

Rugelach with Raspberry Walnut Filling

Joan Nathan, My Life in Recipes

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8 ounces cream cheese (227 grams) at room temperature

1 cup unsalted butter (2 sticks/227 grams) at room temperature

2 tablespoons granulated sugar

2 cups all-purpose flour (250 grams)

1 Pinch salt

1 cup raspberry jam, use a good-quality kind, or strawberry preserves

3/4 cup walnuts (75 grams) toasted and finely chopped (but leave some slightly larger chunks)

2 tablespoons vanilla sugar, for sprinkling

Per Serving (excluding unknown items): 173 Calories; 12g Fat (59.3% calories from fat); 2g Protein; 16g Carbohydrate; 1g Dietary Fiber; 22mg Cholesterol; 67mg Sodium; 7g Total Sugars; 0mcg Vitamin D; 16mg Calcium; 1mg Iron; 53mg Potassium; 38mg Phosphorus. Exchanges: .

Carolyn T's Blog: tastingspoons.com

Servings: 32

From the podcast: When I was in Montreal at Hof Kelsten, a stellar Jewish bakery-deli, I tasted the best rugelach ever. The cream-cheese dough was shaped into small rectangular pockets, overflowing with strawberry jam and nuts. Although the chef would not share the recipe, he did tell me the ingredients, and I realized his pastry is very similar to my own, a simple American cream-cheese butter dough so good that one reviewer in Montreal mistook Hof Kelsten's version for a French mille-feuille pastry

1. Put the cream cheese, butter, and sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment. Cream until blended, about 2 minutes. Scrape the sides of the bowl, then add the flour and salt and mix until a very soft dough is formed, about 1 more minute. Scrape the dough into a rectangle and onto a sheet of plastic wrap, wrap it tightly, and refrigerate for 2 hours or overnight.

2. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper. Divide the dough into four rectangles, then pat each into a rough square. Roll one piece into a rectangle about 1/8-inch thick (roughly 9 by 12 inches). Spoon a fourth of the jam onto the rectangle, then spread it almost to the edge, leaving about a 1/2-inch border all around. Sprinkle on 1/4 of the nuts.

3. Roll the dough up along the long side, like a jelly roll, tucking in the ends and positioning it seam side down. Using the side of your hand like a knife, cut the roll into eight pieces (this causes the dough to crimp partially shut, whereas an actual knife would create a more spiraled appearance). Gently separate each one and place the slices on the prepared baking sheets, repeating with the remaining dough and filling. You should have sixteen cookies per baking sheet. Refrigerate for at least an hour.

4. Preheat the oven to 400°F with two oven racks in the middle. Remove the rugelach from the refrigerator, and use your fingers to crimp the edges shut. (Any jam that oozes out will caramelize beautifully, so don't worry about that.) Sprinkle the cookies generously with the vanilla sugar.

Put the sheets into the oven, and immediately decrease the temperature to 350°F. Bake for 15 minutes, then swap the baking sheets, rotate them back to front, and bake for about 15 minutes more, or until the rugelach are golden on top. Transfer them to racks to cool.

5. VANILLA SUGAR: Put about 4 cups of sugar in a bowl or a glass jar with a lid. Take a vanilla-bean pod and carefully cut down the length, flicking out the beans from the center of the vanilla. Submerge the pods in the sugar, close the jar, and let it infuse for at least a day. Use it whenever you want to make a pastry with vanilla, even if the recipe doesn't call for it, or if you wish to sprinkle it on your rugelach.