

Traditional Apple Strudel

Apple Strudel Alibi

(Oxford Tearoom Mysteries ~ Book 8)

INGREDIENTS:

*For the strudel dough** (I recommend measuring the flour by weight in grams since it is more accurate than measuring by volume.)

- 1/3 cup lukewarm water (80 ml / 80 g)
- 1 tablespoon + 1/2 teaspoon neutral tasting vegetable oil (15 g)
- 1/2 teaspoon vinegar (or lemon juice)
- 1/8 teaspoon table salt or fine sea salt
- 145 g bread flour (1 cup) (substitute with all purpose flour)
- 1/2 teaspoon vegetable oil for brushing the dough
- flour for dusting

For the filling:

- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter (40 g)
- 2/3 cups fine bread crumbs (80 g)
- 5 tablespoons granulated sugar (65 g)
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 4 tablespoons raisins (50 g)
- 3 tablespoons rum or lukewarm water for soaking the raisins
- 2 lbs sweet-tart apples (e.g. MacIntosh) (900 g)
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons melted butter for brushing the dough (divided)
- confectioner's sugar for dusting
- whipped cream for serving (optional)



INSTRUCTIONS:

To make the dough

1. Mix lukewarm water, oil, vinegar and salt in a big bowl. Acid like vinegar helps relax the gluten to make the dough easier to stretch.
2. Stir in about half the flour with a spoon until well combined, then gradually add the remaining flour until it comes together and you can work it with your hands.
3. Knead the dough until smooth for about 10 minutes, either in the bowl or on a working surface. The dough should be moist but not sticky. If it is too sticky to knead, add a little more flour (you shouldn't need more than 1 or 2 additional tablespoons). Slam the dough onto the worksurface a few times to enhance gluten development, yielding a very elastic dough.
4. Shape the dough into a smooth ball. Brush a clean bowl with oil, put the dough into the bowl and brush it with oil (you can do this with your fingers).
5. Cover the bowl with a lid or plastic wrap and let it sit for 1 hour at room temperature. (see note)

To make the filling

1. Melt the butter in a pan over medium heat and add the breadcrumbs. Toast them, stirring constantly, until they are golden. Remove from the heat and let cool.
2. Mix sugar and cinnamon together, then add it to the buttered breadcrumbs and stir well. Set aside.
3. Soak the raisins in rum (traditional) or lukewarm water for about 10 minutes to get them softened.
4. Peel the apples, quarter and core them. Chop every quarter into 1/8 to 1/4 inch thick slices and cover them with lemon juice to prevent the apples from getting brown. Add the soaked raisins (but not the remaining rum or water) and mix well.

Stretching and filling the dough

1. Roll out the dough with a rolling pin on a clean and lightly floured surface. Flour the surface and the dough every now and then while rolling.
2. When the dough gets about 13-15 inch in diameter, pick it up then use the back of your hands, particularly your knuckles, to stretch it (remove all sharp jewelry first). This way you can straighten the dough like a pizza.

3. When the dough gets bigger and thinner, and thus difficult to handle, put it down on a lightly floured tablecloth, straighten out the wrinkles in both the tablecloth and the dough. Continue stretching the dough on the tablecloth using your hands.
4. Gently stretch the dough paper-thin from the inside to the outside, working your way around the sheet of dough. Stretch it until it starts to look translucent. You should be able to read the titles of a newspaper placed under the dough (don't do this though, the ink would probably come off).
5. In the end, the sheet of dough should be stretched into a rectangular shape, with the shorter edge fitting the baking sheet lengthwise. Thick edges should be cut off.
6. Brush half the dough with half the melted butter. Spread the breadcrumb-mixture over the other half of the dough and pat down evenly. One side is brushed with butter now, the other side is covered with breadcrumbs. Leave 1 to 1 ½ inch to the edge. Spread the apples over the breadcrumbs.
7. Fold in the side-ends of the dough. Using the towel, roll the dough, starting at the apple-topped end all the way. Then gently roll the strudel onto a sheet of parchment paper with the seam-side down.
8. Put the dough onto a baking sheet and brush it with the remaining melted butter.

Baking the strudel

1. Put the baking sheet in the middle (I use rack 2 of 4 from top) of the preheated oven and bake it for ½ hour at 375 °F.
2. When the crust turns golden, the Apple Strudel is ready. Take it out of the oven, let it cool slightly, cut it into pieces and serve dusted with confectioner's sugar.

Notes:

You can also make the dough ahead and keep it in the fridge for up to 3 days. Temperate before using.

Enjoy!

