

Portuguese Custard Tarts - pastéis de nata.

Makes 24 (in nata tins) or 16-18 (in a standard cupcake/ muffin pan)



Ingredients

175g	Plain flour
100g	Water - 25°C
1/2 tsp	Fine Sea Salt
120g	Unsalted High Fat Butter @ ideally 30°C (divid into two 60 grams portions)
15g	Unsalted High Fat Butter @ ideally 30°C for mixing into the dough

1. In the bowl combine the flour, and salt. Using your hands mix the 15g of butter into the flour completely.
2. Add the water and mix until a dough forms.
3. Keep mixing and kneading until the dough should be smooth and very elastic.
4. Allow to rest for at least **10 minutes**.
5. Dust your work surface with flour and roll the dough into a rectangle about 1/8 inch thick.
6. Spread the surface with half of the softened butter (60g) leaving a 1/2 inch border on all sides. Fold the dough into thirds like a business letter.
7. Rotate the dough so that the open fold is to your right. Roll into a rectangle about 1/4 inch thick, dusting your work surface with flour as necessary. Spread the surface

with the remaining half of the softened butter (60g) Fold into thirds.

8. Rotate the dough so that the open fold is to your right. Roll again rectangle about 1/4 inch thick. Fold into thirds. Continue to the next step or wrap in plastic wrap and chill if the dough is too warm or difficult to roll out (10 to 20 minutes).
9. Roll into another rectangle 1/4 inch thick (approximately 6 by 7 inches). Brush off any excess flour. With your hand, lightly dampen the surface of the dough with water to help the dough adhere to itself.
10. Starting at the long end, roll being careful to roll tight so no air pockets will be trapped.
11. Wrap the pastry roll in plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least about hour and up to 2 days.

Creme (cream filling):

390g	Whole Milk
1/2	Cinnamon stick
2 strips	Lemon peel
200g	Caster Sugar
40g	Plain Flour
1/4 tsp	Fine Sea Salt
85g	Egg Yolks

1. Place the milk, cinnamon stick and lemon peel in a large saucepan. Heat on medium heat stirring occasionally until simmering.
2. While the milk is heating whisk the sugar, flour and salt together in a medium bowl.
3. When the milk is simmering gradually whisk in the sugar and flour mixture. Continue to cook whisking constantly until just barely thickened. It is done when you can just begin to see faint trails left by the whisk. Do not allow to thicken too much. Control the heat so it does not come to a simmer.
4. Cool to room temperature or store in the refrigerator for up to 2 days. (During class, we will cool on a sheet pan in the freezer for 15 minutes).
5. Once the custard is room temperature or cold, scrape in to a bowl and whisk in the egg yolks. Never add the yolks if the mixture is hot.

Assembly:

1. Roll and stretch the dough log so its diameter matches the diameter of the base of your tins.
2. Using a serrated bread knife cut discs that are 1 1/2 cm or about 2/3 inch thick for *natas* tins or around 3/4 inch for a cupcake/muffin pan.

3. Place each disk into each tin. If they feel soft or slightly warm chill for 5 to 10 minutes.
4. To line the tins lightly dampen your dominant thumb with water. Press the center of the dough to create a thin base. Then use your thumb to push and stretch the pastry up the sides of the tin so it comes up over the edge. Try to avoid the top edge. It should stay slightly thick so that it's layers can puff while baking.
5. Chill all the lined tins until ready to bake. They can be covered and chilled or frozen until ready. If frozen, allow to defrost in the refrigerator before filling.
6. Preheat your oven to 500F or as hot as your oven will go. Use convection if you can.
7. Fill each tin almost to the top or at least to the level of the tin.
8. Bake in the center or upper third of the oven until the pastry is golden and the custard is caramelized. This can take anywhere from 10 to 24 minutes depending on the size of your tarts and your oven. They will take about 16 minutes in a cupcake/muffin pan. Halfway through the baking time, quickly rotate the pan. They are done with the filling seems solid but still wobbles just slightly. If you let them bake longer to achieve more caramelization you may overcook or curdle the filling.
9. Cool in the tins for at least 15 minutes.
10. Remove from tins and cool on a wire rack.
11. Enjoy warm with ground cinnamon and or powdered sugar lightly sprinkled on top if you wish.
12.
(tips):
 - So much depends on your oven. Baking time will depend on how many you bake at once if you're using individual tins. I recommend baking 8 to 12 at once.
 - If the bases burn, place a sheet pan on a rack below to absorb some of the heat.
 - If the tops and pastry aren't browning enough bake on a higher rack. It will take some experimenting to find the best method for your oven.

