



Italian Apple Crostata

By Erin Fletter

Prep Time 20 / **Cook Time** 25 / **Serves** 4 - 6

Fun-Da-Mentals Kitchen Skills

chop: to cut something into small, rough pieces using a blade.

knife skills: Bear Claw (growl), Pinch, Plank, and Bridge (look out for trolls).

measure: to calculate the specific amount of an ingredient required using a measuring tool (like measuring cups or spoons).

mix: to thoroughly combine two or more ingredients until uniform in texture.

zest: to scrape off the outer colored part of a citrus fruit's rind (skin or peel) using a metal tool with small sharp blades, such as a zester, microplane, or the small holes of a grater (avoid the "pith," the white, spongy lining of the rind that can be bitter).

Equipment

- Oven
- Muffin pan
- Medium mixing bowl
- Zester (or grater with small zesting plate/side)
- Dry measuring cups
- Measuring spoons
- Wooden spoon
- Citrus juicer (optional)
- Cutting board + kid-safe knife
- Large mixing bowl

- Whisk
- Liquid measuring cup
- Fork (optional)

Ingredients

Italian Apple Crostata

- Apple filling:
- 1/3 C granulated sugar + more to sprinkle on top (or 6 to 8 stevia packs)
- 2 tsp all-purpose flour ****(for GLUTEN ALLERGY sub gluten-free/nut-free all-purpose flour)****
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 pinch ground cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp finely grated lemon zest (also need 1/2 tsp for dough)
- 1 squeeze lemon juice
- 3/4 lb apples (2 to 3)
- 4 T ricotta cheese, optional ****(Omit for DAIRY ALLERGY)****
- Crostata dough:
- 1 2/3 C all-purpose flour ****(for GLUTEN ALLERGY sub gluten-free/nut-free flour)****
- 1/4 C fine cornmeal
- 1/2 tsp salt, heaping
- 1 tsp sugar (or 1 stevia pack)
- 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 1 pinch ground cinnamon
- 7 T olive oil (1/2 C less 1 T) + extra for greasing cupcake wells
- 1/4 C cold water
- 1/2 tsp finely grated lemon zest (also need 1/2 tsp for filling)

Food Allergen Substitutions

Italian Apple Crostata

Gluten/Wheat: Substitute gluten-free/nut-free all-purpose flour in filling and dough.

Dairy: Omit ricotta cheese in filling.

Instructions

Italian Apple Crostata

intro

Do you suffer from pie-crust-o-phobia? It's the rolling-out part that gets to you, right? Dough sticks to the rolling pin and the counter. If this scenario sounds familiar, we are about to make your pie-baking a whole lot easier with our Italian Apple Crostata (kroh-STAH-tuh). Pie-crust-o-phobia, begone!

zest + measure

First, you will make the filling! Have your kids wash and carefully zest the peel of **1 lemon** (only the yellow part—the white pith is bitter). In a medium mixing bowl, measure **1/3 cup sugar, 2 teaspoons flour, 1/2 tsp salt, 1 pinch of cinnamon**, and **1/2 teaspoon lemon zest** (save 1/2 teaspoon for the dough). Mix to combine.

squeeze + chop + toss

Have your kids add **1 squeeze of lemon juice** to the mixture. Then chop and add **3/4 pound of apples** (about 3). Toss the apples to coat them in the sugar and lemon mixture and, if desired, mix in **4 tablespoons of ricotta cheese**. Set the filling to the side.

preheat + measure + mix

Next, you will make the crostata dough! Preheat your oven to 450 F. In a large mixing bowl, measure **1 2/3 cup flour, 1/4 cup fine cornmeal**, heaping **1/2 teaspoon salt, 1 teaspoon sugar, 1/2 teaspoon baking powder**, and **1 pinch of cinnamon**. Mix dry ingredients with a whisk.

add + mix

Have your kids make a well in the center of the dry ingredients and add **7 tablespoons olive oil, 1/4 cup cold water**, and **1/2 teaspoon lemon zest**. Mix with a fork or your hands until it forms into a ball. Give each kid a bit of dough.

shape + fill

Have the kids flatten their dough with their clean hands. Then, using their fingers, shape the dough into circles and fit them inside the greased wells of your muffin pan. Next, they can place the filling in the middle of the crusts. They can also crumb up any leftover dough and top crostatas with it before baking.

bake + bubble + cool

Bake the crostata for 20 to 25 minutes, until the crust is golden and the fruit is tender and bubbling.

Remove from the oven and let cool for 5 minutes. Sprinkle them with sugar before serving if you like!
Serve warm or at room temperature. Say, "Buon appetito" or "Enjoy your meal" in Italian!

Featured Ingredient: Apples!

Hi! I'm Apple!

"I'm delighted to be part of your recipe! Not only does "an apple a day keep the doctor away," but I'm also versatile and delicious in both sweet and savory dishes, like pies, cakes, breads, salads, and casseroles, and added to vegetables and roasted meats. Not to brag, but I have a fabulous, round(ish) figure and come in several colors and varieties of sweet and tart flavors!"

History

Here's a story about the Granny Smith apple that is long but cute: In the year 1868, near Sydney, Australia, a grandma named Marie Smith had been testing different types of French crabapples for cooking, and she ended up throwing the used apple cores out her window as she worked. Granny Smith saw that a new apple tree (or cultivar) had sprung up below her kitchen windowsill. She cultivated the tree and found that the apples it produced were good for cooking and eating. They were tart, sweet, and crisp. Grandma Marie Smith took a stall at a farmer's market in Sydney, where her apples stored exceptionally well and became very popular. She sold her apples once a week and called them Granny Smith's Apples. Smart (and enterprising) fruit merchants in the 1890s and 1900s experimented with methods to transport the Granny Smith apples overseas in cold storage. Because of its excellent shelf life, they could export the Granny Smith apple long distances and most times of the year. Since growing fruit from the seeds of the Granny Smith apple produces trees with fruit that isn't as good as the original, grafting or cuttings are required instead. All Granny Smith apples grown today are from grafts of Grandma Marie Smith's original tree in Sydney.

Apple trees were domesticated thousands of years ago. A wild apple native to the mountains of southern Kazakhstan in Central Asia is considered the ancestor of most domestic apple varieties.

Worldwide, 7,500 varieties of apples are grown! If just 12 kids were growing that many, each of them would end up with 625 different kinds!

Apples are victims of (or blessed by, depending on how you look at it) their own genetic creativity. An apple from a tree grown from a seed will be nothing like its parents. And because of this, historically, thousands upon thousands of varieties of apples have come into existence. Apples have evolved to adapt to all environments. They can be grown all over the world. Now, the number of apple varieties is much more narrow due to farming practices and consumers' desire for the "perfect red apple." The only way to ensure genetic repeats of apples is to "graft" the trees.

Grafting apple trees involves combining a bottom rootstock of one tree to the scion, or budding branch, of another tree to grow a new successful apple tree.

Anatomy & Etymology

Apples come in all shades of reds, greens, and yellows. They are members of the Rose family. Other members include strawberries, pears, plums, peaches, and raspberries.

Every spring, apple trees bloom or flower. At the bottom and inside each blossom is an ovule. Inside the ovule are the seeds that will eventually turn into an apple! It takes about 4 to 5 months from the time the blossoms are pollinated for the apples to be ready to pick.

New apple trees take four to five years to produce their first fruit!

A raw apple can contain 86 percent water!

If you put an apple in water, do you think it will sink or float? It will float! That's because about 25 percent of an apple's volume is air. And that's why you can play a game of "bobbing for apples" at Halloween parties!

An apple tree can grow to more than forty feet and live over a hundred years!

A Japanese farmer picked the heaviest apple on record in 2005. It weighed 4.1 pounds!

The word "apple" came from the Old English "æppel," which is Germanic in origin. Until the 17th century, "apple" could refer generically to any nut or fruit other than berries.

How to Pick, Buy, & Eat

August marks the beginning of apple season. Apple season peaks in September—some of the most delicious apple varieties are available then: the Honeycrisp (our fave!), Cortland, Macintosh, and Gala. October apples are perfect for baking.

Apples are picked by hand when it's time to harvest them. Choose apples that have smooth skin and are free from blemishes. They should feel heavy for their size and feel firm. Then, give it a sniff—fresh apples smell almost floral-like and super pleasant.

It is so fun to go to an orchard in the fall and pick apples for yourself. Of course, apples are available year-round in most grocery stores and are most affordable during the months when they're in season (August through October).

Farmers often use honeybees to pollinate apple trees.

You can eat apples in so many ways. Try dicing half an apple and adding it to a spinach salad with walnuts or pecans, red onion, and goat cheese. Stuff and bake them for a cozy autumn treat. You can juice, blend, or grind apples to make juice, cider, or smoothies. Slice, chop, or mash them and add them to a variety of apple treats: pie, strudel, cake, donuts, tortes, turnovers, dumplings, galettes, fritters, muffins, and crisps or crumbles. You can thinly slice and dehydrate apples to make chips or cook and mash them to make applesauce, adding a dash of cinnamon for extra flavor. Apple marries beautifully with a ton of different sweet AND savory foods like fennel, cheddar, caramel, cinnamon, butternut squash, rooibos, sauerkraut, and sausage.

Nutrition

"An Apple a Day Keeps the Doctor Away." This saying originated because people believed fruits were important to a nutritious diet. A 2015 study found that people who ate an apple a day took fewer prescriptions.

Red Delicious and Fuji apples contain the most polyphenols, micronutrients found naturally in plants with antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. They can help prevent heart disease, control blood sugar, lower cancer risk, and help your immune system function properly. More polyphenols are found in an apple's peel than its flesh, so be sure to eat the peel, which will also add to your fiber intake!

Isn't it amazing to think that our bodies are hard at work keeping us strong and healthy while we go about our daily activities? Think of it: just now, your body is pumping blood through your veins and arteries, delivering nutrients to your cells to create energy, building proteins to protect you from getting sick, and so much more. That's why it's so important to eat nutritious foods, like apples!