

A Holiday Kringle
About 18-20 pieces

For many, this delightful pastry is a key part of the holidays where traditions play such a part of our celebrations. With Scandinavian origins, this easy-to-make pastry is assembled in three steps: a shortbread-like bottom crust, a cream puff-style, custardy layer, and a generous glaze of almond icing. Together, the three layers form a lovely sweet treat to be enjoyed bite after bite. Traditionally, the pastry is made in long strips that are then cut crosswise, but it is also amenable to creative shapes such as circles cut into wedges, one large rectangular shape cut into squares, or even individually formed pastries. Give it a try, and make it part of your annual holiday traditions.

Shortcrust Layer:

1/2 cup (1 stick) salted butter, cold
1 cup all-purpose flour
2-3 tablespoons cold water

Cream Puff Layer:

1 cup water
1/2 cup salted butter
1 cup all-purpose flour
3 eggs
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/2 teaspoon almond extract

Almond Icing:

1 cup powdered sugar
1 tablespoon butter, softened
1/2 teaspoon almond extract
1-2 tablespoons milk

Embellishments: (optional)

Sprinkles
Chopped, sliced almonds

Directions:

(1) Prepare a large baking sheet, or a half-sheet baking pan by lining it with a silicone baking mat or a sheet of parchment paper. Preheat the oven to 350°F.

(2) Begin with the shortcrust layer. Dice the cold butter into 1/2-inch pieces. Scatter the butter cubes over the flour. With a pastry blender, cut the butter and flour together until combined with just small pieces of butter visible. Toss the butter-flour mixture with 1-2 tablespoons of cold water until a dough is formed and the dry crumbs stick together when pinched. Avoid a dough that's too wet.

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(3) Divide the dough into two parts. Roll each piece into a long cylinder about 10 inches long. Place each “dough rope” on the prepared pan. Pat the pieces into two long strips, each about 3-inches wide and 12-inches long. The dough will be very thin.

(4) Create the second, cream puff layer. In a medium saucepan, place the water and butter; bring to a boil. Remove from heat and add the flour in one motion; whisk until smooth. Add the eggs one at a time stirring to combine after each addition. Finally, stir in the vanilla and almond extracts.

(5) With a spatula, divide and evenly spread the mixture on the prepared shortcrust strips. Spread the dough right up to the edge of each shortcrust leaving a scant margin.

(6) Bake at 350°F for 50-55 minutes. (Check at the 30 minute mark, and loosely tent a piece of aluminum on top to prevent overbrowning.) When baked, remove from the oven, place on a cooling rack, and allow the pastry to cool completely right on the pan.

(7) Mix the icing by combining the powdered sugar, butter, and almond extract. Gradually drip in the milk until an icing consistency with a seven-second ribbon is reached. (A “seven-second” ribbon refers to how long it takes for a spoonful of icing drizzled back into the bowl to disappear and “melt” into the remainder of the icing.) Spread the icing in a thin layer on top of the cooled strips. Embellish with sprinkles or chopped slice almonds, if desired.

(8) To serve, cut in crosswise 1-inch strips. The pastry is slightly crumbly, but, oh so good! Serve with a napkin, or small plate.