

Spiced Pear Tarte Tatin



Ingredients

100ml water
150g golden caster sugar
1 cinnamon stick
3 cardamom pods, bruised
3 star anise
4 medium pears
40g unsalted butter, cubed
500g shop-bought, all butter puff pastry

Essential equipment:

24cm/9in ovenproof frying pan

Serves 6

Prep 15mins

Cook 1hr

1. Start by making a spiced caramel. Put the water, sugar, cinnamon, cardamom pods and star anise into a medium saucepan. Stir until the sugar dissolves, then set over a high heat and allow to boil away until dark golden. This usually takes about 20 mins.
2. Meanwhile, peel the pears and cut in half lengthwise. Remove the core with a melon baller or small spoon, and put the pears into a bowl of water.
3. Once the caramel is dark golden, add the butter cubes and remove from the heat. Pour the caramel into a 24cm ovenproof frying pan. Remove the spices with tongs, saving them for later.
4. Heat oven to 220C/200Fan/Gas 7. Place the pears on the caramel, hump sides down and with their fat bottoms out towards the edges of the pan.
5. Roll the pastry to about 4mm thick, and cut out a circle about 2.5 cm bigger in diameter than the frying pan. Place the pastry on top of the pears and tuck it down the sides using a wooden spoon. Stab a few holes with a sharp knife, then place the frying pan in the oven and bake for 40 mins, or until the pastry is a glorious golden brown and has puffed up.
6. To serve, remove the frying pan from the oven. Take a plate that is larger than the pan, and place it top-side down on the pan. Wearing oven gloves, or shielding your arm with a tea towel, hold the base of the plate with one hand, and with the other flip the pan over so that the tarte is pastry-side down on the plate. Decorate with the star anise and serve.