



**NAME OF THE RECIPE:**

Cottage cheese- and raisin-filled pastry pies  
(branzoici / poale-n brâu)

**PARTICIPANT'S NAME:**

Daniela Ana Ciorna

**CATEGORY:**

Kooky Cooks (18 years old and over)

**PROVINCE:**

Quebec

**STORY:**

I dedicate this recipe to you, my beautiful grandmother Sofia. Oh, how you spoiled us with your linden-blossom tea and your cheese-filled pastry pies (branzoici or poale-n brâu) all through our childhood! Those pies tasted like heaven! Thirty-eight years later, I still clearly remember the taste and smell of branzoici coming out of the wood-burning oven. Your grandmotherly love reigned supreme in our tiny kitchen. Grandma, my heart was filled with emotion last week when I made your branzoici for my partner for the very first time. And what about you, dear reader? Do you have a Proustian madeleine?

**INGREDIENTS:**

**Dough**

- 500 g flour
- 100 g sugar
- 100 g melted butter
- 1 egg + 1 egg yolk
- 25 g fresh (or dry) yeast
- 200 mL milk
- zest of 1 lemon or orange

**Filling**

- 500 g cottage cheese (Western is the best.)
- 2 egg yolks
- sugar to taste

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

**Dough**

1. In a small bowl, mix the yeast with 1 teaspoon of sugar and the warm milk, and let the yeast proof for 5 to 10 minutes. Mix the flour, sugar, egg, egg yolk and lemon or orange zest. Add the yeast. Knead the dough thoroughly (10 minutes), and add the warm melted butter at the very end. Continue kneading the dough until it no longer sticks to the sides of the bowl. If the dough is too firm, gradually add a bit of warm water. Let rise for one hour (the dough should double to twice its volume).
2. While the dough rises, prepare the filling: Using a mixer, mix the egg yolks, sugar, vanilla sugar and extracts of your choice (rum or any other extract), then add the cheese and semolina.



**INGREDIENTS:**

- 2 packets of vanilla sugar
- raisins to taste (optional); while the dough rises, soak the raisins in a bit of warm water with an extract of your choice
- 1 tbsp semolina
- 1 egg yolk for brushing the pastry before putting in oven
- a small amount of icing sugar (optional)

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

3. Divide the dough into three balls. Using a rolling pin, roll out each ball of dough into a square or rectangle, approximately 1 cm thick. Then, cut them into several squares (about 10 x 10 cm), and place one spoonful of cheese filling in the centre of each square. Fold the 4 corners diagonally and pinch. Using a pastry brush, brush each pie with egg yolk. Place the pies on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Leave about 10 cm between each pie. Let stand 15 minutes on the sheet, then bake in oven at 180 °C for 35 to 45 minutes. The pies should be golden. Remove the pies from the oven, and let them cool on a wooden or metal rack. When the pies have cooled, dust them with icing sugar (optional). Serve with milk or herbal tea.