

Plum and Amaretti Crumble

Crumble topping

1 cup all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
7 tablespoons cold, unsalted butter (cut into small cubes)
3 tablespoons sugar

Filling

4 ounces Amaretti cookies (the crunchy ones, not the soft ones)
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
2 ¼ pounds ruby red plums, quartered if large, halved if small (pits removed)
2 tablespoons sugar
Zest and juice of ½ lemon

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees Fahrenheit and slip in a baking sheet at the same time.

Put the Amaretti biscuits into a ziplock bag and bash them with a rolling pin until reduced to coarse crumbs. Melt the 2 tablespoons of butter in a large saucepan (with a lid) and add the prepared plums. Sprinkle with the 2 tablespoons of sugar, add the lemon zest and lemon juice and stir. Cook the plums for two minutes without the lid and a further two minutes with the lid. If the plums aren't as ripe as you'd like, you may have to cook them a little longer. Pour the plums into a 9-inch ovenproof pie dish (approximately 2 inches deep) – be careful as they're very hot – and set the dish aside. Sprinkle over 2 tablespoons of the Amaretti crumbs.

To make the crumble, put the flour and baking powder into the bowl of a mixer, and then add the cold cubes of butter and beat (not too fast) with the flat paddle attachment until the mixture resembles large-flaked oatmeal. Or do it by hand, just rubbing the butter into the flour with your fingers or cutting it in with a pastry blender or two knives. Add the sugar and mix with a fork. Then, tip in the rest of the Amaretti crumbs and fork the mixture together again. Pour the crumb mixture over the fruit in the pie dish, making sure you cover right to the edges.

Place on the hot baking sheet in the oven and bake for about 30 minutes, by which time you'll start to see some of the ruby plum juices bubbling around the edges. Let stand for 10-15 minutes before eating. Serve with good vanilla ice cream or whipped cream flavoured with a bit of Amaretto.

Serves 6-8

[From *Nigellissima*, by Nigella Lawson]