

MARSALA-POACHED APPLE ALMOND FRANGIPANE TART

INGREDIENTS

for the crust

2 1/2 cups all purpose flour

1 tablespoon sugar

3/4 teaspoon salt

10 tablespoons (1 1/4 sticks) chilled unsalted butter, cut into 1/2-inch pieces

1/3 cup chilled solid vegetable shortening, diced

6 tablespoons (or more) ice water

for the apples

4 pink lady apples, peeled, halved and cores removed

1 1/2 cups marsala wine

1/2 cup sugar

1 teaspoon vanilla

1 cinnamon stick

1/4 teaspoon salt

for the Frangipane

6 tablespoons butter, at room temperature

2/3 cup sugar

3/4 cup ground blanched almonds

2 teaspoons flour

1 teaspoon cornstarch

1 large egg plus 1 egg white

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

2 teaspoons almond extract

DIRECTIONS

Blend flour, sugar and salt in processor. Add butter and shortening and cut in using on/off turns until mixture resembles coarse meal. Add 6 tablespoons ice water and process until moist clumps form, adding more water by teaspoonfuls if dough is dry. Gather into ball, then flatten into a disk. Wrap in plastic and chill 2 hours.

For the apples, combine the marsala, sugar, cinnamon stick, vanilla, and salt in a saucepan large enough to hold all the apples and bring to a simmer over medium-high heat. Add the apples halves to the simmering syrup and reduce heat to low. Cover, and let apples poach for about 10 minutes, turning them halfway. They will become slightly translucent, very tender, and easily pierced with a knife or skewer. Let cool in the liquid until room temperature before using.

Prepare a 10-inch tart pan with a removable bottom with cooking spray.

Roll out your pie dough to fit the tart pan and freeze at least 30 minutes. When you are ready to bake it, preheat the oven to 375F.

To partially bake the tart shell, take a piece of parchment paper sprayed with cooking spray on one side and lay into the tart shell, greased side down. Place in pie weights. Place the tart shell on a baking sheet and bake for about 20 minutes with the pie weights and then remove them and bake an additional 10 minutes, until the shell is dry and lightly colored. If any places have cracked, repair with the extra dough. Let cool on a rack until room temperature.

For the frangipane, combine the butter and sugar in the food processor and combine until smooth. Add the ground almonds and blend together. Add the flour and cornstarch, and then the egg and egg white. Process the mixture until it is very smooth. Add in the vanilla and almond extracts just to blend.

Turn your oven to 350F.

Spread the frangipane evenly into the cooled tart shell (It should be liquid enough to smooth out on its own so you don't need to work too much on it). Take the poached apples out of their liquid and drain them on paper towels. You don't want too much excess liquid or they will make the frangipane soggy. Cut each apple half crosswise into 3/8 in thick slices. Slide a spatula or other flat utensil underneath the sliced apple half so you can transfer the entire half onto the tart. Press on the apple to fan the slices. Repeat with the other apple halves until there are evenly spaced fans throughout.

Place the tart on a baking sheet and bake in the oven for about 45-50 minutes, until the frangipane is puffed, golden brown, and firm to the touch. Cool the tart on a wire rack.

Before serving, you can brush the pears with some warmed apple jelly to glaze, or dust confectioner's sugar over the tart.