



Gratz Insider, March 2017 - Story Continuation

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The Gratz Gourmet

Our search for a Sephardic Purim recipe - as an alternative to the Ashkenazic hamantaschen - took us across the country to California, where we reached out to Celia Mayo. Mayo is an early childhood educator, Gratz alumna and Sephardic Jew, who says that her “love for Judaism began in her grandmother’s kitchen.”



Photo by Linda Capeloto Sendowski, author of [The Boreka Diary](#) and [Sephardic Baking From Nona and More Favorites](#).

In response to our request, Mayo contacted her 92-year-old mother, who consulted “Cooking the Sephardic Way.” This cookbook was compiled in the early 1970’s by the sisterhood of the [Sephardic Temple Tifereth Israel](#) in Los Angeles - and over 40 years later, it is still quite popular. The synagogue receives requests for the book from all over the country, sometimes from women seeking to purchase it as a gift for a daughter or granddaughter before her wedding.

For our purposes, Mayo’s mother selected the recipe for Huevos de Haman or Folaes (Foulares), which are essentially basket-shaped pastries, each one containing a decorative hard-boiled egg. While the recipe describes how to cut and shape the dough, and encourages decorating the eggs for children, it does not provide the backstory. There must be some Purim-related significance to this edible contraption, but what is it?



Photo by Mari Levine, [appearing in Jewish Boston](#), used with the permission of Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Greater Boston.

[According to the Encyclopedia of Jewish Food](#) by Gil Marks, “the shape of the pastry is meant to symbolize either Haman’s prison bars (a basket with strips over the top of the egg) and/or parts of his anatomy (Haman’s foot and Haman’s ear).” On her blogsite, The Boreka Diary, [Linda Capeloto Sendowski describes](#) the egg as Haman’s head, and the strips of dough surrounding it as the noose that was used to hang him in the gallows.

Regardless of which interpretation you choose, the symbolism is not good for Haman. But for kids - and even for adults - Huevos de Haman are wonderful Purim treats.

According to “Cooking the Sephardic Way,” these treats can be made with boreka or biscocho pastry dough. They are both Sephardic recipes; the difference is that

biscocho is a sweet-tasting dough. Here is the recipe for biscocho that was used by Celia Mayo's grandmother:

Biscosho Dough

3 eggs
1/2 - 2/3 cup oil
3 teaspoons baking powder
1 cup sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla
3 1/2 - 4 cups flour (may need extra flour for rolling out dough)

1. Beat eggs thoroughly.
2. Add sugar, oil, baking powder and vanilla. Mix well.
3. Slowly add flour.
4. Knead dough for a couple minutes.
5. Let dough rest for a half-hour.

And here is a recipe for boreka dough from Mayo's aunt:

Boreka Dough

1 cup oil
1 cup cold water
1 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon baking powder
4 - 5 cups flour (may need extra flour for rolling out dough)

1. Mix ingredients thoroughly.
2. Knead dough for a couple minutes.
3. Let dough rest for at least a half-hour.

Eggs

Hard-boil the desired number of eggs.* The recipe in "Cooking the Sephardic Way" suggests decorating the eggs specially for each child, or possibly with Purim symbols. The Boreka Diary offers a much more practical suggestion, which is simply to add food coloring to the water when you boil the eggs.



**There may be a bit of trial-and-error involved in determining the number of eggs to use. The number of Huevos de Haman that you get out of the dough recipes will depend on how large you make each circle for the bases where the eggs rest.*

Photo by Linda Capeloto Sendowski, author of [The Boreka Diary](#) and [Sephardic Baking From Nona and More Favorites](#).

Assembling and Baking Huevos de Haman

1. Preheat oven to 350°.
2. Roll out dough until it's about 1/4-inch thick.
3. Cut out 2 ½-inch circles. (The Boreka Diary recommends 4- to 5-inch circles.)
4. Reserve the excess dough from around the circles because you will need it later to make strips.
5. Pinch around the edges of each circle to create little cup-shaped bases.
6. Place the eggs, once cooled, on each base, with the large end of each egg resting on the base.
7. Roll out the remaining dough into 1/4- to 1/2-inch thick strips. Cut two strips per egg. Each strip must be long enough to cross over the top of the egg and attach to the base.*
8. Crisscross two strips over each egg, attaching each strip to the base.
9. If there is extra dough, you can use it to make a decorative shape on top of the strips that cover each egg.
10. Arrange all the pastry-trimmed eggs on a cookie sheet and bake for approximately 20 minutes or until just barely golden brown.

**Mayo recommends brushing the strips with an egg wash to assure a golden color when the pastry bakes. The challenge is to try to prevent the egg wash from getting on the hard-boiled egg, which can cause the [strips to adhere to the egg](#), making it difficult to pull the egg out after the pastry is cooked. Therefore, Mayo suggests brushing the top of each strip with egg wash before attaching the strips to the hard-boiled egg.*

Huevos de Haman recipe from "Cooking the Sephardic Way." Copyright ©1971 by Sephardic Sisterhood, Temple Tifereth Israel, Los Angeles, CA.