

Torta della Nonna

INGREDIENTS

- For the Pastry:
 - 4 cups (475 gr) flour (I use 00 flour)
 - 1 cup (200 gr) of sugar
 - 7 ounces (200 gr) of butter (2 sticks are 225 gr- I cut off 25 gr, 1 Oz, to use for the cream)
 - 3 large eggs
 - Zest from 1 lemon
 - 2 tsps baking powder
- For the Cream:
 - 1/2 cup sugar (95 grams)
 - 2 large eggs
 - 2/3 cup (80 gr) flour
 - 1 quart milk
 - 1 lemon, peel only
 - 1 ounce (25 gr) butter (cut off the previous list)
 - 1 pinch of salt
- For top:
 - 2 TBSPs pignoli nuts



DIRECTIONS

- Grease a 10" spring-form pan and set aside.
- Cut butter into small pieces in a bowl.
- Add all the ingredients from the pastry list until a smooth dough is achieved.
- You may do that by hand or using a KitchenAid with hook attachment.
- You will end up with a dough similar in consistency to pie dough.
- Wrap in plastic film and refrigerate for at least an hour.
- Meanwhile, you can start the cream.
- Place the milk, the 1 Oz of butter and lemon peels in a small pan and heat at low until just lukewarm.
- While the milk is heating, mix sugar and eggs with a wire whisk in another pan until light and slightly foamy.
- Add the warm milk with lemon peels and continue stirring until incorporated.
- Place the flour in a small sifter and add slowly to the milk mixture.
- Continue stirring during this step to avoid lumps.
- Add the salt and cook on low heat until the cream thickens and just begins to boil (bubble).
- Do not leave the cream unattended and stir continually until it's done.

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DIRECTIONS (CONT.)

- Set aside to cool, covered with film wrap to avoid the forming of a crust on top.
- Remove the pastry from fridge and divide it in two pieces, 2/3 of it for bottom and 1/3 for top.
- Start with the bigger piece and put the other back in the fridge.
- Place the dough between two pieces of floured wax paper to make rolling out easier.
- Using a rolling pin, roll the dough into a 13" circle.
- Remove one layer of wax paper and turn upside down so that pastry side will go in the pan.
- Line the bottom and sides of the previously greased spring-form baking pan with the pastry.
- This step might be tricky since the dough is sticky. Flour your hands if needed.
- Make sure entire bottom and sides of pan are evenly covered with dough.
- Gently prick dough evenly with a fork.
- Remove lemon peels from cream and stir.
- Spread cream in an even layer over the pastry bottom.
- Now it's time to roll out the top pastry layer.
- Use same method as described for rolling out bottom.
- Lay top pastry layer carefully over cream.
- Pinch pastry around border of pan to seal.
- Cut off any excess dough and use to decorate the top.
- Sprinkle with pignoli nuts and bake at 375F for 45 minutes or until golden color is achieved.
- Sprinkle with powdered sugar before serving.

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NONNA'S TIPS

- Use flour to help with rolling the pastry dough since it can get sticky. Also, if the wax paper will not separate easily, place the layer you're working on in the freezer for 5 minutes. The paper will peel right off and you can use your fingertips to fix any mishaps with the dough.
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- Feel free to decorate the cake top with designs made from leftover dough. I made a flower, as you can see in the picture, but you can use your own inspiration (and maybe include the kids to help you) to decorate it as you like.
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- You can substitute the lemon flavoring in both the pastry and custard with vanilla instead.
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- This recipe seems difficult but it's not. I made sure to emphasize details for easier execution. This cake is truly an Italian classic and worth every minute of the work involved in making it. It can be served warm, room temp or cold. It's delicious regardless!