

Showstopping Apple Strudel

Apple Strudel is a dessert that requires attention to detail when making it. There is no room for improvising any part of the recipe. From the creation of the dough, to its thickness, to the apples that go inside, each part of the recipe is equally vital to creating a delicious strudel.

The creation of strudel can be traced back to trade connections between Asia and Europe. Ancient manuscripts from 8th century BC even talk about a meal of puff pastry or unleavened bread with nuts and honey. The dessert is known to have been made in Greece and Turkey in 3rd century BC, where it inspired the creation of güllaç and baklava. Strudel then spread to Hungary, where apples were added to the filling of the pastry.

After Hungary was conquered by Austria, the pastry dish became part of the aristocratic culture of the Viennese. It became a noble dish, and liquored raisins became an addition to the filling. The first written recipe for creating the dish appeared in 1827 in Anna Dorn's Great Viennese cookbook. She called it Apfelstrudel which means "apple vortex."

The Austrians also brought the apple strudel to Italian tables. The preferred apples to fill the pastry dough were Golden Delicious, due to their sweet, sugary aftertaste with raisins that were softened in rum, with walnuts, sugar, cinnamon, and lemon juice.

There are different options commonly used for the dough for the shell of the strudel. Many recipes use puff pastry or phyllo dough because strudel dough is not a common ready-made product in stores. Phyllo dough, made only from flour, water, vinegar, and a little oil, is composed of many tissue-thin sheets of dough, which results in a crispy, crackly effect upon layering. Puff pastry dough is made with butter, flour, and water. The dough is made by the repeated layering and folding of dough and cold butter, along with chill time in the refrigerator. Phyllo dough is soft rather than crisp. Strudel dough consists of flour, water, egg, and a lot of oil. The oil and the egg make the dough super elastic so that you can roll and pull it out to a very thin layer.

The secret to making a successful strudel depends on creating a great dough and making your apple filling with an eye for details. Experts recommend making the pastry dough the day before and allowing it to rest for at least 18 hours. It should be tissue-thin when rolled out, even translucent. The goal is to get it so thin you can see through it.

When creating your apple filling, be sure to use quality ingredients. You can vary the flavor based on the type of apple you choose. For example, Granny Smith apples are both sweet and sour, which makes them a great choice. A blend of different apples can create a filling with pleasant textural contrast. Apples are high in fiber, vitamin C, and various antioxidants. Remember to select apples that are in good condition and do not have bruises or marks. A simple tip to help absorb moisture from the fresh apples is to add crumbs from bread, sponge cake, or macaroons into the filling to absorb extra moisture.

Is your mouth watering for apple strudel? Try this recipe and be sure to serve it with vanilla ice cream or vanilla sauce!

Apple Strudel (Recipe from <https://platedcravings.com/apple-strudel-recipe/>)

Ingredients:

Strudel Dough

1/4 cup unsalted butter, melted

1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour

1 pinch of salt

1/3 cup water, lukewarm

Apple Filling

2 Tbsp rum

1/3 cup golden raisins

4 medium apples

1 tbsp lemon juice

1 tsp ground cinnamon

1/2 cup sugar

1/4 cup slivered almonds, finely chopped

1 tsp vanilla extract

6 tbsp unsalted butter, melted

1/4 cup breadcrumbs

Instructions:

In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, combine 1/4 cup melted butter, flour, salt, and lukewarm water. Mix at medium speed for about 1 minute until a smooth and elastic dough forms.

In a small saucepan (with a lid) bring water to a boil, then remove the pot from the heat, empty the pot and dry it with a dishtowel. Line the pot with a sheet of parchment paper, put the dough into the pot, and put the lid on. Let sit for 30 minutes at room temperature.

Preheat the oven to 350°F and line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

Meanwhile, in a small bowl, combine raisins and rum. Let sit for 30 minutes. Then discard the rum.

Peel, core, and cut the apples into small stripes. Combine the apples with lemon juice. Add the cinnamon, sugar, raisins, almonds, and vanilla extract; set aside.

Lay a thin kitchen towel, preferably with a pattern, flat on the counter. Sprinkle with flour. Roll the dough out as thin as you can. Brush it with a little bit of melted butter.

Then use your hands to carefully stretch it until it is about 18 x 12-inches and you're able to see the pattern of the dishtowel through the dough.

Brush half of the melted butter over the rolled-out dough.

The long side should be facing you. On the right side of the rectangle, leave a few inches of space, then sprinkle the breadcrumbs top to bottom over the dough in a 6-inch thick line. Leave a 2-inch margin at the top and bottom of the strip.

Pile the apple filling on top of the breadcrumbs. Use a slotted spoon, so the liquid stays in the bowl.

Fold the 2-inch margin at the top and bottom of the dough over onto the filling, then roll up the strudel from the short side with the help of the towel. Tuck the ends.

Carefully transfer the strudel to the prepared baking sheet, seam side down. Brush with a little bit of melted butter.

Bake for about 50 minutes in the lower third of the oven, until lightly golden on top. Brush strudel with remaining melted butter every 20 min while in the oven.

Let cool for 10 minutes, then sprinkle with powdered sugar and serve warm.

Sources:

<https://startsat60.com/media/lifestyle/food/how-to-make-apple-strudel-recipe>

<https://www.gamberorossointernational.com/news/en-news-in-evidenza/apple-strudel-history-traditional-recipe-and-tasty-variations/>