

PURIM

Purim is celebrated on the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the Hebrew lunar month of Adar. This year, 2013, it begins at sunset February 23 through sunset February 24.

The name Purim comes from the word "Pur", which means lot (as in lottery). "Lots" were small pieces of pottery used in games of chance in ancient times.

Purim will be celebrated for ever. The Talmud tells us that Purim will be celebrated even after the Mashiach (Messiah) comes, but other holidays will not, as there will be no reason for them.



Queen Esther with Mordecai Mosaic, Lillian Broca

The cookies are often called "Hamantashen" which means "Haman's pockets" in Yiddish. Some say that Haman wore a three-cornered hat, and that is why the cookie is triangular.

In Hebrew, the pastry is called "Oznei Haman" which means Haman's ears. This name may have come from the tale which says that when Haman entered the King's treasury, he was bent over with shame and humiliation (literally with clipped ears).

PURIM COOKIE RECIPE

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup sugar
- 1 1/2 cups butter, softened
- 2 eggs
- 6 tablespoons orange juice
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 4 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 (12 ounce) can poppy seed filling (or any pie filling)



DIRECTIONS

In a large bowl, cream together the butter and sugar until smooth. Beat in the eggs one at a time, then stir in the orange juice and vanilla. Mix in the baking powder, and then gradually stir in the flour until the dough forms a ball. Cover and refrigerate at least 2 hours or overnight.

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F (190 degrees C). Grease cookie sheets.

On a lightly floured surface, roll the dough out to 1/4 inch thickness. Cut into 3 inch circles using a cookie cutter or drinking glass. Place circles on the prepared cookie sheets. Spoon 1 teaspoon of filling onto the center of each circle. (Any more and it will ooze out.) Pinch the sides of each circle to form a triangle, covering as much of the filling as possible. The cookies may be frozen on the cookie sheets, if desired, to help retain their shape while cooking.

Bake for 8 to 10 minutes in the preheated oven, until light golden brown. These are best undercooked slightly. Cool on the baking sheet for a few minutes before removing to wire racks to cool completely.