

Apple Strudel with Filo Leaves

From Jenny Redfern's Kitchen

You can find filo dough in oblong boxes in the frozen food section of a well-stocked supermarket. Typically, each box contains two packages, and each package contains about 20 filo leaves, wrapped together. This is usually explained in tiny print on the side of the box.

This recipe assumes you will use one of those boxes to make about 20-24 strudels, using 2 filo leaves for each strudel. You can also use just one of the packages, in which case you should halve the amounts in this recipe.

Much of the strudel-making work is up-front: peeling and slicing apples, grating lemon zest, mixing the crumbs for sprinkling, clarifying butter (optional). Once all the ingredients are ready, the work becomes an assembly line of buttering leaves and rolling strudels quickly to prevent the thin dough from drying out and tearing.

Utensils: apple peeler, paring knife, bowls, smooth linen towels, parchment paper, clean goose feather or pastry brush, small pan for melting butter, baking sheets, measuring cups and spoons. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

Ingredients for about 20 strudels:

- 1 box of filo dough (about 40 leaves using both packages in the box)
- 20-22 medium apples, a mix of pippin and golden delicious, peeled, cored, and sliced into two large bowls
- 1 3/4 c raisins, soaked in 1 c warm rum until plump

In a separate bowl, mix thoroughly:

- 1 c finely chopped walnuts
- 2 c sugar
- grated zest of 3 lemons (Meyer, if available)
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1/2 c cornstarch
- 1/2 c flour

Squeeze the juice from the 3 lemons over the apples as you work to keep them from browning. Gently stir the nut-sugar mixture into the sliced apples, add the rum-soaked and drained raisins, and let the fruit mixture sit while you prepare the other ingredients. Over low heat, melt 1 c unsalted butter (optional: remove the milk solids).



In a separate bowl, mix thoroughly:

- 1 c finely ground nuts
- 1 c granulated sugar
- 1 c cornflake crumbs

Assembly

Dampen a clean, smooth cotton or linen tea towel and lay it flat on your work surface. Work with one package of filo leaves at a time. Remove the filo leaves from their wrapper, unroll them next to the tea towel, and keep them covered with plastic wrap and a second damp tea towel. Lay one filo sheet on the damp towel on the table, short side facing you. Using the goose feather or pastry brush, gently frush the filo with melted butter, just enough to glaze, not to soak it. Sprinkle the buttered filo with a heaping tablespoon of the cornflake crumb mixture. Layer a second filo sheet on the first and repeat the butter and sprinkle routine. Spoon apples along the bottom edge of the two prepared filo leaves--trial and error will teach you the right amount.

Using the damp towel, roll up the filo and apples, tucking in the ends as you go. Place the roll onto a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Repeat until 4 or 5 rolls are on the sheet. Make an egg wash with one egg and a teaspoon of water, and brush the tops of the strudels. Cut a few shallow diagonal slits into the top of each roll.



Bake at 350 degrees F for 30-35 minutes, until golden brown. I use both racks in the oven-- place racks on two alternating levels, and place a pan on each rack. Set the timer for 15 minutes, then switch the positions of the pans and put them back in for another 15-20 minutes. Place pan on rack to cool. Serve strudel while still warm, with vanilla ice cream or whipped cream, or both.

If you are going to serve the strudel within 24 hours, leave it on the baking pan or a serving plate, uncovered to keep the filo crisp. It should be warmed and crisped in the oven before serving. Baked strudel can also be frozen if wrapped carefully in aluminum foil or put in aluminum baking pans with plastic lids.

Cherry filing for about strudel

- 4-5 c pitted dark cherries, frozen
- 1/2 c sugar
- 2 1/2 Tbsp cornstarch
- 1 tsp almond extract
- finely grated zest of one lemon

In a large non-stick sauce pan over medium heat, bring the cherries, sugar, and cornstarch to a simmer, stirring steadily, until the mixture is bubbly and getting thick. Remove from heat and stir in the extract and zest. Let the mixture cool completely before spooning it onto the prepared filo leaves.

