



The way Christina and Mike embraced their potato-laden Irish-Catholic heritage last month so inspired me that I found myself yearning to share a recipe brimming with Jewishness. I picked hamantaschen because they have such an amusing name, a great story and taste amazing. Plus they resemble fancy little French pastries and look way harder to make than they are.

Hamantaschen go hand in hand with the very joyous holiday of Purim, which this year falls on March 19. (It varies because the Jewish calendar is based on the lunar cycle. Go know.) Here is the very abbreviated story of Purim: King Ahasuerus was a Persian ruler who set up a nationwide beauty contest to pick a new queen. He chose Esther, a fabulous and righteous babe whom he didn't know was Jewish. Meanwhile, this bad guy, Haman, a high-ranking anti-Semitic government official, wanted the king to kill all the Jews. Esther found out, went to the king, revealed her religion and foiled the diabolical plot. Haman got hanged and the Jews were happy as clams. (Or perhaps whitefish. Clams are not kosher.)

Purim is a great little kid's holiday. You go to temple and listen to this tale, and when Haman's name is read aloud you scream and try to drown it out—just like on *Pee-wee's Playhouse* (ach, such a nice boy, that Pee). You get noisemakers and you dress up in wacky costumes as Esther or Haman or even something totally unrelated. Then you give presents of food, including hamantaschen, to your



such a tasty purim nosh

friends. In Israel, people goofily take to the streets and bop one another with little plastic hammers—why, I don't know. Oh yeah, hamantaschen either means “Haman's bag,” “Haman's hat” or “Haman's ears” (in which case, the man looked like Spock).

Traditionally, hamantaschen are filled with prunes or poppy seeds, both of which I find repellent. I use no-sugar-added cherry and apricot Polaner All-Fruit with some actual cherries and apricots thrown in. My friend Lori, whose recipe this is, uses melted chocolate, since her philosophy is, “If it isn't chocolate, it's not worth it.” You can reduce the fat by using lowfat yogurt instead of sour cream and/or substituting a banana for one stick of butter (yes, true).

DELIGHTFUL HAMANTASCHEN

(makes about 50)

3 cups flour

3/4 cup sugar

2 tsp. baking powder

1/2 tsp. salt

2 sticks sweet butter, cut up

3 eggs (yolks and whites separated)

1/2 pint sour cream

some form of tasty filling

Preheat your oven to 350 degrees. Dump the dry ingredients into a big bowl, toss in the butter, then mush it all with your hands until the mixture is crumblike. Smush in the egg yolks and sour cream. If it's wicked sticky, add more flour. Now it's dough. Divide it into four parts and knead each really well. Refrigerate for two hours. Then, take out a section and roll it flat, but not too thin (keep sections you're not rolling refrigerated).

Flour the rim of a big (3" across) drinking glass and use it to punch out circles. Drop a wee spoonful of your filling into the center of each circle. Fold the circle into a triangle shape, kind of pulling the bottom up and over the filling and pinching the top together. It's hard to describe, and they sometimes come out mutant. That's okay. Brush the triangles with egg whites for shine and bake on a greased cookie sheet for 10 minutes, or till golden brown. You should only enjoy, darling.



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