



A Timeless Italian Classic: Torta della Nonna

Description

Ingredients

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For the shortcrust pastry:

- 250g all-purpose flour
- 100g cold unsalted butter, cubed
- 75g granulated sugar
- 1 whole egg
- 1 tsp baking powder
- A pinch of salt
- Zest of 1 lemon (optional but recommended)

For the custard filling:

- 500ml whole milk
- 4 egg yolks
- 100g sugar
- 40g cornstarch
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

Optional toppings:

- Pine nuts (traditional)
- Powdered sugar (for dusting)

Instructions

1. Make the pastry:

- In a bowl, combine flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt.

- Rub in the cold butter until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs.
- Add the egg and lemon zest, then knead lightly until a dough forms.
- Wrap and chill for 30 minutes.

1. Prepare the custard:

- Heat the milk in a saucepan until just simmering.
- Whisk egg yolks, sugar, and cornstarch in a separate bowl.
- Gradually pour the hot milk into the egg mixture, whisking constantly.
- Return to the heat and stir until thickened.
- Remove from heat, add vanilla, and cover with plastic wrap to prevent a skin.

1. Assemble and bake:

- Preheat the oven to 180°C (350°F).
- Roll out 2/3 of the dough and line a greased tart pan.
- Spread the cooled custard over the base.
- Roll out the remaining dough to cover the top, sealing the edges.
- Sprinkle with pine nuts if using.
- Bake for 35-40 minutes until golden. Cool before dusting with powdered sugar.

Variations

For a modern twist, try adding a layer of fruit preserves beneath the custard—apricot or raspberry work beautifully. If you love spices, infuse the milk with a cinnamon stick or a pinch of nutmeg for a warming flavor.

Chocolate lovers can fold cocoa powder into the custard or drizzle melted chocolate over the finished tart.

For a nut-free version, omit the pine nuts and top the tart with a lattice design instead. Alternatively, use a sprinkle of coarse sugar for extra crunch. If you prefer a lighter filling, replace half the custard with whipped cream folded into the cooled pastry cream.

For a festive touch, decorate the tart with edible flowers or candied citrus peel. You can also experiment with different extracts—almond or orange work wonderfully in place of vanilla. The possibilities are endless, making this recipe a versatile canvas for creativity.

Tips

To prevent a soggy crust, blind bake the base for 10 minutes before adding the custard. If you don't have cornstarch, flour can be used as a thickener, though the texture may be slightly denser.

For an extra-shiny finish, brush the top crust with an egg wash before baking.

If your custard curdles, don't panic—blend it briefly with an immersion blender to smooth it out. When rolling the dough, work quickly to keep it cool; if it becomes too soft, chill it again before continuing. For even baking, rotate the tart halfway through the cooking time.

For the flakiest pastry, ensure all ingredients are cold and handle the dough as little as possible.

If the edges brown too quickly, cover them with foil. Let the tart cool completely before slicing to ensure clean cuts and set custard.

Storage

Store leftover tart in the refrigerator, covered, for up to 3 days. The flavors meld beautifully overnight, making it even more delicious the next day.

To freeze, wrap individual slices tightly in plastic wrap and aluminum foil; they'll keep for up to a month.

For best results when reheating, thaw frozen slices in the fridge overnight. Warm briefly in a low oven (150°C/300°F) for 10 minutes if desired, though it's equally tasty cold. Avoid microwaving, as it can make the pastry soggy.

If preparing ahead, the unbaked tart can be refrigerated for up to 24 hours before baking. The custard can also be made 2 days in advance—just keep it covered in the fridge until ready to use.

Conclusion

Torta della Nonna is more than just a dessert—it's a celebration of tradition and family. Each bite carries the warmth of generations, making it perfect for both special occasions and everyday moments. Its versatility and crowd-pleasing nature ensure it will become a favorite in your recipe collection.

From its crisp, golden crust to the silky custard within, this Italian classic is sure to win hearts. Whether you stick to the traditional recipe or add your own twist, the result is always comforting and delicious. Bake it once, and you'll understand why it's stood the test of time.

Category

- 1. Grandma Recipes

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