



Lush, creamy and full of savory flavor, Sarah's Three Cheese Ham and Spinach Quiche is the perfect dish for a romantic Valentine's Day brunch. Sarah Nasello / The Forum

Three Cheese Ham and Spinach Quiche

Serves: 6 to 8

Ingredients:

- 1 sheet of pie crust (homemade or a premade crust)
- 1 egg white, lightly beaten
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup cooked ham, finely chopped
- 1 cup fresh baby spinach, finely chopped
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup red onion, finely chopped
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup baby bella mushrooms, thinly sliced
- 3 ounces cream cheese, room temperature
- 3 large or extra-large eggs
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup whole milk or half and half
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon kosher salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon black pepper
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cheddar cheese, shredded
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup Parmesan cheese, grated

Directions to pre-bake the pie crust:

Line a 9-inch pie plate with the pie crust, leaving a 1-inch overhang. Crimp the edges using your fingers or a fork. To keep the crust from shrinking as it bakes, let it chill in the refrigerator for 30 minutes before baking. Preheat oven to 425 degrees.

Line the pie crust with a layer of parchment paper and fill with pie weights (rice or dried beans also work), making sure to distribute evenly along the bottom and the sides.

Bake the crust until the edges start to brown, about 13 to 15 minutes. Remove from oven and reduce temperature to 375 degrees. Remove the parchment paper and pie weights from the pan.

Cover the edges of the crust with a pie shield or aluminum foil to prevent overbrowning. Return the crust to the oven and bake until the bottom and sides begin to turn a light, golden brown, about 8 to 10 minutes (times will vary depending on your oven).

Remove crust from oven and use a pastry brush immediately to coat the bottom and sides with the beaten egg white. This will seal the crust and prevent weeping once the quiche is baked.

Let pie crust cool completely before using. Pre-baked pie crust may be covered in plastic wrap and stored at room temperature for up to 2 days or frozen for up to 3 months.

Directions to assemble and bake the quiche:

Preheat oven to 425 degrees.

In a medium bowl, combine the ham, spinach, red onion and mushrooms; set aside.

In a large bowl, use a stand or hand-held mixer to beat the cream cheese on medium-high speed until smooth and creamy, about 1 to 2 minutes.

Add the eggs 1 at a time, beating hard after each addition until incorporated. Scrape down the sides and bottom of the bowl as needed. Add the whole milk and beat on medium-low speed until well combined.

Fill the cooled pie crust with the ham mixture, and then sprinkle the cheddar and Parmesan cheeses evenly over the top. Add the egg mixture and gently shake the pan to evenly distribute. Cover the edges of the crust with a pie shield or aluminum foil to prevent overbrowning. Bake until the top of the quiche is golden brown and the center has just a slight jiggle, about 25 to 28 minutes. Remove from oven and let cool on a wire rack for 10 minutes before slicing.

To store: Cover the quiche in plastic wrap and refrigerate for up to 5 days or freeze for up to 2 months.

Sarah's Tips:

- The egg mixture is a base custard that can be used with any combination of ingredients. To change the variety, use measurements similar to the items listed in the recipe.
- To reheat a whole frozen quiche, bake at 375 degrees until the center is hot, about 45 to 50 minutes. Cover lightly with aluminum foil to keep the top from overbrowning.
- For easy reheating, freeze individual slices.

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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.