

THE WAY THE COOKIE CRUMBLES



Pumpkin Apple Pizza (rewritten and slightly changed from The Food Lab)

Makes 4 generous servings

I made half the recipe but cooked the entire pumpkin and apple, using the leftovers and more cheese to top crostini the next day.

You can leave the pancetta out (using 1 tablespoon butter to cook the apples and wedge of pumpkin), but I really like the combination of cured pork with winter squash.

1 pound homemade or store-bought pizza dough
1 small sugar pumpkin, quartered, seeds and pulp discarded
2 tablespoons olive oil, divided
salt and freshly ground black pepper
2 tablespoons maple syrup
pinch ground cinnamon
pinch grated nutmeg
4 ounces pancetta, diced
1 crisp baking apple, such as Golden Delicious, peeled and diced
2 tablespoons minced fresh sage leaves, plus ¼ cup roughly torn leaves, divided
8 ounces (2 cups) shredded gruyère cheese
6 ounces (1½ cups) shredded mozzarella cheese
2 ounces (½ cup) grated parmesan cheese
2 scallions, thinly sliced

1. Heat the oven to 325 degrees. Place three of the four pumpkin wedges in a medium oven-safe skillet. Spray or rub with 1 tablespoon oil and season with salt and pepper. Bake for 45 minutes, until the pumpkin flesh is very tender. Scrape the flesh from the skins; transfer to a medium mixing bowl and mix in the maple syrup, cinnamon, and nutmeg. Season to taste with more salt and pepper.

2. Place a pizza stone on a rack about 3 inches below the broiler and heat the oven as high as it goes. Shape the dough into 2 balls; cover and set aside for 10 to 30 minutes to allow the gluten to relax so the dough will be easier to stretch.

3. Peel and dice the remaining wedge of pumpkin. Heat the same skillet used to roast the pumpkin over medium heat. Add the pancetta and cook until its fat has rendered and it begins to brown (it will finish browning while the pizza bakes); transfer to a plate. Increase the heat to medium-high and add the diced pumpkin and apple to the rendered pancetta fat. Cook, stirring occasionally, until browned and softened, about 10 minutes. Season with salt, pepper, and 2 tablespoons minced sage. Set aside.

3. Gently flatten the dough, then pick it up and stretch it out, trying to keep it as circular as possible. Curl your fingers and let the dough hang on your knuckles, moving and rotating the dough so it stretches evenly. If it tears, piece it together. If the dough stretches too much, put it down and gently tug on the thick spots.

4. Line a pizza peel (or the back of a baking sheet) with parchment paper and transfer the round of dough to the paper, rearranging it to something reasonably circular. Spread the roasted pumpkin mixture over the dough, leaving the outer ½-inch of dough uncovered. Top with half of the gruyere and half of the mozzarella, then half the pancetta, half the diced pumpkin and apples, and half of the remaining sage leaves. Top with half the parmesan. Transfer the pizza to the hot pizza stone.

5. Immediately turn the oven off and the broiler on (to high, if yours has settings). Bake the pizza for about 4-6 minutes, until the bottom is spotty browned and the cheese is bubbling. Transfer the pizza to a cooling rack; sprinkle with half the scallions. Cool about 5 minutes before slicing and serving. Repeat with the remaining ingredients.