

Extension

Seasonal Eating Whitney Danhof, Extension Agent

A Spring Quiche Brunch April 2012

Quiche and spring is a pair made in heaven. A fluffy, light egg mixture in a flaky homemade crust studded with beautiful vegetables – what could be better? Pair this with a salad of fresh baby spinach bathed in a lemony vinaigrette and you have the queen of all spring brunches to enjoy on the patio in the warm, fresh air.

Quiche appeared regularly on the menu at home and contrary to popular belief, I know a lot of real men who eat quiche (and actually enjoy it!). It was filled with a variety of ingredients depending on what season it was and what we had on hand. That's the great thing about a quiche is that you can use whatever you have. No asparagus? Add spinach. No leeks? Add chopped, sautéed onion. No bacon? Add cooked sausage. No Swiss cheese? Throw in some Cheddar.

Quiche is a great way to use up leftover items too. Chop up the leftover Easter ham and throw it in with some peas and sautéed mushrooms.



The light, fresh flavors of the spring vegetables such as asparagus, spinach, peas, leeks and green onions match perfectly with the egg mixture and you can use any combination of these vegetables in your quiche. If you choose spinach, make sure you cook it down and squeeze all of the liquid out first. Leeks and asparagus can be sautéed just until tender and then added to the filling. Leeks have a mild onion flavor and look like overgrown green onions. Cut off the tough green tops and the roots. Slice the white portion in half lengthwise and rinse well with running water between the layers to remove any sand that may be trapped. Now you can slice and sauté them. Mushrooms can be sautéed to get out the excess moisture and then added. Green onions can be sliced and added raw.

One of the keys to a good quiche is a good crust, that is partially baked before filling. The recipe below includes a basic pie crust from scratch. Be sure to use a good quality shortening and only work the dough enough to mix in the water (which must be cold). Too much handling will make the dough tough, instead of flaky and tender.

Spring vegetables also make great salads to go along with the quiche. Baby spinach is a perfect base and is loaded with vitamins and nutrients. Throw in some green onions, thinly sliced radishes and green peas and top with a lemony, bright dressing for a flavorful and beautiful spring salad.

For more ideas on using seasonal produce, visit the Bedford County Extension website (<https://utextension.tennessee.edu/bedford>). The Seasonal Eating Cooking Demonstration on Cool Season Veggies will be held on Wednesday, April 18 at 12:00 noon at the Extension Office. Call the Extension Office at 684-5971 to sign up and bring \$5.00 to cover the samples.

Asparagus and Leek Quiche

- 1 1/2 cups flour
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup vegetable shortening
- 4-5 tablespoons cold water
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 leek
- 15 asparagus spears, trimmed and cut into 1/2" pieces
- 1 1/2 cups shredded Swiss cheese
- 4 strips bacon, fried and crumbled
- 8 eggs
- 1 1/2 cups light cream (half and half)
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper

In a mixing bowl, stir together flour and salt. Cut in shortening with a pastry blender until pieces are the size of small peas. Sprinkle in water and gently toss with a fork until all is moistened. Form dough into a ball and flatten into a disc. Roll out on a floured surface to a 12" circle. Transfer to a 9" pie plate. Trim 1/2" beyond edge of pie plate and fold under extra pastry. Make a fluted edge by pressing with thumbs and index finger. Bake at 400 degrees for 7-10 minutes, just until surface is set. Meanwhile, melt butter in a medium skillet. Cut the white part of the leek lengthwise and rinse well between the layers to remove any grit. Slice thinly and add to butter. Sauté until tender, about 3-5 minutes. Add asparagus and sauté another 2-3 minutes, until the asparagus is bright green and just starting to get tender. Sprinkle half the cheese in the bottom of the pie crust. Sprinkle with bacon and then the sautéed vegetable mixture. Top with remaining cheese. In a bowl, whisk together eggs, cream, salt and pepper. Pour into crust over fillings (you may have a little extra left over). Bake in a 400 degree oven for about 50 minutes or until set. If it starts to brown too much, cover with foil. Let stand 10 minutes before serving.

Spring Spinach Salad with Lemon Vinaigrette

- 1 tablespoon lemon zest
- 1/3 cup freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon Dijon style mustard
- 1/4 cup vegetable oil
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 (5-ounce) package fresh baby spinach
- 1 1/2 cups fresh or frozen thawed peas
- 4 radishes, thinly sliced and cut in half
- 2 green onions, sliced

In blender jar, combine lemon zest, lemon juice, sugar, mustard and vegetable oil. Blend until well mixed and slightly thickened. Season with salt and pepper. In a large bowl toss together the spinach, peas, radishes and green onions. Dress with lemon vinaigrette and serve.