



Apple Caramel Fennel Tart

Makes: 10 servings

Prep Time: 25 minutes Cook Time: 1 hour

Total Time: 1 hour & 25 minutes

Ingredients

Sweet Shortcrust Pastry:

- 1 & 3/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/3 cup confectioners' sugar
- 1/4 tsp fine salt
- 1/2 cup unsalted butter, cold, cubed
- 1 large egg, cold and beaten
- 1-2 tbsp ice-cold water

Fennel Caramel Sauce:

- 2 tbsp fennel seeds
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup unsalted butter, room temperature and chopped
- 2/3 cup heavy cream
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp flaked sea salt

Apple Filling:

- 1 lemon, juice
- 5 medium apples
- confectioners' sugar, for sprinkling

Instructions

Sweet Shortcrust Pastry:

In a large mixing bowl, sift the flour, confectioners' sugar and salt. Add the butter and toss until the cubes are coated. Rub the mixture together between your fingers until it reaches a breadcrumb

consistency with a few hazelnut-sized pieces of butter still visible. Make a well in the centre and add the egg. Using a fork, mix the egg into the flour. Add 1 tablespoon of the ice-cold water, and use your fingertips to bring the dough together. If the dough isn't clumping together, add more water sparingly.

Tip the dough onto a lightly floured countertop, and use floured hands to shape the dough into a ball, taking care not to overwork it. Flatten slightly into a disc, and wrap well in plastic wrap. Place in the fridge for at least 1 hour to let the dough rest.

Remove the chilled dough disc from the fridge and set it aside on your countertop for 15 minutes or so to allow the dough to warm up slightly so it's easier to roll out. Trying to roll dough that is too cold will cause the edges to crack. To roll out, lightly flour your countertop and rolling pin, and using firm, even strokes, roll from the centre outward, turning the dough a quarter turn every few strokes. Roll the dough out to the thickness of a coin ($\frac{1}{8}$ -inch thick) and into a 12-inch circle.

Flour the base of a 9-inch shallow fluted tart pan with a removable base, and gently lift the dough and place it into the prepared pan. Use your fingers to push the dough up the sides of the pan and into the grooves. Using a sharp knife, trim off the excess dough from the rim. Refrigerate the prepared tart shell for at least 1 hour to allow the dough to relax further.

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Once the dough is chilled, prick the tart base all over with a fork, and then line with parchment paper and fill with pie weights all the way up the sides. Blind bake for 15 minutes, and then remove the parchment paper and pie weights. Return the tart back to the oven and bake for 7 to 10 minutes, or until the base is dry and a light golden color. Remove from the oven, and leave the tart shell to cool while you make the caramel and prepare the filling.

Fennel Caramel Sauce:

In a small skillet over low heat, lightly toast the fennel seeds. Once fragrant and lightly browned, add to a pestle and mortar and grind to a powder. Set aside.

In a high-sided nonstick saucepan, heat the sugar over medium heat, stirring often. Once the sugar is in liquid form, stop stirring and just swirl the liquid sugar while the color changes to an amber color. Keep an eagle eye on it at this stage as it can turn to burnt sugar very quickly.

Carefully add the butter. It will bubble up but whisk continuously until it has thoroughly melted. Then remove from the heat. Pour in the cream, but be careful as it will bubble up again, but keep whisking and the bubbling will die down. Return it to medium heat, stirring occasionally, so that the caramel can thicken. This takes around 5 minutes.

Remove from the heat, stir in the ground fennel seeds (add half if you want a more subtle flavor), vanilla extract and salt, and stir thoroughly to combine. Pour into a bowl and set aside to cool for 10 minutes.

Pour 1 cup into the bottom of the tart shell and smooth out flat. Pour any remaining caramel into a small serving dish and serve alongside the tart.

Apple Filling and Assembly:

Add the lemon juice to a large bowl. Cut the apples in half through the core. Remove the core with a sharp knife or melon baller. Slice the apple crossways as thinly as you can. An option is to use a mandoline for this part. Add the apple slices to the bowl and gently toss to prevent them from browning.

Arrange the apple slices into the tart shell in any pattern you desire. I started on the outside of the tart shell and laid them overlapping, continuing in a spiral until the centre of the tart. Use your fingers to reposition any if necessary. The thinner the slices, the easier it will be to spiral in the centre. Dust with confectioners' sugar.

Place the tart onto a baking sheet and bake in the oven for 30 minutes until the caramel is bubbling, the apples have softened and the apple edges have caramelized. Cover the edges with foil if the tart shell is browning too quickly and continue to bake. Be careful when removing the tart from the oven as the caramel will be molten hot and melted to a liquid and the apple slices can slide around.

Allow the tart to cool in the tart pan for 15 minutes, repositioning any slices that may have moved when taking the tart out of the oven. After 15 minutes, carefully remove the tart from the pan and slide it onto a serving plate.

Serve warm with any remaining caramel sauce drizzled on top and with a scoop of vanilla ice cream.

Recipe from Emma Duckworth Bakes