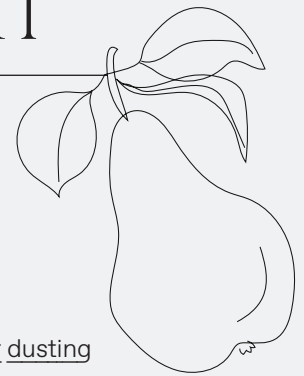


JULIA'S PEAR & POLENTA TART



Ingredients

Serves 8

- 400ml medium-bodied Italian red wine such as Dolcetto, Nero d' Avola, Amarone or Nebbiolo
- 180g caster sugar
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 3 cloves
- 2 strips of lemon peel
- 5-6 firm beurre Bosc pears
- 1 egg, for the egg wash
- icing sugar, to dust

Polenta pastry

- 180g plain flour, plus extra for dusting
- 150g fine polenta
- 80g caster sugar
- zest of a lemon
- pinch of sea salt
- 200g cold unsalted butter, cubed
- 3 egg yolks, lightly whisked
- 3-4tbsp iced water



Method

Begin by making the poaching liquid for the pears. Combine the wine, sugar, cinnamon, lemon and 600ml of water into a large pot. Bring to a simmer over a medium heat then reduce to low, stirring occasionally to ensure the sugar has dissolved. Simmer for 8-10 minutes to reduce the liquid slightly.

Meanwhile prepare the pears by removing the stems, peeling, halving and coring them. Add them into the poaching liquid. Cut a piece of baking paper to the size of the pot and then cut a hole in the middle. Press the paper onto the surface of the pears. This stops the liquid evaporating too much and also keeps the pears submerged. Simmer the pears until tender when a knife is inserted into a thick part of a pear half, turning the pears over half way if not full submerged. This should take around 20 minutes but will depend not the pears you are using and how firm they are. Allow to cool in the poaching liquid then transfer to a plate lined with paper towel to dry. They need to be cool and completely dry before using them.

For the pastry, mix the flour, polenta, sugar, lemon and sea salt in a large bowl or on a bench until combined. Add the butter and toss it through the flour to coat. Use your finger tips to rub the butter into the flour until you have mostly pea sized lumps, some butter more rubbed in is fine too. Pour in egg yolks and begin to

gently press the flour into the egg to begin to create the pastry. Add the iced water, 1tbsp at a time until you can press the pastry dough together and there is no dry bits of flour left. Shape into a disc, wrap and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 180C.

Allow the pastry dough to sit at room temperature to make it easier to roll. Take two thirds of the pastry dough and roll out on a dusted work bench to approximately 4mm in thickness. Drape into a 25cm fluted pan with a loose base. Arrange the pears onto the pastry. Now roll out the remaining pastry and lay over the pears, using your hands to shape it over the pear halves. Trim any excess overhanging pastry and press gently to secure the pastry edges together.

Whisk the egg with 1tsp of water and brush the torte with the egg wash. Pierce two holes into the pastry to allow for steam to escape and bake in the preheated oven for 30-35 minutes or until the pastry is a sunny golden colour. Allow to cool then transfer to a serving plate and dust generously with icing sugar and serve slices at room temperature with cr me anglaise. Any left over tart can be kept at room temperature in an airtight container for 2-3 days.

