

Peach Crisp with Cinnamon–Graham Streusel

Time: About 40 minutes to prep, plus 40 minutes to bake the topping and 20 minutes to bake the peaches

From Blenheim apricots to Italian plums, summer brings a gorgeous procession of stone fruits. Yet none matches the wicked juiciness, intense perfume, and high, singing notes of a peach. Peaches live to be tucked under a crust and baked, and the fastest way to get them to bed is with a crisp crumb topping. To take our topping to its crispest possible conclusion we used Anson Mills Graham Flour. This flour, which produces a superbly crystalline finish in biscuits, is made from Red May graham, a custom-blended flour in which the bran particles of the grain remain large enough to produce dramatic flavor and texture. The final streusel, perfected after a series of tests, takes, and bakes, is crisp, buttery, sweet, and russet-hued—in flavor, it's halfway between graham cracker and molasses cookie. And the peaches are mad about the arrangement.

Equipment Mise en Place

For this recipe you will need 2 rimmed baking sheets (or a baking sheet and a tray); some parchment paper; a small saucepan; a medium bowl; a large, wide pot; a slotted spoon or a skimmer; a couple of large bowls; enough ice to fill a large bowl; a rubber spatula; a sharp paring knife; and a 3-quart gratin or baking dish.

Ingredients

For the streusel

10 tablespoons (1 stick plus 2 tablespoons) unsalted butter

1 1/4 cups (6.25 ounces) Anson Mills Graham Flour

1/3 cup (2.3 ounces) light brown sugar, packed

1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1/8 teaspoon fine sea salt

For the filling

4 pounds ripe peaches (15 small or about 10 to 12 medium-sized peaches)

2 to 3 tablespoons juice from one large juicy lemon

1/4 to 1 cup sugar, depending on your taste and the sweetness of the peaches

Pinch salt

3 tablespoons Anson Mills Carolina Gold Rice Flour

Baking Notes

Peaches come in season from mid-June to mid-July in the South and late July through August in the Northeast. By nature a soft, easily bruised fruit—with less inclination toward postharvest ripening that one might imagine—peaches should be selected when they are distinctly fragrant and, at the very least, trending toward softness. (Blush on a peach's skin is not a leading indicator of its ripeness—different varieties of peaches have skins and flesh of different hues.) A perfect peach is fragile and messy to eat. If you buy rock-hard peaches, you'll bake with hard peaches.

When it comes to the pits, peaches come freestone or cling, the former being easily separated from the flesh, while the latter require a bit of sawing to remove the fruit. Most peaches on the market today are freestone, though the locals we encountered in South Carolina were all clingy—messy, but irresistible.

Peaches *do* need to be peeled before baking. If you have one of the new peelers with a serrated edge, by all means use it. If not, blanching will loosen the skin nicely, making it easy to remove with a paring knife. Many recipes recommend

Directions

1. Make the streusel: Adjust an oven rack to the lower-middle position and heat the oven to 250 degrees. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper and set aside. Melt the butter in a small saucepan over low heat. While the butter is melting, combine the flour, brown sugar, cinnamon, and salt in a medium mixing bowl. Mix well, using fingers. When the butter has melted, remove the pan from the heat, tilt the pan, and skim off the surface foam with a spoon and discard. Spoon the clear yellow butterfat into the dry ingredients, leaving the watery milk solids in the pan behind. (Dispose of the milk solids and set the pan aside.) Mix the butter into the dry ingredients, using your fingers to rub it into the flour mixture thoroughly. Turn the streusel onto the prepared pan and bake until dry and crisp, 40 minutes, turning three times gently with a spatula. Large crunchy pieces are desirable, so don't break up the streusel. Remove from the oven and let cool in the pan. Increase the oven heat to 425 degrees.

2. Make the filling: If you have a serrated peeler, proceed to step 3. If you don't have a peeler, bring 4 quarts of water to a boil in a large, wide pot, and place a large bowl with ice and water on a counter near the stove. Line the second rimmed baking sheet or a tray with several layers of paper towels. When the water boils, lower half of the peaches into the pot with a slotted spoon or skimmer, and blanch until their skins begin to loosen, 45 seconds to a minute—perhaps longer if the peaches are large. (Lift a peach out of the water; if the skin is loose when you rub your fingers across it, the peaches are ready.) Transfer the peaches to the ice-water bath and let cool for about 30 seconds. Transfer the peaches to the paper towels to drain. Blanch and drain the remaining peaches.

3. Pour the lemon juice into a large mixing bowl. Peel a peach, using a serrated peeler if unblanched or a paring knife if blanched.



Cut the peeled peach in half lengthwise around the pit and twist. *If the peaches are freestone*, the pit will drop easily from the fruit. Using a paring knife, cut each half into

scoring a tiny X on the bottom of the peach before blanching to facilitate peeling, but we think that's a waste of time.

The clean-tasting properties of rice flour also make their way into this recipe—peaches are juicy, and that juice must be managed into an appealingly thickened sauce. Finely granular when it is raw, rice flour becomes velvety smooth when touched by heat and liquid.

“Crisp” denotes a certain texture, yes? But it would be more accurate to call many fruit crisps fruit soggy. We gave a lot of thought to how best to treat both fruit and crumbs in this recipe to keep the crisp *crisp*, and we determined that the two are best brought together at the last minute—not a moment sooner. The crumb topping bakes on its own while the peaches are prepared; then the peaches bake alone, joined by the crumbs during the last five minutes for a match made in heaven.

thirds or quarters—depending on how large the peaches are—and drop the slices into the bowl with the lemon juice. Continue with the rest of the peaches, occasionally tossing the slices gently in the juice with a rubber spatula to keep them from turning brown. *If you have cling peaches*, nothing will happen when you twist the peach. Instead, carve the peach into 6 or 8 sections—depending on its size—as you would cut sections from an orange.



4. When all the peaches are peeled and sectioned, add the sugar and salt to the bowl and toss gently with a rubber spatula. Allow the peaches to marinate for 5 minutes.
5. Using the slotted spoon or skimmer, transfer the peach slices to the baking dish, leaving the juice in the bowl. There should be about 1 3/4 cups of juice. Whisk the rice flour into the juice until completely incorporated. Turn the juice into the reserved saucepan and bring to a simmer over medium-high heat, whisking frequently. Simmer 10 seconds, then pour the thickened juice over the peaches, stirring gently with the spatula to incorporate.
6. *Bake the crisp:* Bake the peaches until they are bubbling and the sauce around them is has reduced, 20 minutes. Sprinkle the reserved streusel over the fruit and bake 5 minutes more. Remove from the oven and let cool for 15 minutes before serving. Serve warm with vanilla ice cream.

Serves 6