

ZWIEBELKUCHEN (ONION TART)

INGREDIENTS

for the pastry

2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon pepper
16 tablespoons (2 sticks) unsalted butter, cold
6-8 tablespoons ice cold water

for the filling

2 large onions, sliced thin
1/4 cup smoked speck*, rind removed, cut into 1/4-inch dice
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1/4 cup Gruyere cheese, grated
1 cup whole milk
1/2 cup sour cream
1 egg
1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon white pepper
pinch nutmeg
pinch paprika
sprinkle of caraway seeds (optional)

DIRECTIONS

Prepare your crust: In a bowl, combine the flour, salt and pepper. Cut in the butter, blending until the mixture resembles coarse sand (with some larger pieces of butter). Add in four or five tablespoons of the ice water, using a fork to mix the dough together. Add more water, one tablespoon at a time, just until the dough comes together in a slightly crumbly ball. Turn the dough out to a lightly floured surface. Use your hands to shape the dough into a flattened disc.

Wrap tightly in plastic wrap and refrigerate for a minimum of 2 hours (up to 24 hours).

Preheat oven to 350F. Spray a 9 or 10-inch tart pan (preferably with a removable bottom) with baking spray. On a lightly floured surface, roll out the dough disks to a 12-inch circle. Place in tart pan and crimp edges. Dock the pastry with a fork a few times, all the way to the edges. Set aside.

Cut onions in half and then in 3 mm slices. Fry the smoked speck in a non-stick pan over medium heat until lightly browned. Add vegetable oil and then onions, reduce heat to low and fry until softened and fragrant. The onions should be golden brown, but not falling apart or mushy. Remove speck and onions from the pan and set aside to cool. Once slightly cooled, add cheese and mix well (it may only partially melt; this is ok). Pour the onion and speck mixture onto the pastry.

Combine milk, cream, egg and flour in a bowl. Stir with a whisk to combine, then add salt, white pepper, nutmeg and paprika. Pour milk mixture over the onions and speck. Sprinkle with a few caraway seeds, if using. Bake for 40 minutes, or until cooked through. Serve warm or at room temperature.

* If you can't find German speck, substitute pancetta, but avoid using American style bacon as it is too fatty. Alternatively, you can leave the pork product out altogether and have the dish be vegetarian. If you skip the speck, increase the vegetable oil by 1 tablespoon.