

17 Apple, plum or rhubarb crumble

Serves 4-6

Ingredients

For the crumble

180g plain flour

120g butter

60g golden caster sugar

Plus optional flavourings to match the fruit:

- 2 tbsp ground hazelnuts and a teaspoon ground cinnamon for a plum crumble
- 2 tbsp ground almonds and a teaspoon ground cinnamon for an apple crumble
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger for a rhubarb crumble

For the fruit filling

500g prepared weight of either:

- peeled, cored and thinly sliced Bramley apples (about 750g unprepared weight or 3 small to medium Bramleys)
- washed and trimmed forced pink rhubarb cut into 1 inch lengths (about 600g unprepared weight)
- washed, stoned and quartered plums (about 600g unprepared weight)

40-50g sugar (depends on sweetness of the fruit). You can vary the type of sugar to match the fruit eg golden caster sugar for an apple crumble; soft brown sugar for a rhubarb crumble; dark Muscovado sugar for a plum crumble

Plus optional flavourings to match the fruit:

- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon, 1/2 teaspoon ground allspice and a little grated lemon zest (apple)
- 1 teaspoon grated orange zest (rhubarb)
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon, 1/2 teaspoon ground anise, 1/4 teaspoon ground cloves, a little grated orange zest (plum)

1. Preheat the oven to 170 degrees C fan and get ready a baking dish. I use a 21cm square shallow ovenproof porcelain dish but a slightly larger dish eg a rectangular dish up to 28cm by 20cm will also work but the crumble will be shallower. Pyrex, enamelled cast iron and ovenproof earthenware are other suitable materials for a baking dish.

2. Make the crumble topping. Mix together the flour and sugar and rub in the butter first with a table knife then with your fingertips until the mixture resembles coarse breadcrumbs. Set aside while you prepare the fruit.
3. Prepare the fruit and combine in a mixing bowl with the sugar and flavourings. Don't combine the sugar and fruit until you are ready to bake as if left, the sugar will draw all the juices out of the fruit and you'll be left with a lot of liquid. Tip into a the baking dish and top with the crumble mix. Smooth it lightly with the back of a spoon.
4. Bake for about 45 minutes (maybe longer) until the fruit filling is bubbling and cooked through and the topping is a light golden brown colour. Serve with custard, cream, ice cream or Greek yoghurt.