

SLOWWW ROASTED SWEET + MINTY PEPPER TART WITH BOURSIN AND ARUGULA

Serves 4 as a main, 8 as an appetizer

REMEMBER, BEST PRACTICE: READ THE RECIPE ALL THE WAY THROUGH BEFORE YOU START COOKING!

Instinctually, I never reach for bell peppers. Upon development of this recipe, though, I've changed my own mind about the poor vegetable. You could scrap the whole tart itself and just make peppers per this recipe's method to add to salads, pasta, atop fish or other protein, or as part of an apps platter. The possibilities are you-know-what.

I call for Dufour brand puff pastry because it's made with all butter and is totally worth the extra dough (of the dollars variety). And it's more and more widely available! (Whole Foods carries it, as does my corner deli in NY.) See the asterisk post-recipe for instructions on how to bake if you can only find Pepperidge Farm puff.

6 large red, orange, or yellow bell peppers (about 1 1/2 pounds)

1/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons olive oil, plus additional for dressing the salad

8 cloves garlic, smashed and kept in their skins

1 small serrano chile, thinly sliced (or 1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes)

1 bunch mint

1 1/2 teaspoons granulated sugar

1 tablespoon red wine, white wine, or sherry vinegar, plus additional for dressing salad

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

One (14-ounce) package Dufour puff pastry*, thawed in the refrigerator and cold

All-purpose flour, for dusting work surface and pastry

One (5.2-ounce) package Boursin cheese

A few big handfuls arugula, from a 5-ounce box

1. Preheat the oven to 425 degrees with racks in the upper and lower thirds. Line a rimmed 18" x 13" baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Cut the peppers in half lengthwise. Remove all cores and stems with a small paring knife and discard. Working over a bowl, knock out as many seeds as possible. Slice peppers into strips lengthwise, roughly 1/2- to 3/4-inch thick. Now cut the strips in half crosswise.
3. Place the pepper slices in a large, deep-sided skillet or Dutch oven, along with 1/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons olive oil, 8 cloves of smashed garlic, 1 sliced chile (or 1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes), 4 large sprigs of mint (you'll use the remainder for serving), 1 1/2 teaspoons of sugar, 1 tablespoon of vinegar, 1 3/4 teaspoons salt, and a generous grinding of black pepper. Mix to combine.
4. Transfer to the top rack of the oven and roast, stirring 2-3 times during cooking, until peppers are shriveled and caramelized on the edges, about 70 to 80 minutes. If the pan looks dry at any point, add a glug or two of additional

olive oil. Discard any pesky garlic skins and the mint sprigs. (Some intel, if you're curious: I like roasting garlic cloves smashed and in their skins to protect them from burning.)

5. As the peppers roast, place the sheet of pastry on a lightly floured surface and dust the top, using a brush or the palm of your hand to distribute and remove excess flour. Use a rolling pin just to lightly smooth the creases. (You're aiming neither to enlarge the piece of puff nor make it thinner. The piece will ultimately be around 10" x 15".) Roll the pastry onto your rolling pin like a scroll and unfurl it onto the prepared parchment-lined baking sheet. If the dough has warmed, transfer to the fridge or freezer until chilled, 5-15 minutes. With a sharp knife, score a border about 3/4-inch from the edges, creating a rectangle. (Do not cut all the way through.) Use a fork to prick the interior rectangle in roughly 1-inch intervals.

6. Transfer the baking sheet to the bottom rack of the oven. (It's okay to share space with the peppers.) Bake, rotating and repricking the dough halfway through, until the pastry is thoroughly golden all over, about 18-22 minutes. Be sure to peek at the underside of the pastry to make sure it is browned. This is your chance to bake the pastry through and through, so don't hold back! Remove the tray from the oven and firmly press down on the puffed interior with a spatula, creating a sunken rectangle for the filling. (You can rescore the border with a knife if the seam has sealed.)

7. **Reduce the oven temperature to 350 degrees.** Evenly spoon dollops of the Boursin on top. Return to the oven to let the cheese soften, 3-5 minutes. Remove from the oven and gently spread to cover the bottom

8. Taste the peppers and season with salt if they don't taste sweet and spiced and yumscrum. Salt will make everything sing if it's not already. Spoon peppers on top of the Boursin and return to the oven to warm everything through, about 7-10 minutes.

9. As the tart finishes baking, place a few big handfuls of arugula in a large bowl. Add a generous amount of mint leaves from the remaining bunch of mint. Drizzle with some olive oil and a teaspoon or two of vinegar and toss to combine. Season with salt and pepper.

10. Remove tart from the oven. Cut into squares, top with the arugula-mint salad, and serve.

***If using Pepperidge Farm brand puff pastry, use one sheet from the 17.3-ounce package. Roll to a dimension of 9" x 14". You may need to hold back by about 1/4 cup of the peppers so as not to overload the tart, but up to you. (I don't think you'll have trouble finding another home for extras.)**

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