

rugelach

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Rugelach

A crescent of enriched dough rolled around a filling of jam, nuts, cinnamon or chocolate. Ashkenazi in origin, it arrived in America with Eastern European Jewish bakers and became a deli-counter fixture; in Israel the chocolate version, sold warm and soaked in sugar syrup, is closer to a pastry than a cookie.

The dough is the interesting part: cream cheese or sour cream replaces most of the liquid, which acidifies it, tenderises it, and makes it behave like a very short, very forgiving pastry.

What makes it work

- **Cream cheese dough is nearly foolproof.** The acid inhibits [gluten](#) development, so it can be rerolled without going tough — unusual for a laminated-adjacent dough.
- **Everything stays cold.** Two chills: after mixing and after shaping. Warm rugelach leak their filling and flatten.
- **The filling must be dry-ish and thin.** A thick jam layer boils out. Spread it to the edges but keep it to about 2 mm, and add nuts or breadcrumbs to absorb what runs.
- **Bake on parchment and move them off promptly.** Whatever leaks becomes caramel and then cement.

Ingredients

Makes 32.

Dough:

- 250 g all-purpose flour
- 225 g unsalted butter, cold and cubed
- 225 g full-fat cream cheese, cold
- 25 g granulated sugar
- 4 g fine salt

Filling — any one of:

- 150 g apricot or raspberry jam, plus 100 g chopped [walnuts](#) and 50 g sugar with 8 g [cinnamon](#)
- 150 g chopped dark chocolate, 50 g sugar, 30 g cocoa — see [Chocolates](#)
- 150 g [dried fruit](#) soaked in rum, plus 100 g ground almonds

Wash: 1 beaten [egg](#) and 30 g coarse sugar

Method

Pulse or rub the flour, butter, cream cheese, sugar and salt until it just clumps. Divide into four discs, wrap, and chill at least two hours.

Roll each disc into a 23 cm circle on a floured bench. Spread a quarter of the filling to within 1 cm of the edge. Cut the circle into eight wedges like a pizza, and roll each from the wide edge inward. Curve the ends into a crescent.

Set them point-down on parchment and chill another 30 minutes. Brush with egg and scatter coarse sugar.

Bake **190 °C / 375 °F for 22–25 minutes**, until deep gold. Move them off the parchment within a few minutes.

Notes

- **The slab method** is faster for a crowd: roll the dough into a rectangle, spread, roll into a log, chill, and slice — you lose the crescent and gain twenty minutes.
- Sour cream can replace the cream cheese one for one; the dough is softer and needs a longer chill.

- **Freezes raw and unbaked** for three months. Bake from frozen, adding four minutes.

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