Bread & baking / Türkiye

Börek (Turkish Phyllo Pastry)

Tissue-thin sheets of yufka phyllo layered in spirals with salty white cheese and wilted spinach, brushed with eggy milk between every crackling layer — baked until the exterior shatters into translucent flakes while the interior stays moist, savory, and molten.

Time 75 min **Servings** 4

What you'll need.

- ☐ 100 parts Yufka sheets or thin phyllo dough (thawed if frozen)
- ☐ 40 parts White Turkish cheese (beyaz peynir) or Greek feta, crumbled
- ☐ 30 parts Fresh spinach, washed and roughly chopped
- ☐ 15 parts Eggs
- ☐ 20 parts Whole milk (for brushing mixture)
- ☐ 25 parts Olive oil or melted butter (for brushing and filling)
- ☐ 2 parts Dried red chilli flakes and black pepper

Let's make it.

01 If using fresh spinach, place in a dry skillet over high heat for 2 minutes until wilted. Transfer to a clean kitchen towel and squeeze hard — the spinach must be as dry as possible or it will make the börek soggy. Roughly chop the squeezed spinach. Combine with crumbled cheese, chilli flakes, and black pepper in a bowl. Mix until evenly combined. Do not add salt — the cheese provides enough.

02 Whisk together the eggs, milk, and olive oil in a bowl until completely combined. This brushing mixture is what makes the börek layers fuse into a coherent pastry rather than staying as separate dry sheets. It should be pale yellow, slightly frothy, and pourable. Prepare this just before assembling.

03 Brush a 30x20cm baking dish with the egg-milk mixture. Lay a sheet of yufka in the dish, letting it overhang the sides. Brush generously with the egg mixture. Repeat with 2 more sheets, brushing each. Spread the filling across the center in an even layer. Fold the overhanging edges over the filling. Layer 3 more sheets on top, brushing each generously. The top layer should be brushed last. For a cigar or spiral börek, lay filling along the long edge of a sheet and roll tightly, then coil into the dish.

04 Preheat the oven to 190°C (375°F). Brush the top of the börek generously with the remaining egg-milk mixture and scatter sesame seeds if desired. Bake for 30–35 minutes until the top is a deep, uniform golden-brown and the pastry sounds hollow when tapped. The edges should be pulling away from the dish slightly. Rest 5 minutes before slicing — this allows the layers to set slightly so the börek holds its shape when cut.

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Servings are an estimate; check quantities in the source recipe.
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