

St. Thomas, the Doubter

On October 6th we will celebrate the feast of the Apostle Thomas. He is undoubtedly (no pun intended) known best as the apostle who doubted everything. He was not present at the appearance of Christ in the upper room after His Resurrection, and for this reason he doubted that Christ actually did rise. The Lord appeared again, a week later, when Thomas was present, and commanded him to put his hand into the nail holes and the pierced side of Christ. He did so, exclaiming, "My Lord and my God!".

At the Dormition of the Theotokos, legend tells us that he, along with the other apostles, received divine inspiration to come to Mary's bedside as she lay dying, and that they all were mystically transported there, except for Thomas. He doubted that the inspiration was really from the Holy Spirit. He tarried too long and missed the opportunity for last goodbyes. He was too late when he finally did arrive, but he asked that the tomb be opened so that he could venerate the body. She was not there; only flowers and their sweet perfume were present. This is why we bless flowers and fragrant herbs on that day.

Legend says that when the apostles drew lots to determine where each would go to spread the Gospel, the region of Persia and India fell to St. Thomas. Once again, he doubted that he could do the job. He claimed his health would not permit him to withstand the trip. Thomas was eventually sold to an Indian merchant who took him back with him to India to assist in the building of a palace for a king there. This is how he became the patron saint of architects and builders, and why he is often depicted with a carpenter's square. Once in India, he gave the money he was given for the project to the poor and convinced the king that his palace in heaven would be magnificent. There is a remnant of the Syro-Malabar Church today, in the region known as Kerala in southern India, which claims that the apostle Thomas was their teacher. Some sources say Thomas was martyred, pierced with five arrows, while others say he died peacefully of old age.



Here is a recipe from India that children especially love. Mine like to make these each year on his feast to remember St. Thomas's contribution to the faith of the Indian people. They're kind of like Indian pirohi! Perhaps you could try this too, in honor of St. Thomas!

Samosas

Dough:

2c flour
1/2 tsp salt

3/4 c plain yogurt
1/4 c butter

Filling:

1/2 c minced onion
1 garlic clove, crushed
2 Tbsp oil
1/2 c shrimp, peeled, deveined and chopped
1/4 c diced tomatoes

1/2 tsp salt
1 tsp ground coriander seed
1 tsp cumin powder
1/8 tsp red pepper flakes

Stir fry onions and garlic for the filling until golden. Add the remaining filling ingredients and cook for about 5 minutes over medium-high heat. Cool completely while you make the dough.

Mix the flour and salt together in a mixing bowl, and then cut in the butter to make a coarse meal. Stir in the yogurt until the dough forms a workable ball. Wrap and set in the refrigerator for 1 hour (or more). Roll a fourth of the dough on a floured surface to about 1/16 inch thickness. Cut 4 inch circles, then cut each in half. Moisten the edges with water, then place a teaspoon of the filling in each one, fold it over and seal the edges well, forming a triangle. (At this point, the samosas may be refrigerated for up to 24 hours). Fry in a deep skillet for about 2 minutes on each side. Enjoy as they are, or accompanied by some mango chutney.



These are the ones my daughter made as part of her "Food Around the World" course in her senior year of high school. She didn't cut them in half, but preferred to make them in a form familiar to our Carpatho-Rusyn family! She also tried different filling ideas. this one was made vegetarian by swapping out the shrimp and adding partially cooked potato cubes instead. They were just as delicious!

These also make wonderful appetizers to make ahead and have ready in your freezer in case an occasion arises. I plan to make some now in preparation for unexpected holiday guests. Just fry them lightly, (not too brown!) and place them on a parchment-lined cookie sheet in the freezer overnight. In the morning, place them in a freezer bag...this keeps them individual. When you need them, just place them onto another parchment-lined cookie sheet and bake them at 450 degrees for 12-15 minutes.