



Sarah's Italian Spring Tart features a savory puff pastry appetizer filled with flavors of the season. Sarah Nasello / The Forum

Italian Spring Tart

Serves: 4 to 6

Ingredients:

- 1 sheet frozen puff pastry, thawed
- 1 large egg
- 1 cup (8 ounces) mascarpone cheese (may also use cream cheese or ricotta), room temperature
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon zest
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 2 scallions, finely chopped (about 1/4 cup)
- 1/4 cup fresh parsley, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon fresh basil, finely chopped
- 1 large garlic clove, finely chopped (about 1 teaspoon)
- 12 ounces asparagus, ends trimmed and stalks cut in half
- Olive oil for drizzling

Directions:

Preheat oven to 425 degrees and position oven rack in lower third of the oven. Unfold the sheet of pastry onto a piece of parchment paper and use a rolling pin to gently roll the pastry out about half an inch wider on all sides. Slide the parchment with the pastry onto a baking sheet; set aside.

In a medium bowl, use a fork to beat the egg until frothy. Lightly brush a half-inch border of the beaten egg around the pastry.

In the bowl with the remaining egg, add the mascarpone, lemon zest, salt and pepper and use a wooden spoon to mix until combined. Add the scallions, parsley, basil and garlic and stir until fully incorporated.

Spread the cheese mixture in an even layer over the pastry, leaving the half-inch egg border uncovered. Top with asparagus spears and lightly brush each with olive oil. Sprinkle asparagus with kosher salt and black pepper.

Bake in the oven until the crust is puffy and golden brown, about 18 to 20 minutes. Remove and let cool on baking sheet for 5 minutes before transferring to a cutting board (use the parchment paper to lift and transfer the tart). Slice as desired and serve.

Sarah's Tips:

- The cheese mixture may be made up to 3 days in advance and refrigerated until ready to use. Let sit at room temperature for 20 minutes for easy spreading.
- For a variation, add a sprinkling of torn prosciutto strips to the cheese layer before adding the asparagus.

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"Home with the Lost Italian" is a weekly column written by Sarah Nasello featuring recipes by her husband, Tony Nasello. The couple owned Sarello's in Moorhead and lives in Fargo with their son, Giovanni. Readers can reach them at sarahnasello@gmail.com.