

Torta delle Nonna



Ingredients:

For the pasta frolla

- 300 grams Italian 00 flour or all-purpose flour
- 8 grams lievito Pane degli Angeli, or 3/4 teaspoon baking powder
- 150 grams sugar
- 175 grams butter
- Zest of one lemon

For the pastry cream filling

- 3 egg yolks
- 100 grams sugar
- 3 cups whole milk
- 1/2 of a vanilla bean, or 1 tsp natural vanilla extract
- 3 heaping tablespoons flour

For the topping

- 100 grams of pine nuts
- Powdered sugar

Equipment:

You can get by without any of these gadgets and bakeware, but having them will simplify things when making a torta della nonna.

- Digital food scale that converts from pounds and ounces to kilograms and grams. In Italian recipes, ingredients are listed in grams. It's so much easier and more precise than volume-based units of measure.
- Zester. Lemon and orange zest are staples in Italian baking. If you don't have one, a zester is a worthwhile addition to your repertoire of kitchen tools.
- Tart pan with a removable bottom. You can make a crostata di frutta in any bakeware you like, but a 9" tart pan with fluted edges and a removable bottom is extra convenient and makes for a very pretty crostata.

Instructions:

Prepare the pasta frolla

1. Add the flour, lievito Pane degli Angeli or baking powder, sugar, butter, egg yolks, and lemon zest to a mixing bowl.
2. Mix on medium speed with a stand mixer until the dough is combined.
3. Using a kitchen scale, divide the dough into two equal parts.
4. Shape each part into a ball, cover in plastic wrap, and refrigerate.

Prepare the crema pasticcera

1. Add the egg yolks and sugar to a small saucepan and stir until well-mixed.
2. Slowly add the milk to the eggs and sugar, stirring constantly until well mixed.
3. Add the seeds of half a vanilla bean or the vanilla extract, and place over low heat.
4. Using a tea strainer, slowly add the flour to the liquid, stirring vigorously with a wire whisk to incorporate all the flour.
5. Increase the heat to medium-low and stir the pastry cream continuously until it thickens and comes to a boil.
6. Remove the cream from heat, cover the surface of the cream with a piece of wax paper or parchment paper to keep a film from forming on top, and allow it to cool.

Assemble the torta

1. Preheat the oven to 350° F (180° C).
2. Prepare a 24 cm /9-10 in tart pan with butter and flour.
3. Place the pine nuts in a bowl of water.
4. Remove the pasta frolla from the refrigerator and sprinkle flour on a smooth surface.
5. Roll out one piece of dough until it is big enough to fill the base and sides of your tart pan.
6. Line the tart pan with the rolled-out dough, pressing it in so that it is equal in thickness on the bottom and on the sides.
Trim any excess dough around the rim of the pan. Pierce the bottom of the crust a few times with a fork.
7. Pour the pastry cream on top of the crust and spread it smooth.
8. Roll out the second piece of dough until it is just larger than the tart pan.
9. Place the disk of dough on top of the crostata. Carefully pinch the top and bottom edges together to seal the crust. Make a few small cuts into the top of the crust.
10. Use a pastry brush to gently dampen the top of the crust with water.
11. Drain the pine nuts and sprinkle them on top of the crust.
12. Bake at 350° F (180° C) for approximately 40 minutes.
13. Let the crostata cool completely and use a tea strainer to dust it with powdered sugar before serving.

Notes:

Italian 00 flour, such as Antimo Caputo Double Zero Flour, is ideal, but all-purpose flour will work fine.

Lievito Pane degli Angeli is an Italian leavening agent used in many Italian baked goods. Made of baking soda, baking powder, and vanilla aroma, you can substitute baking powder if you need to, but we buy a few boxes of Pane degli Angeli at a time and keep it on hand for our Italian baking.