

Leek, Lemon, and Feta Quiche

By Allison Cay Parker

Food52 Editors' Comments: Feeding the Saints aptly describes these individual little quiches as "light and cheerful." We love the delicate flavor of leeks, and crisp, airy puff pastry is a nice change from a more traditional short crust; lemon zest and ouzo lend just the right mix of lift and fragrance. We especially love the slabs of feta that, instead of being crumbled into the egg mixture, are laid gently across the top of each quiche before baking. Chilling the quiches for about twenty minutes before baking will help the pastry puff nicely and get nice and crisp. - A&M

While a leek quiche seems indisputably French, this recipe brings a Hellenic "Opa!" to your table with the addition of lemon, feta, and a hint of ouzo, the classic Greek aperitif. The ouzo is optional, but highly recommended. In a small dose, it brings a subtle sweet anise flavor that balances the sharp saltiness of the feta. With a fresh grating of lemon zest to brighten everything up, this quiche becomes light and cheerful, not at all heavy as some quiches can be. It's perfect for a casual celebration meal, a Sunday brunch, or lunch to go. If you're cooking just for one, make individual-size quiches and freeze some for later; you'll be glad to have them on hand. Variation for Omnivores: You may want to dice 1 package of Canadian bacon (about 8 slices) and add it to the quiche at the same time as the sauteed leeks. I've tried it this way, too, and it's just as nice.

Serves 1 large quiche or 4 individual-size quiches

- 1 sheet frozen puff pastry
- 1 pound leeks
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 cup half-and-half
- 3 eggs
- 1 teaspoon freshly grated lemon zest
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- freshly ground black pepper
- 2 teaspoons ouzo (optional)
- 2-1/2 ounces feta cheese, cut into 4 (approx 1/2-inch) slices

1. Preheat oven to 375F. Thaw puff pastry according to package directions.
2. Prepare the leeks. Rise off any visible dirt and slice the roots from the end. Remove the dark green tops, leaving a couple inches of light green with the white portion of the leeks. (The dark trimmings can be reserved for another use, adding them to a vegetable or chicken stock, for example.) Halve the leeks lengthwise, then cut crosswise in 1/2-inch slices. Dump the slices in a colander or salad spinner and rinse thoroughly; if you don't, you risk having a gritty, sandy quiche, as leeks often hide dirt deep in their layers. Let the leeks drain well, or spin dry.
3. Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat until it shimmers. Add the leeks and cook until they are wilted; don't cook them so much that they give off liquid. Turn off the heat and let sit.
4. In a mixing bowl or large measuring cup, using a whisk or fork, beat together the half-and-half, eggs, lemon zest, salt and pepper. Add the ouzo, if using.
5. Prepare the pastry crusts. On a lightly floured surface, or between two layers of plastic wrap or

parchment paper, roll out the thawed puff pastry to a thickness of about 1/4 inch. Line a shallow pie plate or cut the pastry into four circles to fill individual baking dishes. Press the pastry up the sides to make a nice edge.

6. Fill the quiches. Distribute the leeks evenly across the bottom of the dish(es). Pour the milk mixture over the leeks. Top the quiche(s) with the slices of feta. (If you have feta that crumbles apart, don't worry, just sprinkle it on top.)
7. Bake 30-40 minutes, depending on size of the quiche(s). The center should be solid and the crust and top nicely browned. Let the quiche cool for at least 10 minutes before serving. The quiches taste great hot, room temperature, even cold.
8. Enjoy with a simple green salad and a glass of chilled assyrtiko from award-winning Domaine Sigalas (Santorini).