

SWISS CHARD CROSTATA

Ingredients

- 1 recipe Fennel Seed Crust
- 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 finely chopped medium yellow onion
- 4 to 5 minced garlic cloves
- 1 1/2 pounds Swiss chard, stems cut into 1/4-inch dice (to equal 1 cup), and leaves sliced into 1/4-inch ribbons (to equal 15 loosely packed cups)
- 1 teaspoon fine sea salt
- 1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
- 2 teaspoons dried Italian seasoning (or fresh herbs; see Variation)
- 2 pinches of ground nutmeg
- 4 large eggs
- 1/2 cup chopped scallions
- 1 cup ricotta cheese (whole or part-skim)
- 1/2 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese

Method

Make the fennel seed crust, and let it chill in the refrigerator for at least thirty minutes.

Make the chard mixture: heat the olive oil in a Dutch oven over medium heat. Add the onions and cook until they just begin to soften, about 2 minutes. Stir in the garlic and chard stems and cook until the stems begin to soften, about 5 minutes. Add the chard leaves (in batches if needed to fit the pan), salt, red pepper flakes, Italian seasoning, and nutmeg. Cook until the leaves have fully wilted and any liquid has cooked off, about 10 minutes more. Turn off the heat and let cool.

Assemble the crostata: while the chard is cooling, preheat the oven to 375°F. On a piece of parchment, flatten the crostata dough and roll it from the center outward with a lightly floured rolling pin. Turn the dough and parchment as you go to create a circular shape about 15 inches in diameter and a little less than 1/4-inch thick. (Don't bother trying to make a perfect circle, but do try to even out the thickness of the dough.) Transfer the parchment and dough to a rimless baking sheet (the dough can hang over the edges for now).

In a small bowl, lightly beat 1 egg with 1 teaspoon of water to make an egg wash; set it aside. In a large bowl, lightly beat together the remaining 3 eggs, then stir in the chard mixture, scallions, ricotta, and Parmesan to combine.

Transfer the chard mixture to the dough, spreading it out evenly but leaving a border of about 1 1/2 inches. Trim any dough edges that seem too long or thick. Gently fold the dough border up and over the filling, pleating it as you go. Brush the dough lightly with the egg wash.

Bake the crostata until the crust is golden-brown and the filling is firm in the center, 40 to 45 minutes. Slide the crostata, still on the parchment, onto a wire rack to cool for at least 15 minutes before cutting and serving. It can be served warm or at room temperature.

Note: Leftovers of this crostata are delicious cold, but you can also reheat them on a baking sheet at 375°F until warmed through, 10 to 12 minutes.

Variations: To use fresh herbs in place of the dried Italian seasoning, combine ¼ cup chopped fresh basil leaves, 1 tablespoon chopped fresh marjoram leaves, ½ teaspoon chopped fresh thyme leaves, and ½ teaspoon chopped fresh rosemary leaves. To use kale, collards, or mustard greens in place of Swiss chard, first blanch the chopped greens (omit the stems) in boiling water until tender, about 2 minutes. Drain and rinse them. Squeeze them gently to release excess water and proceed as you would with Swiss chard. (Mustard greens will offer a more bitter flavor.)

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Yield

8 to 10 servings

FENNEL SEED CRUST

Ingredients

- 2 teaspoons fennel seeds
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon fine sea salt
- 1/2 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil
- Up to 1/2 cup plus 2 tablespoons ice water

Method

Toast the fennel seeds in a small skillet over medium heat, continuously stirring or shaking the pan, until the seeds are golden and fragrant, about 3 minutes. Let them cool.

In a food processor or large bowl, briefly pulse or stir together the fennel seeds, flour, salt, and parmesan until just incorporated. Add the olive oil and blend or stir to combine. While the processor is running, or while stirring, pour in 1/2 cup of the ice water (without the ice), then add more as needed, 1 tablespoon at a time, until the dough just begins to form a ball. It should be wet and smooth, but should not stick to your fingers.

Knead the dough on a lightly floured board for about 30 seconds until it comes together fully. If it pulls apart at all or is dry and tough, place it back in the food processor or bowl, add up to 2 tablespoons more water, and blend or stir until it is just incorporated. Flatten the ball of dough just slightly and wrap it in plastic wrap; let it rest in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes or up to 1 day in advance of assembling the crostata.

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Yield

One 15-Inch Round of Dough