



## TAANIT ESTHER

Why do we fast on Taanit Esther?

From the name of the fast it seems logical to say that this fast was decreed as a remembrance of the three day fast that Esther asked Mordechai and the rest of the Jews in Shushan to accept before she put herself in danger and went to the king to plead for her People. But that fast was during Pesach - why would we commemorate that fast a whole month earlier?

Rav Yosef Tzvi Rimon in his book on Purim, gives other reasons for this fast.

According to Rav Achai Gaon it was instituted as a remembrance of the fast that the nation fasted on the 13th day of Adar so that the Jewish warriors would be successful in their battle for their lives.

Another interesting answer is suggested by the Magid Meisharim. He says that Taanit Esther is a preparation for the seriousness of Purim, which is like Yom HAKIPURIM. The fast reminds us that although Purim is celebrated with festivities and frivolity, it is a real serious and spiritual day. Since Purim is filled with drinking and eating and partying we may come to sin, so the fast is to

weaken the strength of the evil inclination. It shows that our festivities are not being celebrated because we are looking to give in to the lusts and desires of the evil inclination. Since we fast the day before Purim we show that our partying is in order to honor God, and celebrate with Him.

From the Fast of Esther we learn that Purim can be a very holy day, but only when it is preceded by a Taanit Esther, the fast beforehand, which helps us have proper intentions related to Purim.

**THE TRADITIONAL PURIM FOODS** of Hamentaschen and kreplach are made with a hidden filling surrounded by an outside layer. These foods remind us that the nation was saved from annihilation only because of a hidden miracle.

You can make the traditional stuffed hamentaschen or kreplach or for a change here's a recipe for something else that has a hidden filling. With all the talk in the news these days about cigars, I've included a very easy recipe for Moroccan cigars.

## MORROCAN CIGARS

1 package spring roll pastry - (lumpia wrapper) 20 sheets (defrosted)

½ kilo ground meat or turkey

Pinch of cumin, salt, pepper, sweet or hot paprika to taste

Oil for frying

Two Tbsp flour

Bit of water

Mix the meat with the spices. Heat a bit of oil and fry the meat (stirring constantly) till it is all cooked. Cut the spring roll pastry sheets in half so you have 40 sheets to fill. Take a sheet and place the cut side towards you. Put 1-2 spoonfuls of the cooked meat mixture in the middle of the pastry. Prepare a paste with the flour and water. Roll the sides of the pastry in, fasten with a bit of the paste. Continue rolling till you get a cigar and seal on the top with the paste. Put some oil in the bottom of a pan and fry each cigar on both sides till it is golden. You could fill the cigars with mashed potato if you want them to be parve. **א פורים שמח**