

Stroscia

Serves 6-8 | 5 minutes prep + 30 minutes cook time

When my mom made pie, she'd roll out the scraps of dough, sprinkle them with sugar, and bake them for snacks to keep us away from the pie. The ancient Ligurian pastry called stroscia (stroh-sha) reminds me of those crispy pie dough treats. Legend has it that the women of the mountain village of Pietrabruna created stroscia to celebrate the hamlet's patron saint. In the 5th century both eggs and dairy were forbidden during Lent, so they combined flour, olive oil, sugar, and fortified wine to make a simple dessert. Stiff and crumbly like any short crust, it became known as stroscia from the local dialect verb strosciare, which means to break.

The modern versions use vermouth for a little extra flavor, and it's worth searching out good whole wheat flour since it also improves the taste. The ingredients mix in the food processor, and you press the dough onto a baking sheet by hand, so it's quick and easy to make. I like to eat stroscia plain with coffee, or sometimes with a little dab of jam. It's also good crumbled onto yogurt or ice cream.

2 cups whole wheat flour

2 teaspoons baking powder

**¼ cup + 2 tablespoons
sugar, divided**

⅛ teaspoon salt

1 ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil

½ cup sweet vermouth

Cold water as needed

Step 1 Heat the oven to 350F. Put the flour, baking powder, ¼ cup sugar, and the salt in the food processor. Blitz for a few seconds to mix.

Step 2 Add the olive oil and vermouth, blitz for about 30 seconds or until the dough begins to hold together. Add a little water a tablespoon at a time if the dough seems too crumbly. It should resemble pie dough.

Step 3 Empty the processor into a baking sheet and use your hands to press the dough to about ½ inch thick.

Step 4 Sprinkle the 2 tablespoons of sugar over the dough.

Step 5 Bake for about 30 minutes or until the top is beginning to brown.

Step 6 Let cool, then break into pieces. Stores in an airtight container for at least a week.