Desserts / Austria

Apple Strudel

Viennese apfelstrudel — a tissue-thin dough stretched over a flour-dusted tablecloth until you can read a newspaper through it, filled with spiced apples and breadcrumbs, rolled into a log, and baked until the pastry shatters into translucent, butter-soaked layers.

Time 150 min **Servings** 4

What you'll need.

- ☐ 100 parts High-gluten bread flour or all-purpose flour
- ☐ 55 parts Warm water
- ☐ 8 parts Neutral oil (for the dough)
- ☐ 1 parts Fine sea salt
- ☐ 200 parts Tart apples (Granny Smith or Cox), peeled, thinly sliced
- ☐ 30 parts Granulated sugar
- ☐ 5 parts Ground cinnamon
- ☐ 25 parts Dry breadcrumbs, toasted in butter
- ☐ 40 parts Unsalted butter, melted, for brushing
- ☐ 10 parts Powdered (icing) sugar, for dusting

Let's make it.

01 Combine flour, warm water, oil, and salt, mixing until a shaggy dough forms. Knead vigorously for 10 full minutes — this dough requires serious development of gluten, which is what allows it to be stretched to an almost impossible thinness without tearing. Knead by slapping the dough against the work surface and folding it. The finished dough should be smooth as silk, warm from the kneading, and extremely elastic. Shape into a ball, brush with oil, and rest covered for 45 minutes at room temperature. The rest is not optional — it relaxes the gluten to the point where stretching becomes possible.

02 Toss the thinly sliced apples with sugar and cinnamon and let macerate for 15 minutes — the sugar draws out juice. Drain the excess juice thoroughly, as too much moisture will make the strudel soggy. Toast the breadcrumbs in butter until golden and fragrant — these absorb any residual apple moisture during baking, keeping the pastry crisp from inside. Combine the drained apples and buttered breadcrumbs just before filling the stretched dough.

03 Cover a large table with a clean cloth and dust lightly with flour. Place the rested dough in the center and roll it out with a pin to about 40x60cm. Then begin stretching by hand: place both hands under the dough, palms down, and stretch outward from the center using the backs of your knuckles. Walk around the table, stretching in all directions, until the dough is paper-thin (about 1mm) and almost transparent — roughly 60x80cm. The dough must be so thin you can read text through it. Brush thoroughly with melted butter as you work.

04 Spread the buttered breadcrumbs across two-thirds of the dough, leaving a 5cm border. Pile the apple filling evenly over the breadcrumbs. Using the tablecloth to assist, roll the strudel into a tight log, using the cloth to lift and fold rather than your hands. Place seam-side down on a parchment-lined baking sheet, curving into a horseshoe if needed. Brush generously with melted butter. Bake at 190°C (375°F) for 35–40 minutes, brushing with butter once more at the 20-minute mark. Dust with powdered sugar and serve warm.

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Servings are an estimate; check quantities in the source recipe.
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