

Strawberry Crostata with Cornmeal Crust

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A crostata is a country-style Italian fruit tart, usually high on the flavor-to-effort ratio. Don't be a perfectionist about the crust; the whole point is for it to look rugged. Just squish it up around the fruit however you have the urge to do it the first time.

Serve with lightly sweetened whipped cream, yogurt, or ice cream.

TIME: 30 minutes active time

MAKES: 6 servings

For the crust:

1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour

3/4 cup cornmeal

1/4 teaspoon salt

1/4 cup sugar

1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter

2 tablespoons full fat sour cream

1/4 cup cold water

Raw or turbinado sugar, for decoration (optional)

For the filling:

2 pounds small strawberries, hulled and sliced

1/4 cup all-purpose flour

1 tablespoon sugar

1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon

Pulse the flour, cornmeal, salt, and sugar together in the food processor until blended. Add the butter, and pulse 20 times, or until the butter is the size of small peas. Add the sour cream, and pulse a few times to incorporate. Turn the machine on, and add most of the water in a slow, steady stream, stopping when the dough begins to come together – you may not need all the water if the atmosphere is humid. The dough is moist enough when a handful of the dough stays together when you press it into a clump in your hand.

Dump the dough onto a large piece of wax paper, gather into a ball, press into a disc shape, wrap, and chill until firm, at least 30 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees, and line a baking sheet with a silicon baking mat or parchment paper.

For the filling, place the berries in a large mixing bowl. Then mix the flour, sugar, and cinnamon together in a small bowl and set aside.

Roll the dough out on a floured surface with a floured rolling pin to about 12" in diameter. Transfer the dough to the baking sheet. Sprinkle two tablespoons of the dry

flour/sugar mixture over the center 8" of the dough, and mix the rest of the dry ingredients in with the berries. Pile the berries in the center of the dough, leaving a 2" border all the way around. Using your hands, fold the edges of the dough up and over the berries a little at a time, overlapping the dough over the previous fold each time. (If the dough doesn't readily stick together, dribble a little water on your fingers and brush it between the layers of dough to encourage it to stick.) If using the turbinado sugar, brush the crust with water or milk, and sprinkle it generously with the sugar, patting it into the crust a bit to make it stick.

Bake for 45 minutes, or until the crust has browned and the filling is thick and bubbling. Let cool on the baking sheet for about 15 minutes, or until the juice solidify, then transfer to a platter and serve.

(Hint: To keep the tart intact, it may be easier to slide the tart directly from the baking sheet onto a large cutting board and serve it on that.)