

PASTEL DE NATA

Recipe for 15 to 20 Tarts

Ingredients for Puff Pastry (or 1 sheet of store-bought puff pastry):

- 325g all-purpose flour
- a little extra flour for dusting
- 175ml water
- 10g salt
- 250g margarine (unsalted butter also works!)

Ingredients for Custard:

- 600g granulated sugar
- 100g all-purpose flour
- 1 liter of milk
- 1 lemon zest
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 170g of egg yolks (that's about 10 eggs)



HOW TO MAKE PUFF PASTRY:

1. Put the flour and the salt in the food processor. Turn it on and steadily pour in the water. If you don't have a food processor, you can do this manually too. Simply put the flour and the salt in a bowl and open a hole in the center. Pour the water into the hole and start mixing with your hands until all ingredients have blended into a uniform ball of dough.
2. Lightly flour a clean surface and use your rolling pin to roll the dough into a sheet of about 1cm thick.
3. Make sure the margarine or butter is room temperature and not too hard to work with. Then put it in the center of the pastry and fold over the right and left sides of the sheet of dough, overlapping in the middle. This is the moment when you can unload your frustrations and use the rolling pin to hit the dough quite hard, to ensure the margarine in the middle gets softer.
4. Fold the bottom third up to cover the middle third and the top third down. Seal the dough gently by pressing down on the edges with your rolling pin. Give the dough a quarter turn - this is the "book technique" we talked about during the workshop.
5. Roll the dough out into a long rectangle, keeping the edges fairly square and the sides straight. Then roll the dough to form a long "sausage-like" tube. If you are using store-bought puff pastry, butter it generously on the surface, and roll it to form a tube like the one in the photo below.

DIRECTIONS TO MAKE THE CUSTARD:

6. Put the sugar and the flour together in a bowl, and mix well with your hands to make sure there are no lumps.
7. Place a saucepan on the stove and bring the milk with the lemon zest and the cinnamon to a boil.
8. Once the milk has boiled, whisk in the sugar and flour, slowly but steady. Do not stop stirring until the milk becomes thick.
9. Once the milk reaches a custardy consistency, take it out of the heat and allow it to cool down.
10. Once it is cool, mix in the egg yolks and stir. Do not do this while the milk is still hot.

ASSEMBLING AND BAKING:

11. Cut slices from the roll of puff pastry and place them horizontally in each mold.
12. Spread the puff pastry into the mold, working the dough from the center upwards and around, using your thumb. Pastel de Nata molds can be purchased at Pollux in Lisbon (Rua dos Fanqueiros 276) or [online on Amazon](#). If you buy the original Pastel de Nata tin molds, make sure to follow this procedure before using them for the first time: place them empty in the oven for at least 30 minutes. They will darken and be ready to be used for longer. After each use, do not wash them to avoid rusting. Simply clean them with a paper towel.
13. Make sure each mold has pastry just a little above the edge.
14. Fill each mold with the previously prepared custard.
15. Pre-heat the oven to 250°C (that is 480°F).
16. Place the Pastel de Nata molds in an oven tray and bake for 12 minutes. Halfway through the baking process, turn the tray the other way to make sure all tarts are cooked evenly.
17. When you finally open the oven, shake the tray a little. If the tarts jiggle like Jell-O, leave them in for one or two more minutes. If they look solid, it means they are cooked through and through.
18. Take the tarts out of the oven and let them rest at room temperature for at least 15 mins.

Final step: Sprinkle with cinnamon powder to taste and enjoy!



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