

Spinach Pisi (Turkish Fried Dough)

Crispy Turkish spinach pisi - golden fried dough pockets filled with savory spinach and béchamel. Easy recipe with step-by-step instructions.

20 min

PREP

10 min

COOK

30 min

TOTAL

6

SERVINGS

Easy

DIFFICULTY

Spinach Pisi (Turkish Fried Dough)

Ingredients

- 1.5 lb spinach
- 1 tsp black pepper
- 1 tsp chili flakes
- 3 cup sunflower oil
- 2 bread dough

Instructions

- 1 Prepare the spinach**

Wash 1.5 pounds fresh spinach thoroughly in cold water to remove all dirt and grit. Bring a large pot of salted water to a rolling boil over high heat.
- 2** Add the spinach to the boiling water and cook uncovered for 2-3 minutes until completely wilted and bright green. Drain immediately in a colander and rinse with cold water to stop cooking.
- 3** Squeeze the spinach firmly with clean kitchen towels or your hands to remove as much water as possible - it should feel almost dry. Chop roughly into bite-sized pieces and set aside.
- 4 Make the dough**

Combine 3 cups all-purpose flour and 1 teaspoon salt in a large bowl. Add 1 teaspoon olive oil and gradually mix in $\frac{3}{4}$ cup warm water until a soft dough forms.
- 5** Knead the dough on a lightly floured surface for 5-6 minutes until smooth and elastic. Cover with a damp towel and let rest for 15 minutes.
- 6 Prepare for frying**

Heat oil to 350°F (175°C) in a deep heavy-bottomed pan or Dutch oven - the oil should be at least 2 inches deep. Line a plate with paper towels for draining.
- 7 Shape the pisi**

Divide the dough into 2 equal portions. Roll each portion into a thin circle about $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch thick on a lightly floured surface.
- 8** Spread the chopped spinach evenly over one circle of dough, leaving a $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch border around the edges. Place the second circle on top and press the edges firmly to seal.

- 9 **Fry the pisi**
Carefully slide the filled dough into the hot oil using a large spatula. Fry for 2-3 minutes until the bottom is golden brown and puffed.
- 10 Flip carefully with a slotted spoon and fry the other side for 2-3 minutes until golden brown and crispy all over. Remove and drain on paper towels for 1 minute.
- 11 Cut into wedges and serve immediately while hot and crispy.

Tips

Use room temperature ingredients when making dough - cold ingredients don't combine as smoothly and can result in tough pastry.

Don't overmix the dough, especially unleavened versions. Mix just until ingredients come together to avoid developing too much gluten.

Squeeze excess water from cooked spinach using clean kitchen towels or paper towels - moisture is the enemy of crispy pisi.

Keep assembled but unfried pisi covered with damp cloth to prevent drying while you work in batches.

Test oil temperature with a small piece of dough first - if it browns too quickly, lower the heat and wait for temperature to stabilize.

Don't overcrowd the pan when frying - this drops oil temperature and results in greasy, soggy pastries.

Place fried pisi on paper towels immediately to absorb excess oil, then transfer to wire rack to maintain crispiness.

Seal dough edges firmly by pressing with fork tines or crimping with fingers - loose seals lead to filling leakage during frying.