

Rustic Rosemary-Apple Tart (for 6)

From Fall Menu for A Splendid Table, September 2002

Adapted from A New Way to Cook (Sally Schneider Artisan, 2001 - Copyright 2001)

A rustic European hybrid of tarts & pies reminiscent of French galettes: its charm lies in its imperfections. This tart relies on a simple dough rolled into a rough free-form round. The fruit's piled in the middle & the edges are folded up around it. This eliminates much of what can be daunting about making tarts & pies: the time-consuming task of crimping dough into a tart tin or pie plate. This is the quickest method I know to create a great fruit pie-tart, about 20 minutes once the pastry's made. (Make up pastry batches & freeze for when you're pinched for time.) Apple tarts lend themselves to exotic flavorings beyond the classic American cinnamon-scented pies of my childhood. My favorite: rosemary, which gives an unexpectedly lovely herbal flavor to the tart.

- Foolproof Flaky Butter Pastry (recipe follows)
- 2 TBS all-purpose flour for thickening juices + extra for rolling the dough
- 1/4 C packed light brown sugar
- 1 1/2 lbs apples (Granny Smith, Golden Delicious, Stayman, Macoun, or Winesap)
- 2 TBS fresh lemon juice
- 1 1/2 tsp minced fresh rosemary (don't substitute dried) or 3/4 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp unsalted butter
- 2 tsp confectioners' sugar

Preheat oven to 400°F. On lightly floured surface, roll dough into rough circle about 14" in diameter. Transfer dough to baking sheet & refrigerate while preparing apples. In small bowl, combine flour with 1 TBS brown sugar; reserve. Peel/core apples - slice into 1/4"-thick slices (about 3 C). Place apples in bowl & toss with lemon juice, remaining 3 TBS sugar & rosemary.

Remove dough from refrigerator & sprinkle reserved flour/sugar mixture evenly over it, leaving 2" border uncovered. Arrange apples evenly over flour mixture. Fold edges of dough over apples. Moisten your fingers lightly with water & gently press creases so they hold together. Shave butter over fruit.

Bake tart about 40 minutes, till crust is golden brown, the apples tender & the juices syrupy, covering tart halfway through cooking if crust is browning too rapidly. Let cool 10 minutes - slide tart onto serving platter. Just before serving, sift confectioners' sugar evenly over the crust.

(You can bake the tart up to 3 hours before serving)

Foolproof Flaky Butter Pastry: 8 OZ (enough for one 9-10" tart)

This is an easy-to-make crust that's flaky & tender & tastes like butter. The butter is pared down to what I consider to be the minimum amount possible. The flour/butter mixture is chilled midway through the process so that, when the dough is rolled, the hard butter forms flat sheets, increasing the dough's flakiness. Some of the usual butter is replaced with sour cream, which has less fat & fewer calories but adds to the crust's tenderness & richness. A pinch of baking powder adds a degree of lightening.

- 1 C unbleached all-purpose flour

- 1 tsp sugar
- 1/2 tsp kosher salt
- 1/4 tsp baking powder, preferably non-aluminum
- 4 TBS cold unsalted butter, cut into 1/2" bits
- 3 TBS regular or reduced-fat sour cream

To make the dough in food processor: Combine flour, sugar, salt & baking powder - process to mix. Add butter & process till mixture resembles a coarse meal. Put work bowl in refrigerator to chill for 15 minutes.

Add sour cream to four mixture & process till dough comes together in the bowl. Gather dough into a ball & knead it several times on lightly floured surface. Form it into a 1"-thick disc, wrap it in plastic & chill at least 30 minutes before rolling.

To make the dough by hand: In medium bowl, combine flour, sugar, salt & baking powder. Add butter & cut it into flour with pastry cutter or 2 knives till it resembles a very coarse meal. Alternatively, using a pinching motion, mix butter into flour with your fingers, then rub butter & flour between the palms of both hands to blend it, till mixture is the texture of coarse meal. Chill dough in refrigerator 15 minutes.

Add sour cream & blend in with pastry cutter or fork. Knead & squeeze dough 7 or 8 times to incorporate any loose bits. Gather dough together into a rough ball (it will be a coarse mass), flatten into a 1"-thick disc & wrap in plastic wrap. Refrigerate at least 30 minutes before rolling.

The dough can be refrigerated, well wrapped in plastic wrap, for up to 3 days or frozen for up to 1 month. (I like to make a double or triple recipe and freeze part of the dough) Defrost in refrigerator for several hours before using.

Fall Menu for A Splendid Table

Herb-Scented Tuscan Pork Roast

Rustic Rosemary Apple Tart

Bruschetta of Wild Mushrooms

Roasted Winter Squash Puree

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