

Vegetarian

CAMCA

SAMSA

SOMISA

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Trying to pinpoint a specific country of origin for the humble and delicious Samsa is a bit of a difficult affair, if not somewhat contentious. For the sake of respect (and to avoid being potentially banned from any countries I might offend by misattributing this dish) I'll defer to the broader designation: Samsa stands as a cherished delight across Central Asia, with each locale infusing its own distinct essence into this pastry.

Among the most popular fillings for Samsa are minced lamb and onion, with chicken and beef also being close favorites. However, vegetarian varieties can be found, particularly in

Uzbekistan where, when in season, pumpkin has found its way as a popular filling.

Iwon't claim this recipe to be authentically Uzbek/Central Asian; however, I would consider it a close contender and for those of us who want a warm savory treat this spring, the Samsa has it all.

This recipe is vegetarian, yet with a few minor tweaks, it can be adapted to be vegan. The inclusion of an egg yolk wash is optional and excluding it will not take away from the taste. Additionally, honey can be swapped out for agave syrup.



Butternut Squash Samsa

Ingredients

- 500g butternut squash or pumpkin, grated
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 1 package puff pastry
- 1 egg yolk (for brushing over)
- 5ml honey (optional)
- Dash of chili flakes (optional, adjust to spice tolerance)
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Dash of olive oil for the pan

Instructions

1 Prepare the Filling

- Heat olive oil in a pan over medium heat.
 - Add the grated butternut squash to the pan. Cook for about 5 minutes until it begins to soften.
 - Add the diced onion to the pan. Continue cooking until the onions are soft and translucent.
 - If the mixture becomes dry, add a splash of water to prevent sticking.
 - For a smoother texture, mash the filling together. Alternatively, leave it chunky if preferred.
 - Season the filling with salt and pepper to taste.
- Optional:* Add honey and chili flakes for sweetness and spice. Adjust quantities based on personal preference.
- Allow the filling to cool for approximately 20 minutes.

2 Prepare the Pastry

- Preheat the oven to 220°C.
- Roll out the puff pastry and cut it into squares or triangles, depending on preferred size
- Spoon a portion of the cooled filling onto each piece of pastry.
- Fold the pastry over the filling to create square or triangle shapes, ensuring edges are firmly sealed.

3 Bake the Pastries

- Place the filled pastries on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper.
 - Bake for 20-25 minutes, or until the pastry turns golden brown and crispy.
- Optional:* About halfway through baking, brush the tops of the pastries with beaten egg yolk for a glossy finish.

Enjoy them on their own or accompanied by a yogurt dip, if desired!

