

Caramelized Maple Tart

Serves 10–12

Asking you to boil maple syrup in a pot until it reduces so far that it starts to caramelize might feel like a wild request, but I know you're going to appreciate the concentrated flavor without the tooth-aching sweetness (reducing the syrup concentrates the flavor and sugar content, so you need less of it in the filling). While it might be a challenge to tell when, exactly, it's caramelized (it starts off as an amber color, so...), you will be able to smell it (it'll smell like caramel) and see it (the bubbles go from fast and furious to thick and luxuriously slow).

Ingredients

For the crust:

1 1/3 cups (200g) all-purpose flour

1/3 cup (80g) powdered sugar

1 1/2 teaspoons (6g) kosher salt

1 1/2 sticks (6 ounces/170g) unsalted butter, melted and cooled slightly

For the filling:

1/2 cup maple syrup, plus more for serving

1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon (optional)

1 cup/230g heavy cream

1 large egg

1 large egg yolk

1 tablespoon cornstarch

Whipped cream, for serving

Flaky sea salt, for serving

Instructions

- 1 Make the crust: Preheat the oven to 350°F.
- 2 In a medium bowl, combine the flour, powdered sugar, and salt. Using your fingers, incorporate the melted butter until you've got a crumbly, Play-Doh-like textured dough. Resist the urge to knead the dough—you do not want to develop any gluten in this (that's when you get a crust that shrinks on you).
- 3 Press the dough into a 9-inch tart pan with a removable bottom or a 9-inch springform pan. Use the tines of a fork or the tip of a knife to lightly prick the top all over to allow steam to escape as it bakes (this prevents bubbles).
- 4 Bake the crust until the bottom is lightly golden brown and the top goes from shiny to opaque (a good tell-tale that it's baked through), 15–18 minutes (it will get baked again with the filling, so don't worry too much about the edges being totally golden brown). Remove from the oven and let cool completely. Leave the oven on.
- 5 To make the filling: In a small pot, bring the maple syrup to a boil over medium heat, and cook until the color goes from pale golden brown with lots of small, furious bubbles to dark golden brown with larger, slower bubbles, 8–10 minutes. What we're doing here is evaporating the water in the maple syrup to concentrate the flavors and caramelize the sugars. The smell should be "the most intense maple syrup you've ever smelled," like if maple syrup was a candy or a scratch-and-sniff sticker (do they still make those?).
- 6 Once the maple syrup has reached the desired caramelized stage, add the cinnamon (if using), and slowly whisk in the heavy cream, letting it bubble up as you add it in stages so the maple syrup doesn't seize up and harden. Remove from heat, and set aside.
- 7 In a medium bowl, whisk together the whole egg, egg yolk, cornstarch, and salt. Using a ladle or measuring cup, add a generous 1/2-cup pour of the maple mixture to the egg mixture while whisking to blend. Add another 1/2 cup, continuing to whisk. Add the remaining maple mixture to the bowl with the eggs, whisking to blend.
- 8 Pour the maple mixture into the prebaked crust. Return the pan to the oven, and bake until the custard is set, no longer jiggling in the center, and has a nice shiny top, 30–35 minutes.
- 9 To serve, let it cool completely (chilled, even). Serve topped with whipped cream, perhaps some more maple syrup, and a bit of flaky salt.

DO AHEAD: This tart can be made 3 days ahead and stored loosely covered in the refrigerator. Serve chilled or slightly room temperature.

LEFTOVERS: There likely won't be any, but in the event: Store in the fridge, and serve any leftovers chilled.

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