

NONNA'S MELT-IN-YOUR-MOUTH RICOTTA CRUMB CAKE

Italian Ricotta Sbriciolata

Prep Time	20 minutes	Cook Time	40-45 minutes
Cooling Time	1-2 hours	Servings	8-10
Pan	8-inch (20 cm) springform pan		

Ingredients

For the Crumb Dough

- 2 1/2 cups (300 g) all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup (100 g) granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon fine salt
- 8 tablespoons (1/2 cup / 113 g) unsalted butter, cold and cut into small cubes
- 1 large egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

For the Ricotta Filling

- 2 cups (about 16 oz / 450-475 g) whole-milk ricotta, very well drained
- 1/2 cup (60 g) powdered sugar
- 1 large egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- Finely grated zest of 1 lemon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon, optional

For Finishing

- Powdered sugar, for dusting

Instructions

1. Drain the ricotta

Place the ricotta in a fine-mesh strainer set over a bowl and refrigerate for at least 1 hour. If the ricotta is particularly moist, let it drain for several hours or overnight.

2. Prepare the pan

Preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C). Grease an 8-inch (20 cm) springform pan and line the bottom with parchment paper.

3. Make the crumb dough

In a large bowl, whisk together the flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt. Add the cold cubed butter and rub it into the flour mixture with your fingertips until coarse, irregular crumbs form. Add the egg and vanilla and gently mix until moist crumbs begin to form. The mixture should hold together when squeezed in your palm but should still crumble easily. Do not work it into a smooth dough. If it seems unusually dry, add 1 teaspoon of cold water at a time, only if necessary.

Food processor option

Pulse the flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt briefly. Add the cold butter and pulse until coarse crumbs form. Add the egg and vanilla and pulse only until the mixture forms moist crumbs. Do not process into a smooth ball.

4. Prepare the ricotta filling

Combine the well-drained ricotta and powdered sugar until creamy. Add the egg, vanilla, lemon zest, and cinnamon, if using. Mix just until smooth and combined. Do not overbeat.

5. Form the bottom crust

Transfer about two-thirds of the crumb mixture to the prepared pan. Spread it evenly over the bottom and press gently but firmly into an even layer. Press a small amount about 1/2 inch up the sides.

6. Add the filling

Spoon the ricotta mixture over the crust and spread it gently into an even layer, leaving a small border around the edge.

7. Add the crumb topping

Scatter the remaining crumb mixture evenly over the ricotta filling. Do not press it down.

8. Bake

Bake for 40-45 minutes, or until the crumb topping is lightly golden, the edges are slightly deeper in color, and the ricotta filling looks set. The center may still have a very slight jiggle. Do not overbake.

9. Cool completely

Remove the cake from the oven and place the pan on a wire rack. Cool in the pan for at least 1 hour. For the cleanest slices, cool completely before removing the springform ring. You may refrigerate it for 1-2 hours for a firmer filling.

10. Finish and serve

Transfer the completely cooled cake to a serving plate, dust generously with powdered sugar, and serve at room temperature or slightly chilled.

Nonna's Tips

- **The dough should stay crumbly.** A sbriciolata is not made with a smooth pie dough. The mixture should form moist crumbs that stick together only when pressed.
- **Measure the flour correctly.** Spoon flour lightly into US measuring cups and level it with a knife. For the most consistent result, use 300 g.
- **Use cold butter.** Do not melt or soften it.
- **Drain the ricotta well.** Excess moisture can make the filling loose and the bottom crust soggy.
- **Let it cool before slicing.** The ricotta filling continues to set as it cools.

Flavor Variations

- **Vanilla and Almond:** Replace the cinnamon with 1 teaspoon vanilla extract and 1/4 teaspoon almond extract.
- **Lemon:** Use the zest of 2 lemons and omit the cinnamon.
- **Chocolate Chip:** Fold 1/2 cup mini chocolate chips into the ricotta filling.
- **Orange:** Replace the lemon zest with finely grated orange zest. Finely chopped dark chocolate is optional.

Storage

Store covered in the refrigerator for up to 3-4 days. For the best flavor and texture, let individual slices sit at room temperature for about 15-20 minutes before serving.

Freezing

Cool completely, wrap individual slices tightly, and freeze for up to 1 month. Thaw overnight in the refrigerator. The crumb topping may soften slightly after freezing.

Approximate Nutritional Information

Nutrient	Per serving (1/10 cake)
Calories	Approx. 360-390 kcal
Carbohydrates	42 g
Protein	9 g
Fat	18 g
Saturated Fat	10 g
Sugar	18 g
Fiber	1 g
Sodium	180 mg

Nutritional values are approximate and will vary depending on the ingredients used.