

Seasonal Eating
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Savory Rugelach Appetizers
December 2021

I'm a grazer. I love meals of little bites of different flavors. I love appetizers and cookie trays and cheese boards. Lucky for me, charcuterie boards and grazing tables are a very popular way of entertaining today! The holidays, it seems, are always filled with occasions calling for little bites. So, I'm always on the lookout for new appetizers or cookies and the recipe I'm sharing today can go either way.

Rugelach are little rolled up crescent shaped pastries with a filling. They are from the Jewish community and are a traditional treat of Hanukkah. Normally, the filling is sweet, like a cookie, and can include raisins, nuts, poppy seed paste or jam. The filling is spread on a circle of the tender dough, cut into wedges and rolled up like crescent rolls. While the filling is sweet, the dough itself is not. So, it is the perfect dough to use for savory as well as sweet and can be filled with all kinds of different flavors.



Rugelach dough can be made with yeast or sour cream or cream cheese. The yeast and sour cream versions are older while today mostly cream cheese dough is used. The good news is that it is a very easy dough to make and use. It is four simple ingredients – butter, cream cheese, flour and salt. A food processor is a huge help in bringing the dough together, but you can also use a pastry blender and some muscle. Once the dough is formed, press it into four small disks and place between parchment paper and refrigerate. You can make it the day before or refrigerate for at least an hour to let the dough firm up.

Rolling the dough out on parchment paper works very well, using just a little flour. The dough, after refrigerating, isn't super sticky so it handles and rolls out easily. Roll each disk into about a six-inch diameter circle (doesn't have to be exact) which will make it fairly thin. Sprinkle or spread your filling on top and then use a knife or pizza wheel to cut into 8 wedges. Roll the wedges from the outside to the point and place on a parchment lined baking sheet. They don't spread or puff a lot so you can place them fairly close to each other.

The filling for the savory rugelach below is a wonderful combination of grated Parmesan cheese, chopped kalamata olives and toasted pecans. It's a great little appetizer and works well on any grazing table as a savory baked little treat.

For more information and recipes check out the Seasonal Eating page at bedford.tennessee.edu.

Savory Rugelach

1 1/8 cups flour

1/4 teaspoon salt

1/2 cup cold butter, cut into pieces

4 ounces cold cream cheese, cut into pieces

6 tablespoons finely chopped toasted pecans

6 tablespoons finely grated Parmesan cheese

1/4 cup chopped kalamata olives

1/2 teaspoon dried thyme

In a food processor bowl, add the flour and salt and pulse together to mix. Add the pieces of butter and cream cheese and pulse until the dough forms a ball. Divide into four pieces and press into disks. Place between parchment paper or waxed paper and then in a plastic bag. Refrigerate for at least an hour or overnight. In a medium bowl, stir together the pecans, Parmesan cheese, olives and thyme. Roll each disk into a 6-7 inch circle, Divide the filling among the circles sprinkling to the edges. Press down lightly to adhere the filling to the dough. Cut each disk into 8 wedges using a knife or pizza wheel. Roll up each wedge from the outside to the center point and place on a parchment lined baking sheet, point side down. Bake at 375 degrees for 15-20 minutes, until lightly browned. Remove to a rack to cool. Store in an airtight container.