

Mémé's Apple Tart

Serves 6

This is my mother's famous apple tart that she made almost every day in her small Lyon restaurant, Le Pélican. Her dough, unlike any other, achieved its tender, crumbly, airy texture from a combination of vegetable shortening or lard, baking powder, and warm milk. Since the dough is too soft to roll, it is pressed into the pan by hand.

DOUGH

1¼ cups all-purpose flour

1 teaspoon sugar

½ teaspoon baking powder

¼ teaspoon salt

6 tablespoons vegetable shortening or lard, at room temperature

¼ cup milk, heated to lukewarm

FILLING

2 pounds Golden Delicious or McIntosh apples (6 medium)

3 tablespoons sugar

2 tablespoons unsalted butter

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees, with a rack in the center.

FOR THE DOUGH: Combine the flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt in a bowl. Add the shortening or lard and mix with a spoon or your hands until the mixture feels and looks sandy. Add the warm milk and stir rapidly for a few seconds, until the dough is well mixed.

Using a sheet of plastic wrap to help you, fit the dough into a 9-inch quiche pan or tart pan with a removable bottom. With your fingers, press the dough evenly into the bottom and up the sides of the pan. Set aside.

FOR THE FILLING: Peel the apples, quarter them, and remove the cores. Arrange the apple quarters, cut side up, in circles on top of the dough and sprinkle the sugar evenly over them. Cut the butter into small pieces and dot the apples with the butter.

Place the tart pan on a cookie sheet and bake for 1 hour, or until the apples are browned and crusty.

Let cool to lukewarm, then cut into wedges and serve.

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