



## ADVENTURER'S REWARD, PASTEIS DE NATA (PORTUGUESE CUSTARD TARTS)

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**“Memories of a great adventure come flooding back with Pasteis De Nata. From San Sebastian, Bilbao, Barcelona and Marakesh; the best pintxos; cooking class on Las Ramblas; exploring Moroccan markets and watching women extract Argan Oil by hand. The adventure ended with a delicious Portuguese Custard Tart in Lisbon.”**



PREP: 10 MIN



COOKING: 50 MIN



DIFFICULTY: EASY



SERVES: 10



## Ingredients

### For the pasteis de nata dough

272g all-purpose flour, plus more for the work surface  
1/4 teaspoon sea salt  
207ml cold water  
227g unsalted butter, room temperature, stirred until smooth

### For the garnish

Confectioners' sugar  
Cinnamon

### For the custard

27g all-purpose flour  
296ml milk, divided  
264g granulated sugar  
1 cinnamon stick  
158ml water  
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract  
6 large egg yolks, whisked

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## Method

### Dough:

1. In a stand mixer fitted with a dough hook, mix the flour, salt, and water until dough forms and pulls away from the side of the bowl, (about 30 seconds.)
2. Generously flour a work surface and pat the dough into a square using a pastry scraper. Generously flour the dough, carefully wrap in plastic wrap, and let it rest at room temperature for 15 minutes.
3. Roll the rested dough into an 18-inch (46-cm) square, making sure the dough doesn't stick to the work surface, by using the scraper to lift the dough as you work and flouring the surface when needed.
4. Using a soft brush (a fluffy make-up brush, new and unused, is ideal but any soft, clean pastry brush will do), brush the excess flour off the top of the dough being very careful not to tear or puncture the dough. Using a small offset spatula, dot and then spread the left 2/3 portion of the dough with a little less than 1/3 of the very soft (not melted) butter being careful to leave a 1 inch (25 mm) plain border around the edge of the dough.
5. Neatly fold the unbuttered right 1/3 of the dough (using the pastry scraper to loosen it if it sticks) over the middle 1/3 of the dough. Brush off any excess flour, then fold over the left 1/3 of the dough. Starting from the top, pat down the dough with your hand to release any air bubbles, and then pinch the edges of the dough to seal. Brush off any excess flour.
6. Description automatically generated with medium confidenceThe dough is still very soft and difficult to lift so to make turning the dough easier, temporarily fold the ends over each other to make a smaller parcel to lift. Turn the dough 90° so the fold is facing you. Lift the dough and flour the work surface. Unfold the temporary folds.
7. Description automatically generated with medium confidenceOnce again, roll it out to an 18-inch (46-cm) square, then dot the left 2/3 of the dough with 1/3 of the butter and smear it over the dough (do soften the butter in the microwave if your kitchen is cold and it starts to harden up too much). Fold the dough as in steps 5 & 6.
8. For the last rolling, after turning the dough 90°, roll out the dough to an 18-by-21-inch (46-by-53-cm) rectangle, with the shorter side facing you. Spread the remaining butter over the entire surface of the dough right to the edges.
9. Using the spatula as an aid, lift the edge of dough closest to you and roll the dough away from you into a tight log, brushing the excess flour from the underside as you go. Trim the ends and cut the log in half. Wrap each piece in plastic wrap and chill for 2 hours or preferably overnight. (The pastry can be frozen for up to 3 months.)





#### Custard:

1. In a medium bowl, whisk the flour and 1/4 cup milk (60 ml) until smooth.
2. Bring the sugar, cinnamon stick, and water to a boil in a small saucepan, without stirring and cook until an instant-read thermometer registers 104°C.
3. Meanwhile, in another small saucepan, scald the remaining 1 cup milk (237 ml). Whisk the hot milk into the flour mixture.
4. Remove the cinnamon stick and then pour the sugar syrup in a thin stream into the hot milk-and-flour mixture, whisking briskly. Add the vanilla and stir for a minute until very warm but not hot. Whisk in the yolks, strain the mixture into a bowl, cover with plastic wrap, and set aside. The custard will be thin, which is normal. (You can refrigerate the custard for up to 3 days.)



#### Baking and assembling the pastries:

1. In a medium bowl, whisk the flour and 1/4 cup milk (60 ml) until smooth.
  2. Bring the sugar, cinnamon stick, and water to a boil in a small saucepan, without stirring and cook until an instant-read thermometer registers 104°C.
  3. Meanwhile, in another small saucepan, scald the remaining 1 cup milk (237 ml). Whisk the hot milk into the flour mixture.
  4. Remove the cinnamon stick and then pour the sugar syrup in a thin stream into the hot milk-and-flour mixture, whisking briskly. Add the vanilla and stir for a minute until very warm but not hot. Whisk in the yolks, strain the mixture into a bowl, cover with plastic wrap, and set aside. The custard will be thin, which is normal. (You can refrigerate the custard for up to 3 days.)
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## BAKLAVA LAYER CAKE

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**“During last year’s lockdown, mum and I baked. We shared recipes and photos. It allowed us to connect. My baklava cake was created during this time. This recipe reminds me to strip back all of life’s complexities and remember what is most precious - family and friends (and sharing cake).”**



PREP: 10 MIN



COOKING: 50 MIN



DIFFICULTY: EASY



SERVES: 10



## Ingredients

### For the cake

320g (2 1/2 cups) all-purpose flour  
 170g (1 3/4 cup) almond meal  
 425g (2 cups plus 1 tablespoon) caster sugar  
 20g (4 tsp) baking powder  
 4g (1 tsp) salt  
 225g unsalted butter, soft but cool, about 16°C  
 3 large eggs (150g), brought to about 18°C  
 15g (1 tbsp) vanilla extract  
 A few drops almond extract  
 7g (1 1/2 tsp) rose water  
 425g (2 cups minus 2 tbsp) full-fat milk, brought to about 18°C

### For the buttercream

170g (2/3 cup) egg whites, from 5 to 6 large eggs  
 310g (1 2/3 cups) caster sugar  
 Generous pinch salt  
 1/4 tsp cream of tartar  
 475g unsalted butter, softened to about 18°C  
 5 g (1 tsp) vanilla extract  
 A few drops almond extract  
 3g (1 generous tsp) cinnamon (reserved for later)

### For the praline

215g walnuts  
 67g caster sugar  
 40g honey  
 39 g water

## Method

### For the Cake:

1. Adjust oven rack to lower-middle position and preheat to 180°C (no fan). Lightly grease three 8-inch cake pans and line with baking paper. If you don't have three pans (or the oven capacity), it's okay to bake the cakes in stages; the batter will keep at room temperature until needed.
2. Sift the all-purpose flour and almond meal together in a bowl, then whisk thoroughly to combine. Under-mixing the flours can produce a cake with an uneven crumb.
3. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, combine sugar, baking powder, salt, and butter. Mix on low speed to roughly incorporate, increase speed to medium. Beat until fluffy, pale, and light, about 8 minutes. About halfway through, pause to scrape the bowl and beater.
4. With the mixer still running, add the eggs one at a time, letting each fully incorporate before adding the next, followed by the vanilla extract, almond extract, and rose water. Reduce speed to low and sprinkle in about 1/3 of the prepared almond-flour, then drizzle in 1/3 of the milk. Repeat with remaining flour and milk, working in thirds as before.
5. Scrape the bowl and beater, and briefly mix once more to ensure everything is well combined. The batter should look creamy and thick, registering between 18 and 20°C on a digital thermometer.
6. Fold batter once or twice from the bottom up, then divide evenly between prepared cake pans (about 565g per pan). Place pans in oven and bake until puffed, firm, and beginning to brown around the edges, but relatively pale overall, about 35 minutes.
7. Cool cakes directly in their pans for 1 hour before turning out. Allow to cool completely before icing. Cakes should bake flat. But if needed, cool cakes in the fridge before levelling.





#### For the buttercream:

1. Fill a wide pot with at least 1 1/2 inches of water. Your pot should allow your bowl to sit over the water without touching. Place pot over high heat until steaming-hot, then adjust temperature to maintain a gentle simmer.
  2. Combine egg whites, sugar, salt, cream of tartar in the bowl of a stand mixer and set over the steaming water. Stir and scrape constantly with a flexible spatula, until egg whites reach 80 to 85°C. This should take about 10 to 12 minutes. Once ready, transfer to a stand mixer fitted with a whisk attachment and whip at high speed about 10 minutes, until meringue is glossy, stiff, and cool to the touch, around 32°C.
  3. With mixer still running, add butter, 1 or 2 tablespoons at a time. Initially, the volume of the meringue will decrease but then will thicken and cool as more butter is added. Continue whipping until buttercream is thick, creamy, and soft but not runny, around 22°C. Mix in vanilla extract and almond extract on low speed until well combined.
  4. Cover buttercream with cling wrap and place aside, at room temperature, until the cake layers are ready.
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#### For the praline:

5. Place half of the buttercream in a bowl with 6-8 tablespoons of praline crumble and a generous teaspoon of cinnamon. Stir together thoroughly.
  6. Place one cake layer on a cake turntable. Ideally, a waxed cardboard cake round can first be placed underneath, secured to the turntable with a damp paper towel.
  7. Top with half the praline buttercream. Using an offset spatula spread it evenly from edge to edge. Repeat with the second cake layer and remaining praline buttercream.
  8. Place the final cake layer on top, then cover the sides of the cake with remaining vanilla buttercream, spreading it as smoothly as you can. Refrigerate cake until the buttercream hardens, about 30 minutes.
  9. Use remaining buttercream to finish and decorate the chilled cake. If you like, garnish sides and top with remaining praline and dried rose petals. When ready to serve, bring cake to room temperature.
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## COFFEE WALNUT CAKE WITH COCOA COFFEE BUTTERCREAM

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**“With every bite, warm memories of: Rich butter, brown sugar and farm fresh eggs vigorously beaten with my Scottish-born mother’s wooden spoon; Her favourite instant coffee powder for that recognisable evocative aroma and flavour; Crunchy walnut halves atop a doona-like topping of cocoa coffee buttercream (still always eaten first!). Nostalgic bliss...and still my favourite!”**



PREP: 10 MIN



COOKING: 50 MIN



DIFFICULTY: EASY



SERVES: 10



## Ingredients

### For the cakes (makes 2 x 20cm cakes)

50g walnut pieces, processed finely  
 225g brown sugar  
 225g unsalted butter, softened  
 240g self-raising flour, triple sifted, with good pinch salt  
 1 tsp vanilla extract  
 1 tbsp instant coffee powder, dissolved in 1 tbsp boiling water, cooled (my mother always used Nescafé 43 Blend)  
 1-2 tbsp milk  
 4 x 60g eggs, separated

### For the Cocoa Coffee buttercream

350g icing sugar mixture  
 175g unsalted butter, softened  
 1/2 tbsp instant coffee powder  
 1 tbsp cocoa powder  
 1 tbsp boiling water

### For Coffee-flavored Sugar Syrup

1 cup sugar  
 1 cup water  
 2 tbsp coffee-flavoured liqueur (Kahlua was my parent's favourite!)

### For decoration

Walnut halves  
 Chocolate-coated coffee beans

## Method

### For the Cake:

1. Preheat oven to 160°C. Grease two 20cm loose-bottomed cake tins. Line bases with
2. baking paper. Wrap collars around outside of tins (wet paper towels wrapped in foil).
3. Mix dissolved cooled coffee with 1 tbsp milk. Set aside to cool.
4. Make Coffee-flavoured Sugar Syrup by bring sugar and water to the boil in a small saucepan, stirring to dissolve the sugar. Take off heat, stir in coffee liqueur. Set aside to cool a little.
5. Cream butter, brown sugar and vanilla extract with electric mixer until light and fluffy.
6. Beat in egg yolks one by one. Fold in sifted flour, salt, in batches, alternately with coffee milk mix. Add more milk 1 tsp at a time if needed to make a thick dropping consistency. Stir in finely chopped walnuts.
7. Beat egg whites until soft peaks form. Fold evenly through batter. Divide mixture equally between the two prepared tins.
8. Bake in bottom 1 of preheated oven for 25-30 minutes, rotating cakes after halftime and cooking until sponges have risen, are springy to the touch, and have pulled away slightly from the edge of the tins.
9. While cakes are still warm, prick tops of cakes with toothpick and brush generously with the cooled Coffee Sugar Syrup.
10. Leave the cakes to cool in their tins on a wire rack for 10 minutes, then turn out onto the rack and remove the baking paper. Allow to cool completely before icing with Cocoa Coffee Buttercream.