

Covening Podcast with Lady Setara March Full Moon 2025

Cakes for the Queen of Heaven aka Kamanu aka Hamantaschen Updated 20250304 7:00 PM PST

In real life there are always compromises....

What recipe you use will depend on your priorities.

For example, if there are dietary restrictions, you probably want to observe those first. Second to that is the question of how "authentic" (aka Ancient Mesopotamian) you want these "Cakes for the Queen of Heaven" to be.

For example, wheat, oat, barley, and rye flour were available in Ancient Mesopotamia. So was millet although some archeologists suggest it was only fed to livestock. I disagree. I think people also ate millet. Millet has been added to the wheat recipes because without millet, the dough wants to rise and does not hold into a triangular shape.

Dairy (butter) was available but it probably came from sheep (or goats) rather than cows.

White wheat flour (in other words, not whole wheat) has been available since about 3000 BCE, therefore acceptable for authenticity, and encouraged. These pastries are too delicate for whole wheat!

The land of the Goddess was the "Land of Milk and Honey" because both milk and honey are derived from female animals and do not require slaughter; which is why our first step is always to mix the honey with the butter.

If you are vegan, you can substitute vegan margarine and either maple syrup or agave syrup (measurement is the same), but those were not part of the Ancient Mesopotamian diet. You could use almond oil instead of margarine...

If you are gluten sensitive, Sorghum comes from Africa and Sweet Rice flour comes from Northern India or China. Both are unlikely Ancient Mesopotamian ingredients, but not impossible. However, arrowroot powder or tapioca powder were definitely unknown. So, again, compromises. It is possible to make Hamantaschen with gluten free flour, no egg, and no arrowroot powder or tapioca powder, but it will take some effort and experience to get the dough to maintain shape and not crack.

Yeast, and baking powder or soda are not necessary for these tarts, therefore optional. When I used baking soda with the gluten-free flour, the texture of the cookie seemed easier to chew, airier, less dense. So I would include that, although it is not traditional. In the wheat flour though, it worked against the shape. My circle cookie-cutters are 2 7/8 inch diameter (7 1/4 centimeters).

Almond flour, cumin, and rosewater are my additions, definitely available in Ancient Mesopotamia.

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The challenge with Hamantaschen is getting it to hold its shape. If you are using white wheat flour and egg, you will have the easiest time with this.

If you are using gluten-free flour and no egg, your dough will have a tendency to crack and not maintain shape. If you are using gluten-free flour I strongly suggest including at least 1/4 cup tapioca starch and also arrowroot powder, whether or not you include egg.

Filling:

Any preserves or jam will do. If you are looking for authenticity: poppy seed slurry, fig jam or preserves, date slurry, grape or raisin slurry, pomegranate preserves (minus the hard seeds), are all acceptable. Quinces, pears, and apples were also grown in Mesopotamia, so those preserves are acceptable as well. I used strawberry preserves, which is what I had on hand. They were delicious.

Traditional Kamanu with White Wheat flour

Ingredients:

To make this Vegan use maple syrup or agave syrup instead of honey, and almond oil or vegan margarine instead of butter, and either almond milk or sweet wine instead of milk.

1 cup white flour
1/4 cup millet flour
1/4 cup extra fine blanched almond flour
1 tablespoon milk
1/4 cup honey or maple syrup or agave syrup
3 tablespoons butter or margarine, melted
1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
1/2 teaspoon rosewater
1/4 teaspoon baking soda
filling for cookies (see above options). 1 teaspoon per tart.

Gluten Free Ingredients, WITH Egg, Arrowroot powder, and Tapioca starch

Ingredients:

See note above about the challenges of getting this dough to maintain shape.

2 cups gluten free flour
gluten free flour example: 3/4 cup sweet rice flour, 1/2 cup amaranth or sorghum flour,
1/4 cup quinoa flour, 1/4 cup arrowroot powder, 1/4 cup tapioca starch
1/4 cup extra fine blanched almond flour
1 egg
1/4 cup honey or maple syrup or agave syrup
3 tablespoons butter or vegan margarine, melted
1/2 teaspoon ground cumin

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1/2 teaspoon rosewater
1/4 teaspoon baking powder (optional)
filling for cookies (see above options). 1 teaspoon per tart.

Gluten Free Ingredients, WITHOUT Egg

Ingredients:

To make this Vegan use maple syrup or agave syrup instead of honey, and almond oil or vegan margarine instead of butter.

See note above about the challenges of getting this dough to maintain shape.

1.75 cup gluten free flour
gluten free flour example: 3/4 cup sweet rice flour, 1/4 cup amaranth or sorghum flour,
1/4 cup quinoa flour, 1/4 cup arrowroot powder, 1/4 cup tapioca starch
1/4 cup extra fine blanched almond flour
1/4 cup honey or maple syrup or agave syrup
3 tablespoons butter or vegan margarine, melted
1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
1/2 teaspoon rosewater
1/4 teaspoon baking powder (optional)
filling for cookies (see above options). 1 teaspoon per tart.

Instructions:

1. Melt butter/margarine to room temperature.
2. Mix honey & butter (or agave syrup and margarine) in a mixing bowl
3. Add egg if you are including it. Mix well.
4. Add flour. Mix.
5. Add almond meal. Mix.
6. Add cumin and rosewater. Mix.
7. Add baking powder and additional liquids from recipe.
8. Mix all ingredients well.
9. Add more flour if needed to shape dough into 1 large ball.
The large ball test will let you know if you need to add a little more flour or a little more liquid.
If the ball is sticky, add more flour. If you can't form a ball, add a little liquid.
10. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Set dough in refrigerator (covered) for about 20 minutes.
11. Remove from fridge and knead the dough to get it workable.
12. Roll dough out to thickness between 1/8 and 1/4 inch.
13. Use cookie cutter to cut circles and remove surrounding dough.
14. Add 1 teaspoon of filling to middle of each circle.
15. Pinch 3 sides of cookie to make triangular volcanoes. Pinching may not be sufficient, you may also need to twist a little or fold to get it to stay in shape.

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16. Reshape and roll remaining dough and cut into circles, etc until all is used.
17. Arrange on cookie sheet.
18. Bake 18 minutes in 350 degree oven, until top edges are golden brown.

WARNING the center jam will cool much slower than the outer cookie, so please give the Hamantaschen enough time to cool before eating to avoid burning your mouth!