

Shrimp and Cheese Empanadas

Ingredients (Makes 10-12 empanadas)

For the Dough:

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- 4 tablespoons butter (cold, cubed)
- 1 egg
- ⅓ cup cold water (adjust as needed)
- 1/2 teaspoon white vinegar

For the Filling:

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- ½ pound shrimp (peeled, deveined, and chopped)
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ teaspoon smoked paprika
- ½ teaspoon cumin
- ¼ teaspoon chili flakes (optional)
- Salt & black pepper to taste
- 1 tablespoon lime juice
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh cilantro (optional)
- ½ cup shredded mozzarella (or Oaxaca cheese for authenticity)
- ¼ cup cream cheese (for extra creaminess)

For Frying/Baking:

- 1 egg (for egg wash, if baking)
- Oil for frying (if deep-frying)

Instructions

1. Make the Dough

1. In a bowl, mix the flour, salt, and baking powder.
2. Add the cold butter and use your fingers or a pastry cutter to blend it in until crumbly.
3. Mix in the egg, then slowly add cold water and vinegar until the dough comes together.

4. Knead for 2-3 minutes until smooth, then cover and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes.

2. Cook the Shrimp Filling

1. Heat olive oil in a pan over medium heat.
2. Add garlic and cook until fragrant (about 30 seconds).
3. Stir in the shrimp, paprika, cumin, chili flakes, salt, and pepper. Cook for about 2-3 minutes until shrimp turns pink.
4. Remove from heat and stir in the lime juice and cilantro. Let it cool slightly.
5. Mix in the mozzarella and cream cheese until evenly combined.

3. Assemble the Empanadas

1. Roll out the dough on a floured surface to about 1/8-inch thick.
2. Cut out circles (about 4-5 inches wide).
3. Place a spoonful of shrimp and cheese filling in the center of each round.
4. Fold the dough over to form a half-moon and press the edges. Seal by crimping with a fork or twisting the edges.

4. Cook the Empanadas

Option 1: Deep-Frying (Crispy & Golden)

- Heat oil to 350°F (175°C).
- Fry the empanadas in batches for 3-4 minutes per side until golden brown.
- Drain on paper towels.

Option 2: Baking (Healthier & Still Delicious)

- Preheat the oven to 375°F (190°C).
- Place empanadas on a parchment-lined baking sheet.
- Brush with egg wash and bake for 20-25 minutes until golden.