

Quince Frangipane Tart



Quince is that old-fashioned forgotten fruit that looks like a mutant apple. Eaten raw it's even more astringent & unpleasant than an unripe hachiya persimmon, but poach it until soft and you have a wonderful, complex, floral apple-or-pear-ish fruit with a luxuriously creamy texture.

Pair it with almond and frangipane and you've got a memorable dessert.

Get ready for a little project, because this recipe is a two-for, and you'll need to start this at least one day in advance.

It's not terribly complicated, but it's all about the timing, so don't stress... it's all about the process... And if you can't find quince, this recipe works well with apples or pears. And you don't even need to poach those. Just peel, core & slice.

Ingredients:

Poached Quince:

- 5 quince
- 7 cups water
- 1 cup sugar
- ½ cup honey
- 1 lemon
- 2 whole star anise
- 3 whole cloves
- 3" of a cinnamon stick

Crust:

1 egg yolk
2 tablespoons heavy cream
½ teaspoon vanilla
1-½ cups all-purpose flour
⅓ cup powdered sugar
¼ teaspoon salt
9 tablespoons butter, cut into 1" cubes and placed in the freezer to chill

Frangipane Filling:

7 ounces almond paste
4 tablespoons butter, softened
3 tablespoons sugar
¼ teaspoon almond extract
2 large eggs
3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
+ quince poaching liquid jelly and almond slices for sprinkling on top

Method

1/ One day in advance (or more), poach the quince:

Prepare the lemon by removing large swaths of peel with a peeler and then cut in half. Peel, quarter and core the quince. They can be very hard, so take care. Place them in a tall pot with all the water, sugar, honey, spices, lemon peel, lemon juice squeezed into the mix and then plop the lemon halves in there too. Cut a piece of parchment paper to fit the top of the pot and poke a hole in the middle. Place that on top of the quince mixture. This will help keep the quince in the poaching liquid.

2/ Bring everything to a boil and then turn it down to a low simmer. Cook until the quince is tender enough that a knife tip can be inserted with ease. The amount of time is dependant on the quince involved. When that point is reached, remove from heat. Store the quince quarters in a container with enough poaching liquid to cover. Let sit at room temperature until cooled. Then store in the fridge.

TIP: you may continue reducing the left-over poaching liquid until it becomes jelly. This is a fantastic addition to any cheese board, and we will use it to finish this tart.

3/ Also the day before, make the pâte sucrée (tart crust) dough:

In a small bowl, whisk together the egg yolk, cream and vanilla. In the bowl of a food processor fitted with the blade attachment, pulse to mix the flour, sugar and salt. Add the cold butter and pulse until a cornmeal texture is achieved. Add the egg yolk mixture and pulse only until dough comes together. Take the dough out of the food processor and form a disk shape on a piece of plastic wrap. Wrap well in plastic and chill in fridge for at least 2 hours before rolling out.

4/ Roll out and form the tart crust:

Prepare your tart pan by buttering its bottom and sides. Remove the dough from the fridge and allow it to sit at room temperature for 20-30 minutes. This will make it easier to roll. Lightly flour your rolling surface and place

the dough on it. Lightly flour the dough top as well. Roll it out evenly working from the center outward into a diameter 4-5" larger than your tart pan. Use your rolling pin to transfer your crust to your tart pan. Use your fingers to press the dough into the pan, especially the corners and sides. Use a fork to score the dough. This will let it steam during cooking. Place your pan with dough in the freezer for at least a few hours or up to one day. This will help prevent dough shrinkage during baking.

5/ Blind bake your crust - Pre-heat oven to 350F/180C

Take your crust out of the freezer and place it on a sheet pan. Place a piece of parchment paper with a good overhang on the top of the crust and add your pie weights. I use loose change, collected from my husband's pockets :). Bake for 20 minutes then remove the weights and parchment and allow to cook until a pale golden color begins to form. Remove from oven and make filling.

6/ Slice and drain the quince: Remove the quince quarters from their poaching liquid and slice them into 3 even slices each, lengthwise. Drain the slices on paper towels as you prepare your frangipane filling.

7/ Make the frangipane:

In the bowl of a standing mixer, beat the almond paste, butter, sugar, almond extract and salt at medium speed for 3 minutes or until fluffy. Add the eggs, one at a time and beat for another minute. Scrape the bowl (especially the bottom) with a rubber spatula and beat for another minute. Add the flour and beat just until incorporated.

8/ Put together your tart:

Pour the frangipane into your tart shell, then decoratively place the quince slices on top in a pinwheel motif. Place into your pre-heated oven at 350F/180C and bake for 30-40 minutes or until puffed up, and lightly golden brown.

9/ When your tart comes out of the oven, let it cool until you can handle the pan. Remove it from the pan and put it on your cake plate or platter. In a small saucepan, over low heat, warm a few tablespoons of the quinces poaching liquid jelly until it melts to a liquid. Generously, and evenly, brush your tart with the jelly. Sprinkle with sliced almonds as a final touch.

PS--the photo was taken before the final step of garnishing with the jelly & almond slices.

Enjoy!