



Quince Paste (aka Membrillo)

from Chez Panisse Fruit

makes about 80 1" square pieces

- 2 cups sugar, plus more for coating the pieces
- 3 cups water
- 3 pounds quinces, peeled, cored & diced
- juice of 1 lemon

Wash the quinces and wipe off any clinging fuzz. Cut them in quarters, remove the woody core and cut the quarters into roughly 1-inch pieces.

Put the quinces in a 4-quart pot, add the water and bring to a boil, cover, and steam over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until the fruit is soft, about 20 minutes. When the fruit is completely tender and has started to break down, pass the mixture through a food mill or sieve.

Return the puree to the pot, add the sugar and cook over low heat, stirring constantly for about 45 minutes (or much longer). The mixture will cook into a paste, bubbling thickly; when it's done, it should be thick enough to mound up, but still pourable. If the mixture starts to burn in the pan before it has completely thickened, turn off the heat and let it rest for a few minutes; the part sticking to the bottom will release when you start stirring again. When the mixture reaches the right consistency, stir in the lemon juice and remove from the heat.

Line a shallow pan measuring at least 8x10 with parchment paper. Lightly oil the paper with vegetable oil or almond oil. Pour the paste onto the paper-lined pan, spreading it into an 8x10" rectangle, about 1/4" thick. When it has cooled completely, invert the sheet of paste onto another sheet of parchment. Carefully peel off the upper, oiled sheet.

Let the paste dry uncovered overnight. If it is not firm enough to cut at this point, try drying it out for an hour or so in a low oven (around 150°). Once the paste is cool and firm, cut into 1” squares and toss them in sugar. Store uncovered in a dry place. When the paste is dry to the touch, it can be stored in an airtight container for as long as a year. The paste can also be kept whole, wrapped in parchment.

FYI, I am storing mine in the fridge. Someone told me you can also layer bay leaves between the pieces.