

Torta Salata (Vegetable Torte)

Posted by Ayma Grup, February 10 2009

This is one of my favorite almost vegetarian recipes. It's really simple, and is a great way to make a hearty meal out of couple pounds of vegetables. Almost any firm vegetable will work, as long as it is not too wet. I usually use zucchini, which I salt to draw out the moisture, then drain before using. Whatever you use, make sure you season the vegetables before using them, and that you have enough to tightly fill the pie plate. The egg and cheese mixture adds a nice creamy texture, and binds the whole thing together.



Torta Salata with Zucchini, using all butter pie crust

For the pastry, I usually like to use puff pastry, but you can use a regular pie crust, or omit the pastry altogether. Here is the recipe using zucchini, which is adapted from *Savoring Italy*, by Robert Freson.

Ingredients for a 9" torta:

a [single 9' pie crust](#) or puff pastry crust

1-1/2 lbs. zucchini, sliced into 1/4" discs

2 whole eggs

3 egg yolks

1/2 c. ricotta cheese

3 Tbsp. grated parmesan cheese

a pinch of nutmeg

kosher or other coarse salt

pepper

additional egg wash (optional)

Procedure:

1. Lay the slices of zucchini out in a single layer on a cooling rack or cookie sheet lined with several paper towels or a clean cotton towel. Generously sprinkle with salt and set aside.
2. Meanwhile prepare your pastry crust and line the pie plate. Set aside in the refrigerator.
3. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.
4. In a medium sized bowl, beat together the eggs and egg yolks. Gently mix in the cheeses, and season with a pinch of nutmeg, salt, and pepper.
5. Using paper towels or a clean cloth towel, blot the zucchini dry then arrange them tightly in the prepared pie plate. Pour in the egg mixture so that it fills in the gaps and just covers the vegetables.
6. Brush the edges of the pastry with egg wash, if desired, and bake the torta for 40-50 minutes until the center is firm and the top is golden brown. Cool for 3 minutes before cutting.



Zucchini Torta Salata fresh from the oven

Ideas and Variations:

This torta is also delicious using swiss chard stems or asparagus in place of the zucchini. To prepare swiss chard or asparagus for use in this recipe, simply blanch them for a couple of minutes in generously salted boiling water, then cool in ice water. Drain, then cut into 1-2 inch lengths and assemble the torte as directed above. If you are using asparagus be sure to trim or peel the tough ends from the asparagus before blanching.

Try using [Homemade Ricotta](#) instead of store bought.

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