

TARTE TATIN

with MOLLY J. WILK

Serves 4-6 people

NOTE: Traditionally the tarte is baked in the frying pan it is prepared in but I prefer baking it in a cake pan (8" or 9") or a pie pan! It's so much easier to flip!

For the Simple Puff Pastry:

1 stick/8 tbs (114g) of unsalted or salted butter, COLD in BIG cubes
1 cup (114g) flour
5-6 tbsp cold water

For the Tatin:

4-5 baking apples, firm that will keep their shape (Braeburn, Pink Lady, Jazz..)
5 tbsp (70g) unsalted butter, cubed
½ cup (100g) granulated sugar
Half a lemon
Optional: dried or fresh lavender, ground cinnamon, fresh rosemary or thyme

Start by making the simple puff pastry. Note: The best is to chill the dough multiple times throughout the process.

Toss the butter cubes with the flour in a big bowl and use your thumbs to break the butter in half. You want to leave it in BIG pieces. This is how you get the lift and layers! This should only take 30 seconds.

Add the water, 1 tablespoon at a time. Toss with the flour/butter after each addition. At the 4th tablespoon, start scrunching the dough together to see how it holds a ball. Add small amounts of water until all flour is incorporated.

If you have time, wrap the dough in plastic wrap and chill before continuing to work with it.

Roll the dough into a long rectangle about the length of your rolling pin. Then proceed to make five folds. Start with one single or simple fold, where the dough is folded like a letter to put in an envelope.

Turn the dough to be a long rectangle again, roll out and then do a double or book fold. Fold the ends of the dough to meet in the middle, and then fold again on top of itself.

Roll the dough out again into a long rectangle and repeat this fold to complete the five folds needed for the puff pastry. Chill.

Preheat oven to 375F/180C. If using, butter the cake or pie tin.

Peel, core and quarter four of the apples. Arrange the pieces to line the bottom of the pan you will be using to see how many you need. Crowd the apples in close to each other and add one extra apple quarter. Cut up the 5th apple if needed. Transfer the apple quarters to a bowl and squeeze the lemon over the apples, tossing.

In a medium frying pan with a light bottom, add the granulated sugar. Let melt undisturbed to create a caramel, only stirring briefly to help with even cooking, drawing the melted sugar towards the middle. Once the sugar starts to caramelize, you can stir more to help melt and incorporate any clumps.

Turn off the heat and stir in the butter. **NOTE:** It might look separated, this is ok!

Add the apples to the pan with the caramel/butter, crowding them together. Turn back on the heat to medium, and cook for about 5 minutes then turn the apples over to cook on the other side for another 5 minutes.

Turn off the heat.

Roll out the puff pastry, then use your pan to measure a circle with an extra one to two inches all around the sides.

Use tongs to transfer the apples to the baking dish, cut side up, nestled snugly against each other. Then pour the caramel from the pan over the mixture. *If you are baking the tatin in the frying pan, simply arrange the apples as you'd like.*

Transfer the puff pastry to cover the apples. Fold the excess dough back on itself to rest on the top in a ruffly, rustic pattern. Poke several holes in the top.

Bake 45-50 minutes until golden brown all over.

After removing from the oven, let rest 30 seconds to 1 minute max for the bubbling caramel to settle slightly (waiting any longer can cause the caramel to cool and the apples to stick to the pan). Place a plate on top, with sloped edges. Flip the tart in one fell swoop! Be confident! And go for it! **Tip:** *A long dry tea towel doubled up is perfect flipping the tart and lifting up the hot pan as you have more control than oven mitts.*