

Pastel de Nata – Portuguese Custard Tarts

(recipe received from workshop in Porto, Portugal)

While visiting Portugal, we found these flaky, buttery custard tarts to be a delicious staple sweet on breakfast buffets, as an accompaniment with an afternoon coffee, and as a light dessert after dinner.

INGREDIENTS

Yield: 18-24 tarts

(What follows is the recipe received from the workshop. It is uncertain exactly how many tarts will be made, since the tins were smaller than what would be made using muffin tins.)



SYRUP:

200 grams sugar

100 ml water

2 – strips of peel from a lemon

1 – cinnamon stick

CREAM:

15 grams flour

10 grams corn starch

250 ml whole milk

6 egg yolks

(optional additional 100 ml milk during assembly)

PUFF PASTRY:

One package of frozen puff pastry made with butter

(OR make puff pastry using recipe from Sally's Baking Addiction:

<https://sallysbakingaddiction.com/rough-puff-pastry/>)

FINISHING:

Ground cinnamon

DIRECTIONS

1. Make the Syrup

Pre-heat the oven to 480°F.

Add syrup ingredients to a cold saucepan. Bring to a boil over high heat WITHOUT stirring. Once it is actively boiling throughout the pot, time it for 2 minutes. Remove from heat and set aside.

2. Prepare the Cream

Mix the flour, corn starch and 250 ml of milk in a second saucepan. Heat over medium heat, stirring constantly, until smooth and thick.

Gradually pour in the syrup in the thin stream, mixing well.

In a small bowl, whisk the egg yolks. While whisking, add a few tablespoons of the hot cream mixture to temper the yolks, then whisk the yolks into the cream mixture, and set aside. *(At the workshop, the lemon peels and the cinnamon stick were left in the cream mixture to infuse their flavour.)*

3. Mold the puff pastry

Roll the puff pastry into a log, and cut into equal pieces, about 20 grams each. *(Should look like pinwheels of dough.)* Place dough slices, lying flat, into each tart mold or cup of muffin tin. Press with moistened thumbs spreading the dough evenly up the sides into a cup shape, to the top of the sides of the mold.

4. Fill the molds

Pour the cream mixture through a sieve into a large measuring couple to remove lumps, lemon peels and cinnamon stick. *(If a creamy tart texture is desired, whisk in up to 100 ml of milk. Without this extra milk, the custard will be firmer.)* Pour or spoon the custard into the tarts to be about 2/3 full.

5. Bake

Place tray of tarts into the hot oven and bake for 8-10 minutes, until golden on top. May be served warm or cold.

They are really nice with a light sprinkle of ground cinnamon on top!

Photos from the workshop:



For the workshop, we were given a strip of puff pastry. Once rolled up, the ends were trimmed, and the slices used to make the tart shells were each about 1 cm thick. Note that the tarts were placed in paper cups after baking, for presentation purposes.



Enjoy!