

STEYRISCHER APFELKUCHEN (STEYR-STYLE* AUSTRIAN APPLE PIE)

INGREDIENTS

for the crust

3 cups flour
1 tablespoon baking powder
1/2 cup sugar
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 cup cold milk
1 cup butter, very soft, but not melted

For the filling

3 pounds firm tart apples, peeled, and chopped very finely
4 tablespoons of lemon juice
zest of one lemon
1/2 cup sugar
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1/2 cup raisins (optional)
1/2 cup finely chopped hazelnuts or almonds (optional)

For the glaze

2/4 cup apricot jam
1/2 cup confectioners sugar
3 tablespoons lemon juice

You will also need a 18 x 13 inch cookie sheet; it must have a 1 inch "lip" around the outside

DIRECTIONS

To make the dough: In a large bowl, mix together the flour, the baking powder, the sugar and the salt. Add in the butter and mix gently until it is incorporated (should have a flakey consistency). Add in the milk little by little until it starts to form a ball. This is where I stop using the spoon and start using my hands. When most everything is incorporated, pour onto the countertop, and knead for a minute or two. Note: this can also be done in the food processor.

Wrap the completed dough in plastic wrap and let sit in the refrigerator for 1 hour.

To make the apple mixture: Zest the lemon into very small pieces (note: it should almost be like lemon zest mush. The best way to do this, in my opinion, is to use the finest grate of a cheese grater) Squeeze the lemon juice from the lemon. Wash, peel and core the apples, and then dice into matchstick like pieces. This can take a very long time. If you like, you can use the large grating blade on a food processor, but this can cause you to have apple-mush not match-sticks. As you go, toss the cut apples with the lemon juice to keep them from turning brown and to keep them firm.

After you have finished cutting all the apples, preheat the oven to 400F. Mix together the sugar and the cinnamon and sprinkle over the apples. Add the lemon zest, and if you like, the raisins and the chopped nuts, and stir until all the apples are coated.

Putting it together, Part 1: Take the dough from the refrigerator and cut into two, one larger than the other (like 2/3 and 1/3); set the smaller one aside. Roll out the larger one, to the size of the entire cookie tray, including the sides. Place and fit into the ungreased cookie sheet. Spoon the apple mixture onto the crust. Roll out the second dough equally thin and cut into narrow strips. Make a lattice top crust on the diagonal. Bake on the middle rack for 30-35 minutes.

And finally, while the pie is cooling, mix together the apricot jam, confectioners sugar and the lemon juice in a small work bowl. While still warm, brush the lattice top with the apricot glaze. Let cool completely. Cut into 24-30 squares and serve cool.

*Steyr is a town in Upper Austria.