

Sweet Hour with Carly Michaels

Galettes

There is perhaps no baking project easier, simpler, or lower-stress than the galette. This free-form pastry can be made either savory or sweet. The galette is the ever so humble free form tart. No tins, no need to line or blind baking required. Just a baking tray and your creative and abstract mind. I call it the lazy persons tart. You can use different types of pastry, sable, shortcrust, whole wheat then fill it with either sweet or savory fillings and fold over the edges.

Ingredients

PASTRY	TOPPING
1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour	4 Golden Delicious apples
1 1/2 teaspoons sugar	2 tablespoons sugar
1/4 teaspoon salt	1/2 teaspoon cinnamon - <i>I like to add a pinch of cardamom too</i>
1 stick plus 2 tablespoons cold unsalted butter, cut into small pieces	1 tablespoon honey, preferably wildflower
1/3 cup ice water	1 tablespoon unsalted butter, cut into small pieces
<i>I use an egg wash</i>	

How to Make It

STEP 1

In a food processor, combine the flour with the sugar, salt and butter and process for about 5 seconds. Sprinkle the ice water over the flour mixture and process until the pastry just begins to come together, about 10 seconds; you should still be able to see small pieces of butter in it. Transfer the pastry to a work surface, gather it together and pat into a disk. Wrap the pastry in plastic or wax paper and refrigerate until chilled. (You can also roll out the pastry and use it right away.)

STEP 2

Peel, halve and core the apples and slice them crosswise 1/4 inch thick. Set aside the larger center slices and coarsely chop the end slices and any broken ones; about half of the slices should be chopped. In a small bowl, combine the sugar and cinnamon. You don't have to peel them. Sometimes I prefer the more rustic look with the skin on. I used a mandolin to slice the apple but it is not necessary.

STEP 3

Preheat the oven to 400°. On a lightly floured work surface, roll out the pastry to a 12-by-14-inch rectangle and transfer to a large rimmed baking sheet.

Before I layer the apples or whatever fruit I am using, I add slivered almonds and apricot jam to this recipe. My favorite fruit to use is Apricot. But any fruit can be used. Make sure you take in to account

for the water level in the fruit. Some fruits require corn starch or flour for the juices will congeal, if not your galette can become leaky and watery.

Spread the chopped apples over the pastry to within 1 inch of the edge. Drizzle the honey over the chopped apples. Decoratively arrange the apple slices on top in concentric circles or in slightly overlapping rows. Sprinkle the cinnamon sugar evenly over the apples and dot with the pieces of butter. Fold the pastry edge up and over the apples to create a 1-inch border. Brush the pastry with an egg wash.

STEP 4

Bake the galette for about 1 hour, until the pastry is nicely browned and crisp and all of the apples are tender. Transfer the pan to a rack and let the galette cool. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Make Ahead

The buttery pastry can be refrigerated overnight.

Common mistakes -

1. Starting With a Too-Moist Dough: One pitfall to avoid is a dough that's too moist or wet. "Don't be afraid of working some moisture into the dough as you roll it, rather than starting out with one that has too much liquid," explains Claire. It's okay if it's a little crumbly when you begin rolling it out. Why is this important? Precision. Although perfection is not the goal in composing a galette, the folded edges shouldn't melt and become lumpy or loose. They should have enough structure to hold the filling inside. Keep your folds pert and perfect with a firm, not wet dough.
2. Rolling the Dough Too Thin—or Thick: If your galette dough is too thick, the crust will be gummy and chewy, rather than flaky. (It will also be too small to allow the filling to be dispersed evenly). That said, the dough shouldn't be so thin you can read a newspaper through it. Saffitz recommends a uniform $\frac{1}{8}$ " thickness for the best results. It'll brown nicely, stay crisp, and won't burn before the filling cooks.
3. Using a Too-Wet Filling...: Choose fruit that's too juicy, and your crust will become a mushy, soggy mess. Blueberries are a great pick, because they are naturally high in pectin (an ingredient commonly found in jam to help it set). They also have a high skin-fruit ratio, which keeps them from getting too saucy. If you are using a very ripe or juicy fruit, like summer strawberries, add a thickener like cornstarch. You can give yourself extra insurance against a soggy crust by dusting the galette dough with semolina flour or breadcrumbs before adding the filling. They'll keep things firm and crispy, even under a small mountain of berries.
4. ...Or Piling It Too High: The deep, sloped edges of a pie pan help a pie crust hold its structure as it bakes and firms up, but a galette is baked directly on a rimmed cookie sheet and offers no such insurance. Pile the filling too high, and the crust will turn mushy and shapeless before it has time to "set."
5. Overbrowning the Crust: The crust of a galette is thin, so it has the potential to burn quicker than a pie crust. Arm yourself against this atrocity by baking it in a moderate oven (350-375°) and keeping the galette in the middle, rather than the bottom or top of the oven.
6. Not Dotting With Butter: Do you have to dot the top of your galette with pieces of butter before baking it? Technically not, but the melting butter is what imparts a gorgeous, glossy sheen to your galette. Remember that your filling has no crust to hide underneath, so it must look beautiful in its own right. A few small pats of butter are all you need; distribute them evenly across the top of the filling and let the heat of the oven melt them into the fruit (or veggies). Skip this step, and the filling can look dry or desiccated.