



Ricotta Pie with Field Greens and Garden Vegetables

Serves 8 to 10

When putting out a spread for a gathering, offer your guests an interesting twist on the salad bar. Set up a bowl of fresh field greens, then around the bowl arrange dressed vegetables and a basket of warm, crusty breads. Add a luscious, golden baked ricotta pie, and you have a salad good enough to be a meal. Note that you need to prepare this in advance. You will want to drain your store-bought ricotta overnight.

Ingredients:

For pie:

- 2 15-ounce containers whole milk ricotta
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 1/2 cup freshly grated Parmigiano Reggiano
- 2 large eggs
- Fluer de sel and Fresh ground pink or white peppercorns, to season

For salad:

- 6 to 8 cups fresh field greens, stemmed
- 1/2 to 1 pint fresh, ripe cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1/2 hothouse cucumber, peeled and cut to 1/4" slices
- 1 small red onion, peeled, halved and sliced paper thin

For dressing:

- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tablespoons, coarsely chopped fresh parsley
- 1/4 cup high quality, extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon high quality, red wine (or other wine-based) vinegar
- Fluer de sel and fresh ground pepper =, to season

For variation add sliced organic carrots, squash organic mushrooms or asparagus.

Preparation:

For the ricotta pie:

Place the ricotta in a colander (or large sieve) double-lined with cheesecloth. Cover the ricotta with the cheesecloth overhang, and place a plate and a weight (i.e. a large can of tomatoes) on top. Place the colander in a bowl to capture the liquid and refrigerate overnight.

Preheat oven to 375° F, adjusting racks so top rack is in the upper third of the oven. Butter a 10" pie pan. In a large mixing bowl combine the drained ricotta and the Parmigiano-Reggiano. Add the eggs and stir to combine, making sure the eggs are fully incorporated. Season with salt and fresh ground pepper.

Pour mixture into prepared pan and spread evenly. Bake until puffed and golden, about 50 to 55 minutes. Remove from oven and cool until just warm on a rack (the pie will deflate). Carefully slide the pie out of the pan onto a serving board.

Prepare the salad:

While the pie is baking, prepare the salad and the dressing. Place each ingredient in a separate serving bowl.

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Combine the garlic, parsley and red wine vinegar in a small bowl. Whisking constantly, pour the olive oil in a slow stream to emulsify the ingredients. Pour into a non-reactive serving bowl.

Service:

Arrange the salad, garden vegetables and dressing on a buffet. Place the ricotta pie and dressing with the ingredients and allow your guests to create their own salad. For individual plating, cut a wedge of the pie and place in the center of a salad plate. Dress with greens and vegetables over and around the pie. Lightly spoon the vinaigrette around the plate. Serve immediately.