

Pear & Cheddar Tarts With Cornmeal Crust



Author: Monika Topolko

Yields 12 small tarts

Prep time: 1h 10min

Cook time: 20min

Total time: 1h 30min

Difficulty: Intermediate

Category: Appetizers & snacks, Tarts & quiches, Vegetarian

These tarts are a great party food or lovely appetizers. Prepare the tart shells ahead and refrigerate them. When you're ready, top with cheese and pear slices and pop them in the oven. They are lovely served with some prosciutto and a glass of wine. Instead of making small tarts, you can also make one regular sized tart and serve it as a no-fuss weekday meal.

For the cornmeal pastry crust:

Ingredients

150g all-purpose flour
100g cornmeal
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
125g cold butter
100g cream cheese, at room temperature
1 egg

Directions

In the bowl of a food processor, combine flour, cornmeal, salt and baking powder and pulse to combine. Add butter, and pulse until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Add cream cheese and beaten egg. Process just until dough holds together without being wet or sticky. Turn out dough onto a clean work surface and shape into a flattened disk. Wrap in plastic, and refrigerate at least 30 minutes.

Butter twelve 10cm tart rings. Preheat the oven to 190°C.

When the dough is nice and cold, roll it out in between two sheets of plastic. Cut out circles slightly bigger than your tart rings, transfer and press the dough gently with your fingers into the bottom and sides of the tart rings. Scrape the remaining dough, knead it until it comes together, roll out and repeat the process. Prick the bottom of each tart with a fork and refrigerate for 15 minutes. Remove from refrigerator and blind bake for 10 minutes. Allow to cool before filling the tarts.

For the pear and cheddar filling:

Ingredients

1 tablespoon butter
3 small pears, sliced
6 thyme sprigs
3 teaspoons wholegrain Dijon mustard
200g cheddar cheese, grated
generous pinch of chili flakes

sea salt
freshly ground pepper

Directions

On medium heat melt the butter, add pears and saute for 5 minutes. Add thyme springs and cook for 2 minutes, gently tossing the pears around the pan. Remove from heat and allow to cool.

Spread about 1/4 teaspoon of Dijon mustard on bottom of each half-baked tart shell. Top with a generous amount of cheddar cheese and pear slices. Sprinkle generously with sea salt and freshly ground pepper and add a pinch of chili flakes on each tart. Bake for 10 minutes or until the pastry is crispy and goldenbrown and the cheese is bubbling.

Serve immediately sprinkled with some fresh thyme leaves.