Artichoke & Mushroom Tart

From the blog For Love of the Table

1 recipe pâte brisée (below)
125 g. (1/2 cup) whole milk ricotta
1/2 oz. (scant 3 T.) finely grated Pecorino Romano
Salt & Pepper, to taste
6 oz. white or crimini mushrooms, quartered
1 to 2 T. olive oil
1/4 c. sliced scallions—white and green (from about a half of a bunch)
1 t. minced fresh thyme
4 oz. well-drained artichoke hearts (half of a 14-oz. can), quartered—see notes
1 T. minced Italian flat-leaf parsley
1/4 t. minced fresh thyme
1/2 T. olive oil
Pinch of hot pepper flakes
1 1/2 T. pine nuts (untoasted)
2 oz. crumbled goat cheese

On a lightly floured surface, roll the pastry out into a thin (1/8- to 3/16-inch thick) square that measures at least 10- by 10-inches. Place on a parchment-lined baking sheet and chill for at least 30 minutes.

In a small bowl, combine the ricotta and Pecorino. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Set aside

In a small sauté pan set over moderately high heat, sauté the mushrooms in a tablespoon of so of olive oil until golden and any liquid that has been released has evaporated. Season with salt and pepper, reduce the heat to medium and add a drizzle of olive oil if the pan seems dry. Add the scallions and 1 t. thyme and continue to gently cook until the scallions have wilted. Remove from the heat.

In a small bowl, combine the drained and quartered artichokes with the parsley, remaining thyme, hot pepper flakes and olive oil. Taste and season with salt and pepper.

Take the pastry out of the refrigerator and trim to a 9 1/2- by 9 1/2-inch square. Prick all over with a fork. Spread the ricotta mixture in a thin layer over the pastry, leaving a quarter inch wide border of dough visible. Scatter the mushrooms, artichokes, pine nuts and goat cheese crumbles over the ricotta. (Tarts may be made a few hours ahead to this point. Cover loosely and chill.)

Place the pan on the lowest rack in the preheated 375° oven. Bake until the tarts are golden brown, well colored on the bottom and cooked through—about 30 to 35 minutes. Transfer the finished tart to a wire rack so the crust will remain crisp. Cut into portions and serve.

Notes:

- If you prefer to use fresh artichokes, you will need two medium artichokes that have been turned, halved and roasted and cut into 1-inch wedges (probably about 4 wedges per half).
- To prepare small appetizer/passed hors d'oeuvres-sized tartlets, trim the rolled out square of pastry to a 10- by 9-inch rectangle. Cut in half into two 5- by 9-inch rectangles. Proceed with the building of the tarts as directed in the recipe, dividing all of the ingredients between the two tarts. Bake the tarts and cut each into 8 (or more) small squares. By building the tarts in this way (as 2 rectangles instead of 1 large square) each portion will be an "edge" piece and will be sturdier and thus easier to pick up and eat out of hand.

Pâte Brisée (Short Crust Pastry):
1 c. all-purpose flour (4 oz.)
1/4 t. salt
6 T. cold unsalted butter, sliced 1/4-inch thick (3 oz.)
2 to 3 T. ice water

Combine the flour and the salt in a medium-sized bowl. Rub the butter into the flour until the mixture has the look of cornmeal and peas. Drizzle 2 T. ice water over the flour/butter mixture. Using your hands, fluff the mixture until it begins to clump, adding more water if necessary. Turn the dough out onto a counter and form into a mound. Using the heel of your hand, gradually push all of the dough away from you in short forward strokes, flattening out the lumps. Continue until all of the dough is flat. Using a bench scraper, scrape the dough off the counter, forming it into a single clump as you do. Form the finished dough into a thick rectangle. Wrap in plastic wrap. Chill for at least 30 minutes.

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