

# Dutch Apple Taart



**Serves 12**

**Prep 30 mins**

**Cooking 70- 85 mins**

**Challenge**

## **For the crust**

360 g unsalted butter, cubed, room temperature  
240 g brown sugar, packed firmly  
Pinch of salt  
2 eggs, slightly beaten  
600 g self-rising flour

## **For the filling**

7 firm apples (such as Braeburn, Gala or Cortland)  
3 soft apples (such as Golden Delicious or Pink Lady)  
Finely grated zest of ½ orange and ½ lemon  
Juice of ½ lemon  
80 ml brown sugar (plus more for the topping)  
2 tsp speculaaskruiden  
2 tsp cornstarch  
30 ml Cognac, Brandy or Calvados (optional)  
125 ml sultanas (or raisins )

## **Speculaaskruiden (Dutch Spice Mix)**

4 tsp ground cinnamon  
1 tsp ground cloves  
1 tsp ground mace  
½ tsp ground ginger  
¼ tsp white pepper  
¼ tsp ground cardamom  
¼ tsp ground coriander seeds (optional)  
¼ tsp ground anise seeds  
¼ tsp grated nutmeg

1. **To make the crust:** In a food processor, mix the butter and brown sugar together until creamed. Sprinkle with the salt and add almost all of the eggs, keeping a tablespoonful to brush over the pie later. Pulse until the eggs are well incorporated. Add a third of the flour, pulse until well incorporated. Add another third of the flour, pulse to incorporate, then scrape down the sides of the bowl. At this point, the mixture will still be wet, but it will start gathering together.
2. Add the remaining flour and pulse just until the dough comes together into a ball. Transfer the dough to a bowl, cover with plastic wrap, and rest at room temperature while you prepare the filling. Preheat the oven at 190°C/ Fan170C/Gas 5.
3. **To make the filling:** Peel & core the apples, then cut them into bite-size pieces. In a very large bowl, mix the apple pieces with the orange & lemon zest, lemon juice, brown sugar, spices, cornstarch, liqueur, sultanas. Reserve. To assemble the pie: Grease a large, spring form pan (22 cm), and cover the bottom with a cut out sheet of parchment paper.
4. Reserve ¼ to 1/3 of the crust mixture for the pie's topping. (It's OK if the apples show through). Pour the rest of the mixture into the pan and firmly press the dough against the bottom and all the way up the sides of the pan. As long as the bottom & sides are completely covered, you're fine.
5. Add the apple filling and press down to compress the filling and make it as flat as possible on top.
6. Spread the remaining of the crust mixture all over the apples. Yes, it'll be a messy process: the crust mixture is soft and the apples are moist. I used my fingers to distribute the mixture all over the top, then used a spatula to spread it as best as I could. Brush the reserved egg wash all over the top of the pie, then sprinkle with a tablespoon or two of brown sugar (optional).
7. Bake for 70 to 85 minutes. Start watching over the pie after 60 minutes. If it gets too dark on top, cover it loosely with a piece of aluminium foil. After 70 minutes, test the apples to see if they are soft enough. Since you used firm apples, you won't be able to tell just by looking at the pie if they are done. Use a small and very sharp knife to pick through. If the pie is ready, you'll easily pierce through the apples. If you feel they're still a bit crunchy, continue baking until the knife test is conclusive. Let the pie cool thoroughly before removing the sides of the pan (this can take 2 to 3 hours!). Unmold, and use a very sharp knife to cut out pieces. Serve at room temperature with whipped cream or warm with ice cream.