

Strudel di mele

Apple strudel

Few desserts are as comforting as the humble apple strudel. Despite the recipe now spanning the world with numerous interpretations, for the definitive version it's always good to head to the source. I spent an unforgettable time at Lefay Resort & SPA in the Dolomites. Yes, the place is stunning and, yes, the massages were divine, but to me the strudel, being one of my all-time favourite desserts, was the true taste of the region. This version, from Chef Matteo Maenza, wraps up all that strudel signifies in a recipe that encapsulates family Sunday lunches, passed from generation to generation.



Trentino-Alto Adige

NORTHERN ITALY

SERVES 6

- 40 g (¼ cup) pine nuts
- 700 g (1 lb 9 oz) apples, (preferably rennet or golden delicious variety) peeled, cored and cut into small pieces (about 1 cm/½ in)
- 60 g (2 oz) granulated sugar
- 50 g (1¾ oz) raisins
- zest of 1 lemon
- 50 ml (1¾ fl oz) rum
- 1 tablespoon ground cinnamon
- 25 g (1 oz) butter, melted
- 50 g (1¾ oz) dried breadcrumbs
- beaten egg, to glaze the pastry
- icing (confectioners') sugar, for dusting

Pastry

- 160 g (5½ oz) plain (all-purpose) flour, plus extra for dusting
- 1 tablespoon sunflower oil
- 1 egg

To make the pastry, put the flour and a pinch of salt in a large bowl, make a well in the centre and add 50 ml (1¾ fl oz) of water, along with the oil and egg. Use a fork to mix everything together, then knead the dough on a lightly floured work surface for 1–2 minutes to form a smooth ball. Cover with plastic wrap and leave to rest for 30 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 180°C (350°F) fan-forced. Toast the pine nuts in a small frying pan over medium heat for 2–3 minutes, until golden.

Place the apple, toasted pine nuts, sugar, raisins, lemon zest, rum and cinnamon in a large bowl and gently mix to combine.

To assemble the strudel, place a large sheet of baking paper on a clean work surface and dust with a little flour. Roll out the pastry, adding a sprinkle of flour to stop the dough from sticking, to form a 35 cm × 45 cm (13¾ in × 17¾ in) rectangle, about 2 mm (⅛ in) thick. If the pastry becomes too elastic and springs back as you roll it, allow it to rest for a minute or two.

Brush the pastry lightly with the melted butter and sprinkle over the breadcrumbs. Now spread the apple filling over the top, leaving a 2 cm (¾ in) border on three sides and taking the filling to the edge on the long side closest to you. Fold the short sides of the pastry over the filling, then, starting from the long edge, carefully roll up the strudel, using the baking paper to help you, until you have a log with the seam underneath. Carefully transfer the strudel on the baking paper to a large baking tray, then brush all over with the beaten egg.

Transfer the strudel on the tray to the oven and bake for 30 minutes, then reduce the temperature to 170°C (340°F) and continue to cook for another 25–30 minutes, until the pastry is crisp and lightly golden.

Remove the strudel from the oven and allow to cool to room temperature. Dust with icing sugar, then cut into slices and serve.

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