

Torta Salata di Bietole Swiss Chard Torte

Crust:

2 cups flour
½ tsp. salt
1 tsp. baking powder
½ cup milk
1 egg
4 TB butter or margarine
Bread crumbs

Pour flour onto countertop or working surface. Make a hole in the middle of the flour. Melt the butter with the milk and pour into the hole. Lightly beat the egg separately and pour into the hole. Add salt. Mix everything together with hands, making sure the wet and dry ingredients are blended thoroughly and that the dough holds together. If the dough is too wet, add more flour; if too dry, add more milk. Form dough into a ball and let sit for ½ hour. While dough is sitting, prepare the filling.

Filling:

6 cups chopped fresh swiss chard, leaves only
1 small onion, chopped
1-2 leeks, chopped
1/3 cup grated parmesan cheese
¼ cup grated pecorino cheese
¾ cup fresh ricotta cheese
1 egg
½ tsp. grated lemon peel
Salt and pepper to taste
Ground nutmeg to taste
Red pepper flakes, if desired
Pine nuts, if desired

Parsley

Chop the swiss chard in small strips and steam until lightly cooked. When cool, squeeze out all the excess water. Sauté the onion and leeks in olive oil until translucent. Add the swiss chard and sauté together. Mix together in a mixing bowl the swiss chard, onion, leeks, cheeses, egg and lemon peel. Add nutmeg, salt and pepper to taste. Add red pepper flakes, if desired.

Roll out dough with rolling pin about 1/8" thick. Roll out to fit 9" pie tin so that it hangs over edges. Lightly grease pie tin and brush with breadcrumbs. Place dough in pie tin and prick with fork. Pour in filling so that it is even with the top of the tin. Form beaks with the dough around the edge. Sprinkle with pine nuts, if desired. Cover the edges of the crust with foil to avoid burning if you wish.

Bake at 350° for about 45 minutes or until lightly browned.

Note: In Lucca, torta di bietole can be made as a main dish (salata) or as a dessert (dolce). The recipe for the dolce is very different. Also, there are various recipes for the both types of torta, each using different types of cheeses and proportions.