

## 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, adult treat. The lavender takes center stage with its strongly herbaceous flavor, imparting a beguiling aroma that will linger on your breath. These pierogi are exceptional for sharing with a friend or for enjoying as a solitary pleasure.

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. Don't let it boil - you just want a slow simmer for now. Let the mixture simmer 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 saucy, with a rich, intense flavor, but let's not forget the lighter side of the flavor profile. Add the remaining 1 tbsp moscato and 1 tbsp lemon juice, to balance your slow-simmered intensity 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 get hot and steamy, 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, but hold on to your anticipation: it's going to get wet soon. 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 give your dough another 10 minutes of alone time.



6. Knead the dough for no more than 5 minutes. But your dough has needs of its own, and you should be attentive to them. It should become soft, smooth, supple, and just a little sticky as you work it with your hands. Your dough should be able to stay together in a single mass, without coming apart or getting stuck to your fingers. Pay attention to what it tells you. 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. In this way, you can knead your dough while respecting its integrity.





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. At this point, your dough will be very sensitive, and it desires a gentle touch. 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 very 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 - the rolling won't come as easily the second time around. If your dough is thin enough, it will yield about 12 rounds.

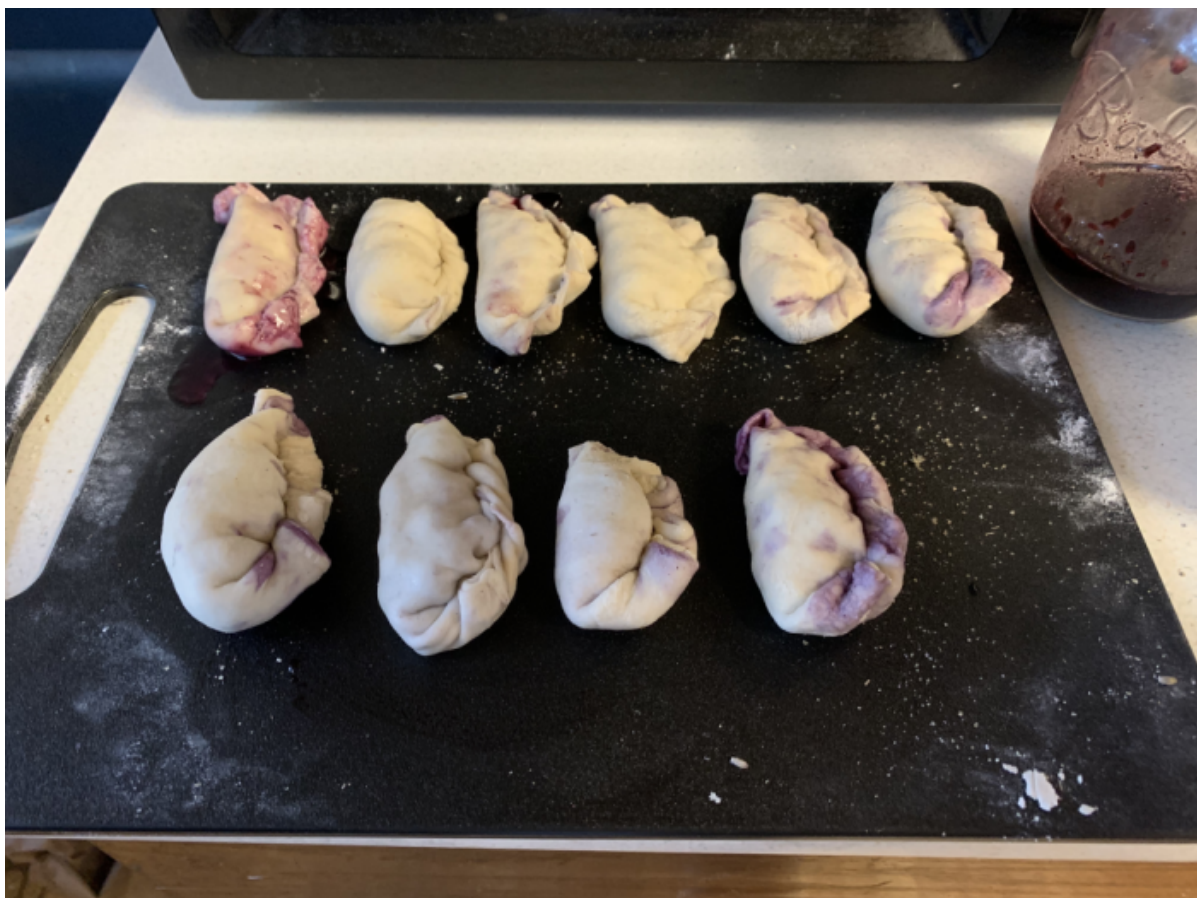


9. Now is a good time to prepare a couple of things for later. Begin melting 1 tbsp of butter in a saucepan over low heat. As you work on other things, check on the butter regularly - you want it to brown, but not burn. Meanwhile, bring some water to a gentle boil in another saucepan with a little salt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

10. It's time to fill the pierogi with your love, and also with the filling. Give each pierog the attention it deserves, working with one at a time until it is finished. 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 don't worry: the rounds will still be moist and sticky down below, 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 fine, it's a normal part of life. 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: as long as there are no large gaps or tears, the dough will swell up quickly when heated, and be able to fill those holes.



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, ~~pour some sugar on it~~ 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. Now all that remains is to have someone feed the pierogi to you. 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 overtop 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.