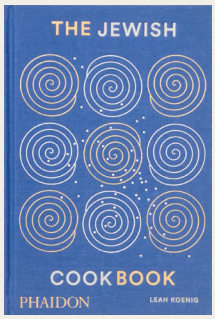
RECIPE COURTESY OF

LEAH KOENIG



Excerpted from the book THE JEWISH COOKBOOK by Leah Koenig.
Copyright © 2018 by Phaidon Press limited.
All rights reserved. Photography by Evan Sung.

HAMANTASCHEN

This sweet, triangular cookie is unarguably the most popular Ashkenazi Purim treat. (They are so popular, kosher cooks devised both dairy and nondairy versions, so the treat could be enjoyed after meat and dairy meals.) The cookie's tricornered shape is meant to evoke the Purim story's notorious villain, Haman. The name HAMANTASCHEN translates from Yiddish as "Haman's pockets," but the cookies are also colloquially described as Haman's hat or ear. This butter-enriched dough yields tender, full-flavored cookies but requires some chilling time in the refrigerator, so plan ahead. Hamantaschen are traditionally filled with poppy seeds, jam, and chopped nuts, but many contemporary cooks spoon everything from dulce de leche and lemon curd to the chocolate-hazelnut spread Nutella into the cookies' centers. Cuban Jewish cooks sometimes spoon guava paste into their hamantaschen, giving them a deliciously tropical flavor.

- **PREPARATION TIME: 45 MINUTES, PLUS CHILLING**
- **COOKING TIME: 20 MINUTES**
- **MAKES: ABOUT 3 DOZEN COOKIES**

2½ cups (350 g) all-purpose (plain) flour, plus more as needed

1 teaspoon baking powder

½ teaspoon kosher salt

1 stick (4 oz/115 g) unsalted butter, at room temperature

¾ cup (150 g) sugar

2 eggs

1½ teaspoons vanilla extract

Prune Lekvar (page 408), Apricot Lekvar (page 408), Poppy Seed Filling (page 396), Honey-Walnut Filling (page 400), or other thick jam, for filling

1. Sift together the flour, baking powder and salt into a medium bowl.

2. In a stand mixer (or using a handheld electric mixer and a large bowl), beat together the butter and sugar on medium speed until pale and fluffy, about 3 minutes. Add the eggs and vanilla and beat to fully combine. Add the flour mixture to the butter mixture in three additions, beating on low after each addition, and scraping down the sides of the bowl as necessary, until a firm but pliable dough comes together. If the dough looks too dry, add water, 1 teaspoon at a time, until the desired consistency is reached. If it looks too wet, add additional flour, 1 tablespoon at a time. Gather the dough and gently knead it a few times, then form into a flat disc. Wrap tightly in plastic wrap (cling film) and refrigerate for at least 3 hours (or overnight).

3. Preheat the oven to 350°F (180°C/Gas Mark 4). Line two large baking sheets with parchment paper. Remove half of the dough from the fridge (keep the other half wrapped and chilled). On a lightly floured surface, using a lightly floured rolling pin, roll the dough to a ¼-inch (6 mm) thickness. Using a 3-inch (7.5 cm) round biscuit cutter or glass, cut out as many rounds as possible and carefully transfer them to the prepared baking sheets. Gather the scraps, reroll, and cut out additional rounds. Spoon 1 rounded teaspoon of the desired filling into the center of each dough round. Fold the left side over on an angle, followed by the right side. Fold the bottom flap up, tucking one end under the side flap to make a pocket (the filling should still be visible in the center). Pinch the corners firmly to seal. Repeat with the remaining dough and filling.

4. Bake the cookies until lightly golden and browned at the corners, 15–18 minutes. Let the cookies cool on the baking sheets for 5 minutes, then transfer to wire racks to cool completely.

PRUNE LEKVAR

Hamantaschen (page 340–343), Flódni (page 358), and a wide variety of other baked goods across Central and Eastern Europe are traditionally filled with lekvar—a thick fruit butter made from prunes, apricots, peaches, and other jammy fruits. Lekvar is also delicious spread on dark bread or spooned over yogurt.

- **PREPARATION TIME: 10 MINUTES**
- **COOKING TIME: 30 MINUTES**
- **MAKES: ABOUT 1½ CUPS (435 G)**

2 cups (300 g) pitted prunes

½ cup (120 ml/4 fl oz) apple juice

4 tablespoons sugar

⅛ teaspoon kosher salt

1 tablespoon honey

½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

1. In a small saucepan, stir together the prunes, ¾ cup (175 ml/6 fl oz) water, the apple juice, sugar, and salt. Bring to a low boil over medium-high heat, then reduce the heat to medium-low, cover, and cook, stirring occasionally, until the prunes are very soft and most of the liquid is absorbed, 25–30 minutes.

2. Remove the pan from the heat, and use a hand blender to blend the fruit into a chunky puree. (Or, transfer to a food processor and process until the desired consistency is reached.) Transfer to a bowl and stir in the honey and cinnamon until fully combined. Let cool completely then store, covered, in the fridge.

APRICOT LEKVAR

Aside from prunes, sweet-tart apricots are the most common fruit used to make this jammy Central and Eastern European fruit butter.

- **PREPARATION TIME: 10 MINUTES**
- **COOKING TIME: 30 MINUTES**
- **MAKES: ABOUT 1¼ CUPS (400 G)**

1½ cups (270 g) dried apricots, roughly chopped

⅓ cup (65 g) sugar

1 teaspoon grated orange zest

1 tablespoon fresh orange juice

Kosher salt

1. In a small sauce pan, stir together the apricots, 1 cup (240 ml/8 fl oz) water, the sugar, orange zest, orange juice, and a pinch of salt. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, then reduce the heat to medium-low, cover, and cook, stirring occasionally, until fruit is very soft and nearly all of the liquid has absorbed, 25-30 minutes.

2. Remove the pan from the heat and use a hand blender to blend the fruit to a chunky puree. (Or, transfer to a food processor and process until the desired consistency is reached.) Let cool completely then store, covered, in the fridge for up to 2 weeks.

POPPY SEED FILLING

This sweet pastry filling is called mohn after the Yiddish word for poppy seeds. In Ashkenazi cuisine, mohn refers specifically to the nutty, blue-black confection. Try spooning it into Hamantaschen (pages 340–343) on Purim, or spread it into the decadent, trilayered Hungarian dessert, Flódni (page 358).

- ▶ **PREPARATION TIME: 10 MINUTES**
- ▶ **COOKING TIME: 15 MINUTES**
- ▶ **MAKES: ABOUT 1½ CUPS (435 G)**

1 cup (140 g) poppy seeds

1 cup (240 ml/8 fl oz) milk or almond milk

½ cup (100 g) sugar

⅓ cup (60 g) finely chopped dried apricots

1 tablespoon orange juice

½ teaspoon finely grated lemon zest

1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice

1 tablespoon (15 g) unsalted butter or vegetable oil

1½ teaspoons vanilla extract

1. Grind the poppy seeds in a spice or coffee grinder, working in batches if necessary, until powdery, 15–20 seconds. In a small saucepan, combine the ground poppy seeds, milk, sugar, and apricots and bring to a simmer over medium heat. Reduce the heat to low and cook, stirring frequently, until the mixture thickens and nearly all of the liquid is absorbed, 7–10 minutes.

2. Stir in the orange juice, lemon zest, lemon juice, butter, and vanilla and continue cooking until absorbed and the mixture is very thick, 3–5 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat and let cool completely. It will continue to thicken as it cools. Store, covered, in the fridge for up to 2 weeks. Let the mixture come back to room temperature before using.

HONEY-WALNUT FILLING

Romanian Jews fill hamantaschen (pages 340–343) with a mixture of honey and walnuts. The nuts are cooked in the honey until caramelized, then pieces of the sticky confection are pinched off and rolled into small balls that get tucked into the tricornered Purim cookie. A bit of lemon zest brightens up the filling's rich honey flavor.

- ▶ **PREPARATION TIME: 5 MINUTES, PLUS COOLING**
- ▶ **COOKING TIME: 5 MINUTES**
- ▶ **MAKES: ABOUT 1½ CUPS (435 G)**

1½ cups (155 g) walnut halves, chopped

½ cup (170 g) honey

¼ cup (50 g) sugar

½ teaspoon kosher salt

½ teaspoon finely grated lemon zest

1. In a medium saucepan, combine the walnuts, honey, sugar, ½ cup (120 ml/4 fl oz) water, and the salt and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat to medium and cook, stirring often, until the honey thickens and turns golden brown, about 5 minutes.

2. Remove from the heat and stir in the lemon zest. Let cool to the touch, stirring occasionally. If desired, transfer to a container and store covered in the fridge, for up to 1 week. Let the mixture come back to room temperature before using.