

Milan's Chicken Puff

BY MILAN MATHEW | @MILAN.MATHEW

Chicken puffs, a classic Indian snack, have become my signature dish for Christmas, Thanksgiving, and every party I host. The flaky, golden pastry brings the festive feel of American holidays, while the spiced chicken filling and chutney carries the warmth and flavors of my Malayali, South Asian roots. Growing up in America, I didn't always see my culture reflected in the holiday traditions around me. Over time, I've learned to celebrate both sides of who I am, and food has become my favorite way to do that. Making them is my way of sharing a piece of my heritage with friends and family, and seeing everyone enjoy and in fact demand them brings me so much joy. They're not a traditional holiday dish, but to me, they perfectly celebrate my culture while still feeling like part of the holiday table, a delicious reminder that traditions can be personal, shared, and joyfully blended.

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INGREDIENTS

Chicken Filling

2 tbsp vegetable oil
1 green chili, chopped
½ red onion, finely chopped
1 tsp salt
1 tbsp grated ginger
1 tbsp minced garlic
1¼ lbs (about 570g) minced chicken
2 tsp coriander powder
1 tsp roasted cumin powder
1 tbsp garam masala
1 bunch spring onions, chopped
¼ cup finely chopped mint leaves
½ bunch cilantro, chopped

Pastry

1 package Pepperidge Farm Puff Pastry Sheets (thawed)
1 egg (beaten)

Green Chutney

1 cup fresh coriander leaves
½ cup fresh mint leaves
3–4 green chilies
4–5 garlic cloves
1-inch piece of ginger, grated
1 tsp salt
2 tsp coriander powder
1 tsp garam masala
1 tsp cumin powder
½ tsp sugar
2 tbsp yogurt
1–2 ice cubes
Juice of ½ lemon

INSTRUCTIONS

01 For the Chicken Puffs

1. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit. Line a baking tray with parchment paper
2. Heat vegetable oil in a pan over medium-high heat. Add 1 chopped green chili and half chopped red onion, sauté for 1 minute. Add 1 teaspoon of salt and 1 tablespoon of grated ginger and cook for 6 minutes. Stir in 1 tablespoon of minced garlic, cook for another minute. Add 1 and a quarter cup of minced chicken, breaking it apart as it cooks for 5 minutes until no longer pink. Add 2 teaspoons of coriander powder and 1 teaspoon roasted cumin powder, stirring for 10 minutes. Mix in 1 tablespoon of garam masala,chopped spring onions, ¼ cup finely chopped mint leaves, and ½ bunch cilantro, chopped. Stir and cook for 1-2 more minutes, then remove from heat.Let the mixture cool completely before filling the pastry.
3. Place thawed puff pastry sheets on a flat surface. Cut each sheet into 9 squares.Place 2 tablespoons of chicken filling to the middle of each square. Cover each square with another pastry square and press the edges with a fork to seal (should look like a ravioli). Transfer pastries to the baking tray with the parchment paper. Leave a little space between each pastry. Beat 1 egg and brush the tops of the puffs for a golden sheen. Bake for 25 minutes, or until golden brown and puffed.

02 For the Green Chutney

Add all ingredients to a blender or small chopper. Blend into a smooth, fine paste. Chill until ready to serve.