



Zig-Zag Holiday Carrot Tart

Make ahead party side dish to rewarm and serve

Puffy Crust:

1 sheet frozen puff pastry (8.65 oz.), thawed

Creamy Cheese Filling:

4 ounces plain or herb goat cheese, softened

1/2 cup whole milk ricotta cheese

1/4 cup evaporated milk

1 egg, separated

1 Tablespoon minced shallots

1/8 teaspoon salt; ground black pepper to taste

2 to 3 Tablespoons fine crushed garlic butter croutons

Carrot Topping

1/2-pound organic (rainbow; (yellow, orange, purple, white) baby carrots, trimmed, washed, Cut into 1/4 to 1/2 inch width, about 3-inch lengths)

1 large shallot, peeled, sliced lengthwise into 6 pieces

1 Tablespoon (each) fresh orange juice; lemon juice

1 teaspoon grated orange zest
1 Tablespoon olive oil
1/8 teaspoon ground fennel
Salt; ground black pepper to taste
3 Tablespoons fine crumbled feta cheese
Garnish: 1 Tablespoon (each) coarse chop parsley; fresh fennel fronds

Before Starting: Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Place rack in center of oven

Prepare Crust: On large piece parchment paper, roll puff pastry into an 11-inch square. Score 1-inch-wide border around edge of pastry with the tip of a paring knife; do not cut through the pastry.

Bake Crust: Move parchment and pastry to a baking or cookie sheet. bake for about 8 minutes or light gold color. Remove from oven. Using a small measuring cup, flatten pastry inside of border. Prick the flatten surface with a toothpick or fork. Return to oven; bake pastry about 8 minutes or until golden brown. Remove from oven; set aside.

Prepare Cheese Filling: With a hand mixer or a small food processor pulse goat cheese, ricotta cheese, evaporated milk, and egg yolk (set egg white aside), minced shallots, salt, and black pepper until smooth.

Spread Cheese into Crust: Lightly brush inside of cooked pastry square with half of beaten reserved egg white; sprinkle crushed crumbs over the inside of pastry square. Set aside for 10 minutes. Spoon and spread creamy cheese filling onto pastry to evenly cover within crust borders.

Roast Carrots: Toss carrots and onions with combined orange juice, lemon juice, orange zest, oil, ground fennel, salt, and black pepper; arrange on a parchment lined baking sheet. Bake in 400-degree F oven until tender. (Time will depend on the thickness of the carrots; about 12 to 15 minutes) Remove from oven. **Hint** –For thicker pieces of carrot, give them a head start by precooking them in a microwave safe bowl for 1 to 2 minutes until crisp but starting to become tender.

Design a Carrot Pattern: Arrange carrots in zig-zag pattern alternating the carrot colors in a single layer on cheese mixture; dot as desired with shallots and feta crumbles. Brush remaining reserved egg white on pastry border; sprinkle crust lightly with salt. Bake in 400-degree F oven for 5 to 8 minutes until cheese is set and crust is brown. Remove; let cool. Transfer to cutting board or serving plate.

To Serve: Sprinkle the top lightly with parsley and fennel fronds before cutting and serving. Yield: 6 to 8 servings

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Cook's Note: (*Make-Ahead Hint*) - We made the carrot tart without the final garnish; placed it on a plate; covered it with plastic wrap; and chilled it in the refrigerator until preparing dinner. Before serving, we placed it on a cookie sheet and warmed it in a 350-to-400-degree F oven for 5 minutes or until warm. We cut it into squares with scissors. For a design pattern, use the different carrot colors. We made it twice, using thick and thin carrots, and felt that thin cut carrots taste better than the thicker ones.

About the Recipe: Use your creative energy and serve your carrots in a creamy light onion flavored cheese filling inside an elegant puff pastry crust. Alternate the carrot colors to form your own design patterns. It's important to use about three different colors of carrots to make interesting designs. The thinner carrots also taste more delicate than thicker ones.

