

Sweet Austria: Traditional Desserts & Pastries

Verlag Perlen-Reihe

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Austria and the strudel - a grand love story.

The question of who actually created this delicacy is the subject of passionate discussions.

Although the Austrians are naturally convinced that this flaky pastry could only be an Alpine invention, one can also find strudel in old cookbooks under the name "Spanish dough". But one thing is certain: whether it is hearty or sweet, whether it is served as a soup garnish, a main dish or a dessert, in no other country can one find such wonderful and surprising strudel variations. In Styria, the strudel even serves as a guarantee of marriageability: in this part of Austria, women are said to be allowed to wed only when they are able to make strudel dough without holes.



Difficulty level: 👑👑

Preparation time: 90 minutes

APPLE STRUDEL

Apfelstrudel

*For 2 strudels,
about 10 servings*

Strudel dough

250g flour
1–2 tablespoons oil
A pinch of salt
125ml water

Flour for the work surface
Melted butter and
a beaten egg yolk,
for brushing the dough

Sautéed breadcrumbs:
see p. 10

On your floured work surface, mound up the dough ingredients and knead them together to make a smooth dough. Shape the dough into a ball. Sprinkle a soup plate with oil, place the dough ball on the plate, drizzle with oil, cover and leave to rest – preferably overnight in the refrigerator.

To continue, place a floured tea towel on a table and roll out the dough on the towel to make a rectangle.

With the floured back of one hand, reach under the dough; with the other floured hand, stretch the dough from the centre toward the edge of the table until you have a paper-thin rectangle.

➔ *Tip*

The dough should be thin enough that you could read a newspaper through it. Keep stretching the dough until you are ready to fill it to prevent it from contracting. You can also use ready-made strudel dough, of course.



*Delights from the oven:
heavenly soufflé variations!*

It is not only the incredible array of strudel variations that is omnipresent in Austria: soufflés ranging from “Scheiterhaufen” to “Reisauflauf” are also a staple on every menu in every corner of this country. This delicacy, baked in oven-proof moulds and often consisting of several layers, can serve as a main dish as well as a sweet dessert – and soufflés are also the perfect dish for using up leftovers.

Legend has it that Wolf Dietrich von Raitenau, Prince-Archbishop of Salzburg from 1587 to 1612, was fond of high-class food but middle-class women. However, his long-time mistress, Salome Alt, spoiled him so with simple home-baked sweets like Salzburger Nockerln that he was unable to part with either. And the rest is history: Salome Alt made sure that the archbishop was well fed, and in return he gave her Mirabell Palace and 15 illegitimate children.



The “Scheiterhaufen” is one of Vienna’s many sweet soufflés. In the south-western part of Germany, a similar form of this dish is known as “Ofenschlupfer”, literally “slipping into the oven”.

Difficulty level: 👑

Preparation time: 45 minutes

BREAD PUDDING *Scheiterhaufen*

For 8 to 10 servings

Dough

6 bread rolls
(or brioche rolls)
4 eggs
200ml milk
50g granulated sugar
1½ tablespoons
vanilla sugar
50g raisins
75g butter, melted

Apple filling

500g apples
50g granulated sugar
A pinch of ground
cinnamon
1½ tablespoons rum
50g slivered almonds

Meringue

4 egg whites
120g granulated sugar

Preheat the oven to 180°C.

Grease a shallow oven-proof baking dish.

Cut the bread rolls into thin slices and place in a large bowl. Beat eggs together with milk, sugar and vanilla sugar. Pour mixture over the sliced bread rolls, stir in the raisins and melted butter, and leave to rest for 30 minutes.

For the filling, peel and core the apples, cut into thin slices, and combine with the sugar, cinnamon, rum and slivered almonds. Spoon enough of the bread mixture into the greased baking dish to cover the bottom and spread a layer of the apple mixture over the top. Repeat this procedure until the bread mixture and apples have been used up, finishing with a layer of the bread mixture. Bake in the preheated

oven for about 40 minutes. Beat the egg whites, gradually adding the granulated sugar, until a creamy consistency has been attained. Remove the pudding from the oven and increase the temperature to 250°C. Spread the meringue over the pudding and brown in the very hot oven for 10 minutes.