

Lavender Blueberry Pierogi



[above: a pierog-in-progress]

These eye-catching dessert pierogi deliver a complex mix of sweet and bitter flavors that are sure to excite and delight the senses! Full of booze and dripping with decadent browned butter, they make for a special treat. The lavender takes center stage with its strongly herbaceous flavor, imparting a distinctive aroma.

Makes about 12 pierogi.

Ingredients

Wine mixture

- 1/2 cup (125 ml) moscato wine, plus 1 tbsp (15ml) for after reducing
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) blueberry juice
- 1/4 cup (60 ml) brown sugar
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) dried lavender buds
- 1-1/2 tsp (7.5 ml) ground cardamom
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) lemon juice, plus 1 tbsp (15 ml) for after reducing

Dough

- 1/4 cup (60 ml) milk, plus 3 tbsp (45 ml)
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) plain yogurt
- 1 cup (250 ml) all-purpose flour
- pinch o' salt

Filling

- 1 lb (450 g) pack of frozen blueberries, barely thawed
- brown sugar to taste
- dried lavender buds to taste

Topping

- 1 tbsp (15 ml) butter
- brown sugar to taste

Instructions

1. Begin by making the wine mixture. Combine 1/2 cup moscato, blueberry juice, brown sugar, lavender, cardamom, and 1 tbsp lemon juice in a saucepan over medium-low heat. Let the mixture simmer without boiling until volume is reduced to about 1/4 cup (60 ml), about 30 minutes.



2. Remove the wine mixture from heat. By this point, it should be noticeably more viscous, with an intense, concentrated flavor. Add the remaining 1 tbsp moscato and 1 tbsp lemon juice, to balance the flavor with a little extra brightness, then refrigerate.
3. For the dough, begin by heating 1/4 cup milk in a saucepan, just until it begins to give off steam, but not to boiling.
4. In a bowl, combine the warm milk with yogurt and salt. Add flour and mix casually, just until a lump of dough is beginning to take shape. The dough will still be a bit dry and crumbly at this point. Cover with cloth and let sit for 5 minutes.



5. Add 3 tbsp cold milk to the dough mixture and mix until roughly incorporated. The dough should be moist at this point, and should stick together in a single mass. Cover with cloth and let sit for another 10 minutes.



6. Knead the dough for no more than 5 minutes. It should become soft and smooth as it is lightly worked. The dough should be able to stay together in a single mass, without coming apart or getting stuck to your fingers. Pay attention to its consistency. If it is too thin or sticky, add extra flour, 1 tbsp at a time. If it feels dry or starts to flake apart, add extra milk, again, 1 tbsp at a time.





7. Roll your dough out on a lightly floured surface. I split the dough into two parts for ease of handling here, and because my surface was small. It should be worked very gently from this point. Always place the rolling pin in the center of the dough and roll outwards in a single motion, not going back-and-forth. If you've kneaded the dough well, it should be soft and respond easily to your rolling, but not get stuck to the surface nor the rolling pin. Roll it about 1/8 inch (3 mm) thick, working it as little as possible. Your dough should be able to hold its shape pretty well once rolled; if it rebounds a lot, this is a sign that it has been worked too much.

8. Cut the dough into rounds, about 3 inches (7.5 cm) in diameter. A large cup or glass can be a useful tool for this. The leftover dough can be balled up, rerolled, and cut again, though it will tend to become tougher than the first batch. If your dough is thin enough, it will yield about 12 rounds.

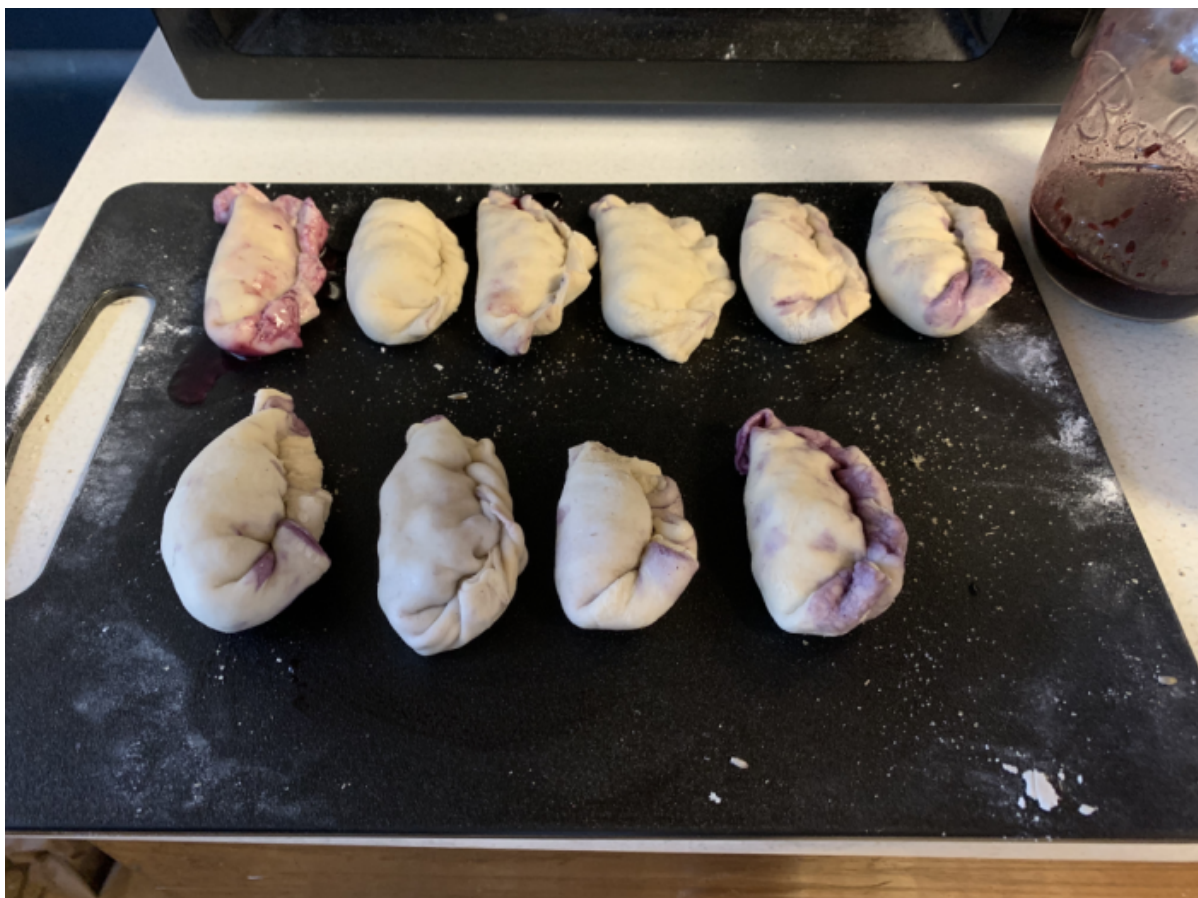


9. Now is a good time to prepare a couple of things for later. Begin melting 1 tbsp of butter in a saucepan over low heat. As you work on other things, check on the butter regularly - you want it to brown, but not burn. Meanwhile, bring some water to a gentle boil in another saucepan with a little salt and oil.

10. Begin filling and closing the pierogi, one at a time. The rounds may have shrunk a bit while sitting, so take the opportunity to enlarge each of them one more time with the rolling pin before filling it. The top sides may be a little drier, but the bottom sides will be more moist, so flip each of them over to put the filling on the moister side - they will close more easily that way. Each pierog gets:

- a. a spoonful of blueberries
- b. a sprinkle of brown sugar
- c. a sprinkle of lavender buds, crushed between your fingers
- d. a drizzle of the wine mixture

Fold the filled pierogi in half and press the edges closed. Try not to get too much fluid on the edges, as they will close more easily if not soaked. Press any air out as you close the pierogi. A little fluid leakage is acceptable. Of course you should close the pierogi as carefully as possible, but I've found them to be remarkably forgiving of pinholes and other minor leaks, which will tend to close up once the pierogi are boiled.



11. Boil the pierogi, a few at a time, until they float and then for another 1 minute. As you take each pierog out of the boiling water, sprinkle some sugar on it. The sugar will quickly melt, and it will help prevent the pierogi from sticking to each other.

12. By now, the butter should be well-browned, with a toasty aroma, visible solids, and a newfound depth of flavor. Slather it over the pierogi. You can also drizzle any remaining wine mixture if you'd like. Smacznego!





Notes and Tips

- You don't need to obtain blueberry juice separately for this recipe. Your frozen blueberries will release plenty of juice as they thaw. If they do come up a little short, you can always make up the difference with more moscato.
- When filling the pierogi, the proportion of each ingredient that you use will have a strong impact on the flavor of the dish. It might be worth making and boiling a few tests to see how you like them. I prefer to use a massive quantity of lavender and only a little sprinkle of sugar, but I think most people would prefer more sweetness!
- The flavor of lavender will mellow out a bit when cooked, so if you *really* want that raw lavender bite, sprinkle a little otopop the cooked pierogi before serving.
- The quality and freshness of the lavender is very important. Be sure to get culinary lavender and store it in an airtight container.

- If you have extra blueberry juice, you can substitute it for some or all of the cold milk in the dough. Warning: the result may be pretty.
- This makes a fine vegan dish as well. Omit the butter and yogurt, and replace the milk with water. You will probably have to add a little extra liquid in the kneading step to account for the loss of the yogurt.
- There are many ways to style and shore up the edges of the pierogi. For this batch, I went with a braid: starting at one end, take a little bit of the edge between your thumb and forefinger, twist it 180 degrees around the horizontal plane, press it into the not-yet-braided edge next to it, and repeat. Simpler options include pressing the edges down with a fork, or folding the whole edge back in on itself.
- If they are available, I prefer using Wyman's frozen blueberries, Kate's butter, and King Arthur flour for this recipe. I am not paid to say that.