

# Orange and Date Baklava

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## **Ingredients**

For syrup:

1/3 cup sugar  
3 tablespoons water  
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice  
1 tablespoon honey  
1 teaspoon orange flower water  
1/4 teaspoon almond extract

For filling:

3 cups whole pitted dates  
1 tablespoon sugar  
1 tablespoon grated orange peel  
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
1/4 cup orange juice

For baklava:

1/2 cup sugar  
2 teaspoons ground cinnamon  
12 sheets fresh phyllo pastry or frozen, thawed (each about 18 x 14 inches)  
1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, melted

## **Directions**

Make syrup:

Stir first 3 ingredients in small saucepan over low heat until sugar dissolves. Increase heat; boil 1 minute. Remove from heat. Mix in honey, orange flower water and almond extract. Cool.

Make filling:

Combine first 4 ingredients in processor. Using on/off turns, process until dates are minced. Add juice; process until coarse paste forms.

Make baklava:

Preheat oven to 350°F. Mix sugar and cinnamon. Stack phyllo on work surface. Using bottom of 8 x 8 x 2-inch pan as guide, cut out two 8-inch-square stacks, making 24 squares.

Butter inside of same pan. Place 2 phyllo squares in pan. Brush with butter; sprinkle with 1 1/2 teaspoons cinnamon sugar. Repeat layering of phyllo squares (2 at a time), butter and sugar 4 more times (a total of 10 phyllo squares). Spread half of filling over. Top with 2 phyllo squares. Brush with butter and sprinkle with cinnamon sugar. Repeat with 2 more squares, butter and sugar. Spread with remaining filling. Layer 10 squares (2 at a time) over filling, brushing with butter and sprinkling with sugar. Using knife, score top into 16 squares (do not cut through to filling).

Bake baklava until deep golden, about 30 minutes. Cut through scored lines to bottom of pan. Spoon cool syrup over hot baklava. Cool. (Can be made 1 day ahead. Cover. Let stand at room temperature.)