



Tarte de ameixas - **Portuguese Plum Tart**

By Jeremiah Duarte Bills and adapted from Chefe António Silva

The recipe for this tart I found in my first Portuguese cookbook which I bought at a book fair while visiting the island of Faial. I love fruit desserts! My great grandfather José Duarte who immigrated from Faial was a peach, plum and pear farmer in northern California. This recipe was included in a book titled traditional Portuguese desserts but after visiting the country and talking to experts it is more likely a more recent and regional dish. Regardless of how traditional or common it is it is absolutely delicious and easy to prepare.

Dicas (tips):

- Choose a deep tart tin for this recipe. A glass or metal pie pan will work as well. You may also use a spring form pan. Using a darker metal will help conduct heat to ensure a crisper crust.
- The cornstarch is optional. It helps set the juices of the plums. If you omit it you may have a very saucy but still delicious tart.
- Use plums that are ripe but not falling apart.
- You may adjust the amount of sugar but I have always found that the 4 tbsp in the filling are perfect.
- Once baked the crust will be at its crispest. The longer you keep the tart the crust will begin to soften.
- You may make the crust by hand if you wish.
- Consider the color of the metal you bake in and the location of the rack in the oven for an optimal bake. I find baking lower in the oven can help with a crisp bottom crust and fruit that softens and bubbles which will activate the starch and pectins. More is explained in the video.

Equipment:

- A 9 inch/23 cm deep tart tin, pie plate or spring form pan
- Stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment
- Baking sheet pan
- Rubber spatula

Ingredients:

Massa (dough):

113 grams (8 tbsp) unsalted butter, room temperature
125 grams (1/2 + 1/8 cup) sugar
1/2 tsp fine sea salt
200 grams (1 1/2 cups) all-purpose flour (bleached or unbleached)
1 tbsp water

Recheio (filling):

1 kg (2 lbs 3 oz) ripe plums
4 tbsp sugar
2 tbsp corn starch (optional)

Method:

1. Preheat oven to 350F/180C. Place the oven rack in the lower third or lower most position to assist the crust in fully baking.
2. Lightly grease a 9 inch/23 cm deep tart tin, pie plate or spring form pan.
3. To create the dough, place the butter, sugar and salt in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment. Beat on medium-low to medium for 1 to 2 minutes until well combined.
4. Add flour and beat on low until combined.
5. Add the water and beat briefly to distribute the water.
6. Press the dough into the prepared pan pushing the dough up the sides. Chill while preparing the plums.
7. Wash and cut the plums in half. Remove the pit and set aside.
8. If using the cornstarch mix with 2 tbsp of the sugar and sprinkle evenly over the base of the chilled crust.
9. Arrange half of the plums over the crust. Sprinkle with 1 tbsp of the sugar.
10. Arrange the remainder of the plums on top or in-between the bottom layer. Sprinkle with the remaining 1 tbsp of sugar.
11. Bake for 1 hour to 1 hour and 40 minutes until the juice is bubbling in the center and the plums are tender.
12. Allow to cool completely before serving. It is best to serve the day it is made. The longer it sits the softer the bottom crust will become. You may also serve it chilled which is delicious!