

# Samosas - Tasty Snacks and easy to make

Contributed by jema

If like me you have a love for these wonderful snacks, then hopefully you will appreciate a beginners guide to making them. Done in batches they will freeze well, and in their vegetable versions cost mere pennies to make.

**Introduction to making Samosas**The Samosa is a great snack item, an irresistible combination of tastes and textures. Making them at home is very easy if you avoid a few potential pitfalls. If you are a skilled pastry chef, you may find this guide low level and a bit patronizing, if like me you tend to find this type of thing fiddly, you may appreciate an "idiots guide" and find it helps you get the results you want. We will start off the guide with a couple of recipes with variations for your Samosa filling, we will have a meat recipe and a vegetarian recipe.

**Minced meat Samosas**

**Ingredients for 18 Samosas**

8 oz lamb or beef mince  
2 onions, chopped fine  
4oz frozen garden peas  
4 cloves garlic, crushed  
1/2 inch piece of root ginger crushed, or 2 tsp ginger powder  
2 tbsp oil  
1/2 tsp turmeric  
2 tsp ground coriander  
2 tsp tsp ground cumin  
1 tsp chilli powder  
1/2 tsp salt  
2 deseeded green chillies finely chopped.  
1/2 cup water

1 tsp garam masala 1 tbsp lemon juice

**Brown**  
the onions in the oil in a saucepan for about 5 minutes. Add the garlic and ginger and fry for a further 30 seconds, now add the mince and fry until the mixture is almost dry. Add the spices and green chillies apart from the garam masala, stir to coat the ingredients and then add the water and green peas. Cover and cook on low for 20 minutes, then remove cover and continue cooking until the ingredients are completely dry.

**Now stir in the garam masala and lemon juice and allow to cool.**

**Vegetable Samosas**These are very easily varied, but figure on about 1 lb 4oz of ingredients for 18 Samosas

**Ingredients for 18 Samosas**

1 lb peeled potatoes  
2 tbsps vegetable oil  
1/2 tsp mustard seeds, most recipes say black, I use brown as that is all I can seem to get.  
1 tsp cumin seeds  
2 dried red chillies coarsely chopped  
1 medium onion finely chopped  
2 deseeded green chillies. coarsely chopped  
1/2 tsp turmeric  
1 tsp ground coriander  
1 tsp ground cumin  
1 tsp salt

**Boil the potatoes until cooked, drain and allow to cool. Dice into 1/2 " cubes.**

**Heat**  
the oil and add the mustard seeds, when they begin to pop add the cumin seeds, red chillies, green chillies and onions. Fry on medium heat until the onions are soft, then add the remaining spices along with the potatoes and stir to coat the potatoes with the mix. Cook on low if needed until the mixture is quite dry which it really should be already. This is also a good stage to throw in a few extras like frozen

peas and raw cashews. Allow to cool.

**Create your own recipe Samosas**There really is no such thing as a definitive Samosa recipe. I sometimes use left over Aloo Matar (Potato and Pea curry) and any dry curry will work as a filling.

**Samosa Pastry**

**How**  
you do this ultimately depends on how you like your Pastry. Some people even buy ready made filo pastry for their Samosas. To me buying pastry for a Samosa is sacrilege, my pastry recipe takes only a few minutes to prepare and costs pennies. with any pastry the first question is what flour do you use, and for most Indian cooking I think you get better results with more appropriate flour like Besan flour for example. In the case of Samosas though I think a cheap plain white flour is ideal.

**But like all things in Samosa making, you should ultimately experiment.**

**Ingredients for Samosa pastry for 18 Samosas**

8 oz Plain flour  
1/2 tsp salt  
2 oz butter  
1/3 cup warm milk approx

**Put**  
the flour in a bowl, add the salt to the flour and rub the butter in. I stir a bit with a wooden spoon then tip out on to a floured surface and knead to an even bouncy and dryish consistency. Pastry benefits from "resting" so I then wrap in a cloth or bung into a carrier bag and put it in the fridge for 30 mins. You could probably leave it there for days if airtightly wrapped.

**Constructing the Samosa**Separate a piece of dough about the size of a golf ball. On a floured surface roll this into a 6" diameter circle. This is of course easier said than done, but we don't need perfection and we don't want to waste time

actually cutting out circles. I generally rotate the rolling pin, to roll out from the centre in the directions needed to make a better circle. After you roll the pastry will contract back on itself, and you need to take a little account of this when deciding when you are finished. Now you have your rough circle, cut it into two semi circles, you can pick the line to cut here to help improve how good the semi circles are. You now need to wet along the straight edge, and fold the straight edge in half. Press firmly along the edges to join them, creating a cone. I use a pastry brush to wet along the edges and find it pays to be generous. You now need to fill the cone with about a heaped dessert spoon full of the filling. I leave the cone on the surface, just lifting the flap to fill. What ever you do, don't overfill. As you move up the learning curve, you may be able to get more filling in, but far better a few under filled Samosa, than oil filled ones where they have broken. Now seal the Samosa by wetting the unsealed edge. Consider how solid the result is, and if need be make the pastry thicker. This is a very good reason to fry Samosas as you fill them, so you know they are working at the thickness you are rolling. Frying the Samosas A lot will depend on your equipment. I use a deep fat fryer on the chips setting. You certainly want the oil very hot. I fry two at a time turning them once, in about 5 minutes you will have golden brown Samosas, that should be drained onto kitchen paper towels to absorb the excess oil. This prevents them being soggy and greasy. Whatever you do, don't try and fry too many at once. The oil won't stay hot and you will have problems separating them etc. A Samosa Production line Samosas are pretty time consuming to make, and a lot more so, if you construct them all before frying them. I find whilst two are frying I can roll the pastry for the next two and construct one by the time the frying Samosas need a turn. I turn the Samosas, incidentally I use dessert spoons when turning, tongs would be indelicate and might break the Samosas. I then construct the second Samosa and find that the frying Samosas are almost ready to be drained. Samosa Do's and Don'ts Do - Make sure your filling is dry enough. Don't - Overfill your Samosas. Do - Use very hot oil. Don't - Make your pastry too thin. Do - Pat down your Samosas to remove any cooking oil. Don't - Waste time being fussy about exact pastry circles. Do - Fry as you roll and fill. Don't - Think the filling recipe has to be followed exactly. Do - Use a liberal amount of water and a firm press to seal the Samosas. Don't - Be rough with a Samosa in the fryer. They can be a bit brittle and you don't want a leaking Samosa. Do - Be creative, there is no such thing as a definitive Samosa. Don't - Try and match the overall amount of ingredients to the amount of pastry. Use the right amount in each Samosa, better to have a little left over than bad Samosas. Do - Run a production line, fry as you go, Samosas are quite time consuming and this will save a lot of time. Don't - Just make a few. Samosas freeze well and are easiest done in a big batch.