

Deconstructed Apple Crisp with Buttermilk Ice Cream

Makes 8 Servings

Recipe adapted from Liz Williams, Pastry Supervisor, Blackberry Farm.

Blackberry Farm gives the classic apple crisp a creative makeover: The topping is transformed into oatmeal cookies that are served atop the apple filling in individual bowls. A scoop of buttermilk ice cream adds the perfect finishing touch. To get a head start on this recipe, you can make the apple filling a day in advance; let cool, then cover and refrigerate. The cookies can be baked the day before and stored in an airtight container at room temperature. The ice cream can be made up to 3 days ahead of time and stored in the freezer.

Ingredients:

For the apple filling:

1 cup (250 ml) water
2 Tbs. dark rum
Wide strips of zest from 1 lemon
Juice of 1/2 lemon
1 cup (185 g) golden raisins
1/2 cup (90 g) currants
1/2 vanilla bean, split lengthwise
6 cups (750 g) peeled, cored and chopped Granny Smith apples (about 6 apples)
1/2 cup (105 g) firmly packed light brown sugar
Finely grated zest and juice of 1 lemon
1/2 tsp. freshly grated nutmeg
1/2 tsp. sea salt

For the oatmeal cookies:

3 cups (280 g) rolled oats
1 1/2 cups (235 g) all-purpose flour
1 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. sea salt
20 Tbs. (2 1/2 sticks/315 g) unsalted butter
3/4 cup (185 g) firmly packed dark brown sugar
1/2 cup (105 g) firmly packed light brown sugar
2 eggs
1 1/2 tsp. vanilla extract
Whole pecan halves for garnish (optional)

For the buttermilk ice cream:

2 cups (500 ml) half-and-half
1/2 cup (160 ml) corn syrup
1 vanilla bean, split lengthwise
6 egg yolks
2/3 cup (155 g) sugar
1 cup (250 ml) buttermilk

Directions:

To make the apple filling, in a saucepan, combine the water, rum, lemon zest strips, juice of 1/2 lemon, raisins and currants. Scrape the vanilla bean seeds into the pan and add the pod. Set over medium-high heat and bring to a boil, then remove from the heat and let steep for 30 minutes. Drain the fruit, reserving the cooking liquid. Discard the lemon zest and vanilla bean pod. In a large saucepan over medium heat, combine the apples, brown sugar, the rehydrated fruit, 1/2 cup (125 ml) of the reserved cooking liquid, grated zest and juice of 1 lemon, nutmeg and sea salt. Cover and simmer for 5 minutes, then uncover and simmer until the apples are tender, about 5 minutes more. Serve the filling warm or at room temperature. To make the cookies, position 1 rack in the upper third and 1 rack in the lower third of an oven. Preheat the oven to 350°F (180°C). Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper. In a bowl, using a fork, stir together the oats, flour, baking soda and salt. In the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the flat beater, beat together the butter and brown sugars on medium speed until creamy, about 2 minutes, stopping the mixer to scrape down the bowl as needed. Add the eggs one at a time, beating after each addition, then beat in the vanilla. Reduce the speed to low, add the oat mixture and beat until incorporated. Scoop 2 Tbs. dough for each cookie onto the prepared baking sheets, staggering the cookies 8 to a sheet. Flatten the cookies with the palm of your hand, then press 4 pecans in a row on top of each cookie. Bake until golden brown, 12 to 13 minutes, rotating the baking sheets from front to back and 180 degrees halfway through baking. Transfer the baking sheets to wire racks and let cool for 5 minutes, then transfer the cookies to the racks and let cool completely. Repeat to bake the remaining dough. The recipe makes 32 cookies, so you'll have some left over for later enjoyment. To make the ice cream, in a saucepan, combine the half-and-half and corn syrup. Scrape the vanilla bean seeds into the pan and add the pod. Set over medium heat and bring to a simmer, then remove from the heat. Meanwhile, in a bowl, whisk together the egg yolks and sugar until thick. Slowly add the hot half-and-half mixture, whisking constantly until fully incorporated. Pour the mixture back into the pan, set over medium-low heat and cook, stirring continuously, until the mixture thickens and coats the back of a spoon, 9 to 10 minutes; do not allow it to boil. Pour the custard through a fine-mesh sieve set over a clean bowl. Nestle the bowl in a larger one filled halfway with ice water and cool the custard to room temperature. Refrigerate until chilled. Whisk the buttermilk into the cold custard. Transfer to an ice cream maker and freeze according to the manufacturer's instructions. Transfer the ice cream to a freezer-safe container, cover and freeze until firm, at least 4 hours or up to 3 days. To assemble, divide the apple filling among 8 individual bowls and top each with a scoop of ice cream. Place a cookie, whole or crumbled, on top. Serve immediately.

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