

Buenos Aires Beef Empanadas

At Tierra Negra Cooking Classes in Buenos Aires, Argentina, we had hands-on experience learning how easy it is to make empanadas. Chef instructor Manuel Escalante Posse says beef empanadas always include olives and onions, but other ingredients can be added, such as hard-cooked egg, potatoes, or raisins. Here's his recipe with a few adaptations. If you need a shortcut, skip making the empanadas dough and substitute purchased refrigerator dough used for pizza crust, such as Trader Joe's or Pillsbury. Makes 12 empanadas.

Beef filling:

2 tablespoons butter
1 tablespoon olive oil
1¼ cups chopped onion (about 2 medium)
1 pound lean ground beef (or beef sirloin chopped into ¼ to ½" pieces – ask the butcher to do this for you)
1 teaspoon chili flakes
2 teaspoons ground cumin
2 tablespoons mild paprika (or sweet paprika or Hungarian paprika)
1/3 cup chopped green onion, green part only (about 4)
½ cup pitted, chopped green olives
Optional: 2 chopped hard-cooked eggs, ¼ cup raisins, or ½ cup cooked, diced potato
Salt and pepper
Hot sauce for serving

1. Melt butter and oil in large skillet over medium-low heat. Add onions and a pinch of salt; sweat the onions until translucent but not browned, about 10 minutes. Add beef and cook for 1 minute, then add chili flakes, cumin, and paprika. Cook beef until no longer pink but not dry.
2. Add green onions, stir, and turn off the heat. Add olives and optional eggs or raisins or potatoes, if using. Taste, add salt and/or pepper as needed.
3. Set aside and proceed with Empanadas Dough.

Empanadas Dough:

2¾ cups all purpose flour plus extra for rolling
1 teaspoon salt
½ cup water
1 tablespoon olive oil
2 tablespoons butter
1 egg, beaten

1. Stir together flour and salt in large bowl. Add water, oil, and butter. Use a wooden spoon or your fingers to combine the ingredients until crumbly. Put dough on table and knead for 10 minutes or until it springs back slightly when pressed with fingertips. Cover with plastic wrap and place in refrigerator for 30 minutes to relax the dough.
2. Preheat oven to 425 degrees.



Traveler's Table

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Variations:

Empanadas can be filled with all sorts of goodness:

- ❖ Grated mozzarella, chopped tomatoes, basil
- ❖ Diced ham and grated cheese
- ❖ Cooked, diced butternut squash and frozen, thawed corn kernels
- ❖ Cooked, diced chicken and sautéed mushrooms

Cook's tips:

Manuel says that empanadas can be frozen uncooked, then baked straight from the freezer in a preheated 425 degree oven. Alternatively, baked empanadas can be frozen and reheated in a 350 degree oven.

3. Cut the dough into 12 pieces. Sprinkle some flour on the table or board, and use a rolling pin to roll each piece into a circle about 6 inches in diameter. Dust them with flour as you stack them so they don't stick together.
4. Put one disc on the table and add about $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of filling in the center of the disc. With your finger, put water on one half of the disc, then fold it in half to close it. Seal the dough by crimping the edges to look like a rope or press with the tines of a fork.
5. Place empanadas on baking sheet and brush with beaten egg. Bake in preheated oven for 15 to 20 minutes or until browned. Serve with hot sauce.