

Spicy Potato Samosas

Aloo Samosa

Makes 12 pastries

Bite into a freshly fried samosa, and you'll realize that the quintessential Indian snack is no simple food. When made well, the crisp shell is delicately rich and flaky. The filling inside varies, but a tangy potato mixture is the most common. Many believe that samosas arrived in India via the ancient trade routes that linked West Asia with Central Asia and South Asia. In fact, related pastries are called *sanbusak* in the Middle East and *samsa* in Central Asia.

Samosas are fabulous alone or with a dab of mint and/or tamarind chutney. Add some chai tea, and you have a perfect snack. Or serve them with a salad for a great lunch. Many cooks use russet (baking) potatoes, but I prefer Yukon Golds for their flavor and cheery yellow color. Choose potatoes of the same size to ensure that they're done at the same time.

FILLING

10 ounces Yukon Gold potatoes (2 medium)

1½ tablespoons canola oil

1¼ teaspoons coriander seed

½ teaspoon cumin seed

¼ cup finely chopped yellow onion

1 teaspoon minced fresh ginger

¼ cup frozen green peas, thawed

1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh cilantro

Generous ½ teaspoon salt

¼ teaspoon cayenne

Heaping ½ teaspoon garam masala (page 219)

1½ teaspoons fresh lemon or lime juice

½ pound Simple Flaky Pastry (page 113)

Canola or peanut oil, for deep-frying

⅔ cup Fresh Mint Chutney (page 219) (optional)

1⅓ cups Tamarind and Date Chutney (page 220) (optional)

1. To make the filling, put the potatoes in a pot and add water to cover by 1¼ inches. Bring to a boil over high heat and boil for about 20 minutes, or until the potatoes are tender. Test by piercing each with a knife. Drain and briefly set aside to cool, then slip off their

skins. Cut out any unsightly eyes. Allow the potatoes to cool completely and firm up (refrigerate them overnight, if you want) before cutting them into ¼ to ½-inch cubes. You should have a generous 1½ cups. Set aside.

2. Heat the oil in a medium skillet over medium-high heat. Add the coriander and cumin seeds and fry for about 30 seconds, until very fragrant and slightly darkened. Add the onion and ginger, and cook, stirring constantly, for about 2 minutes, or until soft, compacted, and frothy. Add the potatoes and cook, stirring frequently, for about 4 minutes, or until a number of the pieces are tinged golden brown.

Remove from the heat and stir in the peas and cilantro. Sprinkle on the salt, cayenne, and garam masala. Stir and finish with the lemon juice. Cool for a few minutes, taste, and make any flavor adjustments. Aim for a slightly intense flavor because it will mellow a tad. Transfer to a bowl and set aside to cool completely before using. You should have about 1⅔ cups. (The filling can be prepared up to

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