and let it stand in a warm area for 10-15 minutes until it starts to froth.
- Sift the flour and salt into a bowl and mix the dissolved yeast or the dried yeast into the flour.
- Add the warm water beating it with a wooden spoon until the batter becomes thick, smooth and elastic. To test whether the batter is sufficiently smooth and elastic pull some of it from the bowl, it should not break as it stretches.
- Cover with a thick towel and leave in a warm area for at least 2 ½ hours until it rises and almost doubles in size and bubbles appear on the surface.
- To make the syrup, put the honey, sugar and water, cinnamon, cloves, lemon rind and juice in a large pan and boil for 5 minutes. Stir and allow the mixture to cool.
- Heat the oil in a pan until it is very hot but not smoking or use a deep fryer at 180°C.
- Have a cup of cold water close to wet a teaspoon to avoid the dough sticking to it. Take a teaspoon of dough and using your hand push it down and drop into the oil.
- Fry the loukoumades until they puff, about 10-15 seconds and rise to the surface and become golden brown. Turn them over to get an even colour and fry for a further minute.
- Remove them with a slotted spoon and place them on a serving plate laid with kitchen paper. Repeat the process, wetting the teaspoon every time and fry 7-8 loukoumades at a time.
- Serve immediately 5-6 loukoumades on each plate. Pour over honey and sprinkle with a generous amount of cinnamon. You can also serve them with icing sugar. Alternatively drop them in the honey syrup for 1 minute, remove with a slotted spoon and serve them sprinkled with chopped pistachio nuts.