

Spanakopita (Spinach Pie)

Spanakopita, Greek spinach pie with feta cheese, is a classic Greek dish made with flaky phyllo sheets layered with a savory spinach and feta cheese filling. Spanakopita (pronounced spah-nah-KO-pee-tah) can be made as a "pie," or *pita*, and cut into squares, or as individual phyllo triangles.

Ingredients

For the Filling:

- 2 1/2 pounds spinach, fresh or frozen, chopped
- 3/4 cup olive oil, divided
- 4 large onions, diced
- 2 bunches green onions, diced
- 1/2 cup coarsely chopped parsley
- 1/2 cup coarsely chopped fresh dill, or 3 tablespoons dried dill
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- Kosher salt, to taste
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1/2 pound feta cheese, crumbled
- 4 large eggs, lightly beaten
- 1/2 pound ricotta cheese, or cottage cheese

For the Phyllo

- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- 1 pound phyllo pastry sheets

Steps to Make It

Note: While there are multiple steps to this recipe, this spanakopita dish is broken down into workable categories to help you better plan for preparation and baking.

Prepare the Filling

1. Gather the ingredients.

2. Wash and drain the chopped spinach very well. If using frozen spinach, thaw completely and squeeze out excess water. The spinach should be dry before you begin cooking.
3. Heat 1/2 cup of the olive oil in a deep sauté pan or large dutch oven. Sauté the onions and green onions until tender.
4. Add the spinach, parsley, and dill, and cook for 5 to 10 minutes until the spinach is wilted and heated through.
5. Add the nutmeg and season with salt and pepper. The spinach mixture should be on the dry side; if using frozen spinach, you will want to cook it until any excess moisture evaporates. Remove from the heat and set the spinach mixture aside to cool.
6. In a large mixing bowl, combine the feta, eggs, and ricotta cheese.
7. Add the cooled spinach mixture and mix until combined.

Prepare the Phyllo

1. Gather the ingredients.
2. Combine the melted butter with the remaining 1/4 cup olive oil in a bowl. Using a pastry brush, lightly grease two 9- by 12-inch rectangular pans.

3. Carefully remove the phyllo roll from the plastic sleeve. Most packages come in 12- by 18-inch sheets when opened fully.
4. Using kitchen scissors or a sharp knife, cut the sheets in half to make two stacks of 9- by 12-inch sheets. To prevent drying, cover one stack with wax paper and a damp paper towel while working with the other.

Make the Spanakopita

1. Preheat the oven to 350 F. Layer about 10 sheets of phyllo on the bottom of each pan making sure to brush each sheet with the butter-olive oil mixture before layering the next.
2. Add half of the spinach mixture to each pan in an even layer and press with a spatula to flatten.
3. Layer another 10 phyllo sheets on top of the spinach mixture in each pan, making sure to brush each sheet well with the butter-olive oil mixture.
4. Before baking, score the top layer of the phyllo (making sure not to puncture the filling) to enable easier cutting of pieces later. (You can place the pan in the freezer to harden the top layers and then use a serrated knife to make the cutting easier.)

5. Bake until the pie turns a deep golden brown, 20 to 25 minutes. If the pie is frozen when you put it in the oven, you will need approximately 45 minutes of cooking time.

6. Let cool for a few minutes and then slice, serve, and enjoy.