



Vanessa's savoury brunch treat: Ottolenghi's Torta Pasqualina

This savoury pie is often made using several layers of filo pastry, but I like the robustness of puff. The pie keeps well, so it's a great dish to have in the fridge over the Easter weekend. If you can't get chard, use spinach or another green. Serves six to eight.

INGREDIENTS

2 tbsp olive oil
1 medium onion, peeled and roughly chopped
1kg Swiss chard, stalks removed and roughly chopped, leaves cut into 1cm slices
3 sticks celery, trimmed and finely sliced
15g parsley leaves, roughly chopped
20g dill, roughly chopped
½ tsp ground allspice
¼ tsp grated nutmeg
250g ricotta
100g mature cheddar, grated
9 eggs
Salt and black pepper
500g all-butter puff pastry
Plain flour, for dusting



DIRECTIONS

Heat the oven to 180C/350F/gas mark 4. Put a large sauté pan for which you have a lid on a medium-high heat. Add the oil and onion, and cook for 10 minutes, stirring from time to time, until the onion is soft and starting to colour. Add the chard stalks and celery, cover and cook for five minutes. Stir in the chard leaves and cook for five minutes more, until the leaves have wilted and the stalks and celery have softened. Remove from the heat and set aside to cool a little.

Line a colander with a clean tea towel or muslin and pour in the contents of the pan. Draw the sides of the towel around the filling and squeeze out the juice: you want the mixture to be as dry as possible. Transfer the contents of the towel to a bowl and add the herbs, spices, cheeses, three eggs, half a teaspoon of salt and a good grind of pepper. Mix well and set aside.

Cut a third off the pastry and set aside. Roll out the remaining pastry on a lightly floured work surface into a 30cm square that's 2.5mm thick. Transfer to a 20cm-wide spring-form cake tin with 7cm high sides. Press the pastry into the edges of the tin and trim off most of the overhang. Roll the remaining pastry into a 25cm square lid and set aside.

Tip the chard mixture into the cake tin and use a spoon to create five egg-sized holes. Break an egg into each hole, then lay the lid on top. Trim the edges, then pinch the lid and base together to make sure it's secure. (If you like, use the excess pastry to make festive decorations for the top.)

Whisk the remaining egg, brush it over the lid, then prick a few times with a fork. Bake for 45 minutes, until cooked and golden brown. Leave to cool for half an hour, and serve warm or at room temperature.