



Apple Tart 'Maman Blanc'

Maman Blanc loves simplicity and this tart is easy to prepare as the pastry case does not need to be pre baked.

Here, we have used apples, but plums, apricots or cherries make an equally delicious alternative. Use only the best seasonal fruits.

SERVES (YIELD):	6
DIFFICULTY RATING:	•
PREPARATION TIME:	15 MINS PLUS 45 MINS
	RESTING TIME
COOKING TIME:	20 MINS

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

2cm x 18cm diameter tart ring with no base, and a wooden peel (for sliding the tart onto the baking sheet)

PLANNING AHEAD:

The pastry can be made in advance and kept in the fridge until required.

INGREDIENTS

For the pastry

250g/9oz Plain flour (*2)
125g/4.5oz Butter, unsalted, diced, at room temperature (*3)
1g/1 pinch Sea salt
1 Egg, medium, organic
15ml /1 tbsp Water, cold

For the filling

3 or 4 Cox's Orange Pippin, Worcester, Russet or Braeburn apples (*4), peeled, cored and cut into 10 segments per apple

15g / 1 tbsp Butter, unsalted, melted
7g / ½ tbsp Lemon juice, mixed
65g / 2.5oz Caster sugar
7g / ½ tbsp Calvados (optional) (*5)
(these four ingredients mixed together)
100ml/3½fl oz double cream
1 medium free-range egg
1-2 tbsp icing sugar, for dusting

METHOD

For the pastry

- 1 For the pastry, pulse together the flour, butter and salt in a food processor until you reach a sandy texture. Add the egg, water and pulse again. If you over mix the dough at this stage it will lose its flakiness.
- 2 Transfer the dough onto a lightly floured work surface and knead with the palms of your hands for 30 seconds, or until the dough is smooth and well combined.
- 3 With the palm of your hand flatten the dough slightly to 1cm/½in thickness, then sandwich it between two large sheets of cling film. Chill in the fridge for 30 minutes.
- 4 Preheat the oven to 220C/440F/Gas 7. Place a baking tray into the oven to preheat.
- 5 Roll the chilled dough, still sandwiched in cling film, to a 2mm thickness. Place a 22cm/9in diameter, 2cm/¾in deep tart ring on a greaseproof lined wooden peel or baking tray. Remove the top layer of clingfilm and carefully pick up the dough, place it into the tart ring with the second layer of clingfilm facing up. Lift and tuck the dough into the edges of the ring and discard the clingfilm. By tucking in the base you will minimise the shrinking of the dough during cooking. Trim off any excess with a rolling pin.
- 6 Using your index finger and thumb, pinch and press the dough until it's 2mm above the tart ring all around the edge. With a fork, prick the bottom of the tart. Chill in the fridge for 20 minutes.
- 7 Meanwhile, for the filling, heat the butter, lemon juice and 15g/1oz of the sugar in a small saucepan until the butter has melted and the sugar has dissolved. Remove from the heat and stir in the Calvados. Set aside. saucepan, pressing the mixture through the sieve with the back of the ladle to extract all of the liquid.
- 8 When the tart case has chilled, arrange the apple segments in concentric circles, overlapping the apple slices as you go. Brush the apples all over with the Calvados mixture. Slide the tart ring onto the pre-heated baking tray and bake for 10 minutes.
- 9 Reduce the oven temperature to 200C/400F/Gas 6, then continue to cook for a further 20 minutes, until the pastry is pale golden-brown and the apples have caramelised.

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CHEF'S NOTES: (*)

- *1 A Peel is a wooden shovel-like tool used by bakers to slide loaves of bread, pizzas, pastries, and other baked goods in and out of the oven.
- *2 Flour; for most pastry you do not need high gluten flour, reserve these strong flours for bread making.
- *3 Apples; you need to get to know your apples. Some are over acidic, cook down too easily, they release too much juice, lack flavour, or do not caramelize because of the low sugar content. I have found that the Cox Orange Pippin, Braeburn, Worcester and Russet are delicious for baking or pan-frying.
- *4 Butter, lemon juice, caster sugar mix; the butter will enrich, the lemon juice will bring acidity and more flavour, and the sugar will bring sweetness and browning. The Calvados is optional, but many farmers are now making some great Ciders and Apple Brandies, so a make a trip to your local farmers market.
- *5 The egg will add richness, moisture, thickness and baking quality. It will also help bring the dough together.
- *6 At this point it is for you to judge the consistency of the dough, if it is too wet add a little flour. Every flour is different and have different absorption rates.
- *7 At this stage because you have worked the gluten in the flour, the dough is elastic and by refrigerating it, makes the dough easier to roll, less elastic and more pliable.
- *8 The easiest way to roll the dough is between two sheets of clingfilm, this will enable you to roll it very thin without using any flour. Then discard the top layer of cling film and carefully pick up the pastry and place into the tart ring ensuring the cling film is facing up.
- *9 By tucking in the base of the tart you minimalism the retraction of the pastry whilst it cooks.
- *10 The pricking of the base will help the distribution of the heat and thorough cooking.
- *11 By using the bottomless tart ring directly onto a pre-heated tray you will have an instant transfer of heat to the base of the tart. Usually the base of tarts are underdone and doughy, this method will give you a perfectly crisp, golden base.

10 Whisk together the double cream, egg and the remaining 50g/2oz caster sugar until well combined. When the pastry is pale golden-brown and the apples have caramelised, sprinkle the tart with a tablespoon of sugar and pour the custard mixture into the tart, bake for a further 10 minutes, until the filling mixture has just set.

To serve

1 remove the tart from the oven and set aside for 1 hour to cool slightly, then carefully remove the tart ring. Dust all over with icing sugar. Serve immediately.

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