

STRAWBERRY-RHUBARB STREUSEL BARS

INGREDIENTS

1 1/2 cups strawberries, hulled and thinly sliced
2 cups rhubarb, cut into roughly 1/3-inch thick pieces
1 cup course sugar, divided (plus a little extra for sprinkling)
1 tablespoon lemon juice
2 3/4 cups all-purpose flour, divided
6 ounces cold, unsalted butter
2 ounces cream cheese
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 large egg
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

DIRECTIONS

Preheat the oven to 350F. Create a foil sling for your 8 x 8 inch baking pan and spray with baking spray.

Combine the sliced strawberries, sliced rhubarb, lemon juice and 1/4 cup of the sugar in a large bowl. Set this aside to macerate while you make the crust and streusel.

Place 2 1/2 cups of the flour into the bowl of a food processor. Cut the butter into 5 large chunks and add to the flour along with the cream cheese, salt and remaining 3/4 cup of cane sugar. Pulse to combine the mixture until moist and crumbly, with no chunks of butter remaining. Remove 1 2/3 cups of this crumbly mixture from the food processor and set it aside for the streusel topping. To the rest of the mixture still in the food processor, add the remaining 1/4 cup of flour, egg, baking powder and vanilla. Blend until it just starts to come together to form a dough. Press the dough evenly into the lined pan (it's easier to do this if your hands are slightly damp). Bake for 10 minutes until slightly risen.

Strain the macerated fruit to remove the excess liquid. Spread the fruit in an even layer over the surface of the partially baked crust. Sprinkle the reserved streusel topping over the surface of the fruit and then sprinkle on a little more sugar. Bake again for 40 to 50 minutes until the topping is golden brown.

Let cool for 20 minutes before lifting the pie bars out of the pan using the parchment paper. Slice into 16 squares.