Strawberry Rhubarb Strudel

SERVINGS: 12 strudels ACTIVE TIME: 1 hour TOTAL TIME: 2 hours

As one of the most coveted breakfasts from my childhood, toaster strudels have it all: a light flaky crust, a gooey fruity center and a delicious vanilla icing that narrowly toes the line between breakfast and dessert. This Strawberry Rhubarb Strudel recipe is a fun play on the classic Southern spring and summer time pie and makes a breakfast favorite even better.

Ingredients

For the Strudel

- 2 1/2 cups fresh strawberries, diced
- 2 1/2 cups fresh rhubarb, diced
- 2 navel oranges
- 1/2 cup orange juice
- 1 teaspoon orange zest
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 tablespoons corn starch
- An egg
- 4 sheets puff pastry

For the Icing

- 3/4 cup confectioner's sugar
- 1 tablespoon half and half
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- *A pinch of cinnamon, optional*

Directions

1. Begin by thoroughly rinsing the strawberries and the rhubarb. Remove the stems from the strawberries and then cut the fruit into quarters. Cut the rhubarb vertically down the center of the stalk and then cut into thin horizontal slices. Lightly drag a zester across the peel of one of the oranges so that you are only getting the orange part and leaving the bitter white part on the fruit. Once you have accumulated approximately a teaspoon of the zest, run your knife through it a few times on a cutting board to make sure there aren't any pieces that are too large. Cut the two oranges in half and squeeze the juice into a bowl. There should be approximately a half cup of juice. Using a fork, dissolve the two tablespoons of corn starch into the orange juice.

2. In a medium sauce pot, combine the cut strawberries, rhubarb, orange zest, sugar and orange-juice- corn-starch solution and mix thoroughly. Let simmer over medium heat for approximately 15 to 20 minutes until the fruit and rhubarb have softened and the liquid has thickened. Place a fine mesh strainer over a container and pour off about a cup and a half of the liquid from the sauce pot. Set aside and let cool. This will be later referred to as "the syrup." Scoop the remaining fruit and liquid into a separate container and put in the refrigerator to cool and continue to firm up. This will be later referred to as "the filling."

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Shopping List

- ☐ 2 1/2 cups fresh strawberries
- ☐ 4-5 stalks fresh rhubarb
- ☐ 2 navel oranges
- ☐ sugar
- ☐ corn starch
- ☐ an egg
- ☐ 4 sheets puff pastry
- ☐ confectioner's sugar
- ☐ half and half
- ☐ vanilla extract
- ☐ cinnamon (optional)

3. In a small mixing bowl, combine the confectioner's sugar, vanilla extract and half and half and whisk thoroughly. An optional pinch of cinnamon is also a nice way to add some depth of flavor to the icing. Pour into a small zip-top bag (more on this later) and put in the refrigerator to firm up.

4. Now it's time to prepare for assembling and baking the strudels. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper or silpats. Crack an egg into a small bowl and add about a tablespoon of water. Whisk together with a fork and set aside with a brush to be used later. Scoop a handful or two of flour onto a small dish for quick access along with a clean fork also to be used later. Remove puff pastry sheets from their packaging and place under a dampened kitchen towel while you work. Lastly, the filling should be cooled enough now to remove the fridge and set out with the rest of your assembly line.

5. Sprinkle flour onto a clean work surface and place a sheet of pastry on top. Add more flour to the top of the pastry and put a little bit of flour on to a rolling pin as well. This will keep the pastry from sticking to the counter top and the rolling pin. Roll the pastry out in all directions until it is about an inch thick and about twice the original size. Using a pizza cutter, trim off the odd edges until you have a large square. Make two vertical cuts across the pasty to produce three rectangles that are approximately a third of the dough each. Next make one horizontal cut across the center of the rectangles to separate them into halves. Carefully transfer the bottom row to a baking sheet. Brush the egg wash over the pastry and then scoop approximately two to three tablespoons of the filling onto the center of the rectangle. Smooth it out so that the filling covers all but a half inch border around the rectangle. Brush a little more of the egg wash around the edges and then carefully place the corresponding half from the top row on top to create a "pocket." Use your finger to lightly seal around the border of the strudel and smooth the ends together. Dip a fork into a little bit of flour and then press the tips of the fork along the border of the strudel, occasionally dipping it back into the flour to keep it from sticking to the dough. Position the completed strudel on the baking sheet so that you can fit five more strudels onto it. Each sheet of puff pastry will produce three strudels.

6. Repeat step five to assemble the eleven remaining strudels. Before putting into the oven, brush a little bit of the egg wash across the top of the pastries so that they will get nice and golden brown in the oven. Bake at 375 degrees for 30 minutes, rotating the sheet pans halfway through. Take out of the oven and allow to cool slightly. At this point you can serve them or allow them to cool completely and wrap in wax paper and keep in the refrigerator. If serving now, remove the zip-top bag with the frosting in it from the refrigerator and use scissors to trim a small corner from the bag. You can now use the bag as a piping bag and gently squeeze the icing onto the strudels from the bag in a decorative pattern. Drizzle the strudels with the icing and the syrup from earlier and serve warm.

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