

FIDDLE HEAD TART

Serves 8

This recipe is made in stages—preparing the crust first, then the fiddlehead, and blending the cheeses. Finally, everything is layered onto the tart in a visually appealing way. If you can't find fiddlehead, this recipe can be easily adapted to fresh asparagus, either steamed or roasted, then baked into a savory tart.

1 sheet frozen puff pastry dough
1 1/2 cups (1/2 pound) fresh fiddleheads (or 1/2 pound fresh asparagus)
4 tablespoons olive oil
1 large shallot, thinly sliced (about 1/4 cup)
1 medium yellow onion, peeled and thinly sliced (1 cup)
2 cloves garlic, pressed and minced (1 teaspoon)
Salt and freshly ground pepper
2 cups ricotta cheese
1/2 cup grated Cheddar cheese
2 eggs
2 tablespoons chopped fresh chives
1 lemon, zested

Preheat the oven to 450°F.

On a lightly floured surface, roll out the pastry dough to an inch larger than the tart pan. Place in the fluted tart pan, and trim off the edges with the back of a spoon or a rolling pin. Refrigerate until ready to use.

Rinse the fiddleheads with water to remove any grit, and in a steamer set over boiling water, steam the fiddleheads for 8 to 10 minutes, or until they are crisp-tender. Transfer them with a slotted spoon to a bowl of ice water to stop the



cooking, and then to paper towels to drain. If you don't have a steamer, drop directly into boiling salted water.

Heat the remaining 2 tablespoons olive oil in a medium skillet, add the shallot and onion, and cook over low heat until soft, about 15 minutes, stirring occasionally with a wooden spoon. Add the minced garlic, stir, and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Season lightly with salt and freshly ground pepper.

Preheat the oven to 375°F.

In a large bowl, blend together the ricotta, Cheddar, eggs, chives, and lemon zest. Remove the tart crust from the refrigerator. Spread the cheese mixture evenly over the crust, add the browned onions, followed by the fiddleheads spread evenly over the top. (If you are using asparagus instead, try to leave them whole, which will make for a very attractive presentation.)

Bake for 40 minutes, until the pastry is golden. Remove from the oven, and cool on a rack for 5 minutes before cutting into serving pieces.

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