

Leek and Roquefort Tart with Caramelised Apple and Pine Nut Dressing

This is a terrific little number using what, in my opinion at least, is one of the finest cheeses ever produced. I've no idea about the history of Roquefort. No doubt it was a happy accident. Some over salted cheese that no-body liked was probably left in the back of a cave somewhere for a year or two because someone couldn't bear to throw it away where it got infected by some obscure mould or other etc, etc. However it happened, the end product is cosmic. If you haven't tried Roquefort, go out and buy some now! It's salty, sweet and very, very blue. No other blue cheese tastes quiet like it. One of the best things about this recipe is that when you've crumbled the cheese into the tarts, you get to lick your fingers! Wash them well afterwards of course.

Serves 4

For the pastry

200 grms plain flour
100 grms unsalted butter,
chilled and diced
Pinch of salt and black
pepper
Water to bind

For the filling

1 leek finely shredded
100 grms Roquefort
2 tbs double cream
4 free range eggs
Basil leaves to garnish

For the apples and dressing

3 tbs extra virgin olive oil
1 tbs red wine vinegar
2 dessert apples (Cox are
good)
25 grms pine kernels
1 tsp finely chopped chives
1 tsp finely chopped oregano
3 tsp sugar
Pinch of salt and black
pepper

First make the pastry. Sift the flour, salt and pepper into a mixing bowl. Rub in the butter until the mixture looks like fine breadcrumbs. Add about a tablespoon of water and begin to bring the mixture together with fork. When it begins to bind, use your hands to bring the mixture together into a ball. Add a little more water if required. Wrap the pastry in cling film and chill in the fridge for 30 minutes.

Butter four individual, loose bottomed tart cases. Divide the pastry into four. Roll out each piece in turn, line the tart cases and trim away the surplus pastry from the edges. Return to the fridge and chill for a further 30 minutes (don't skip the chilling; it will stop the pastry shrinking away from the cases whilst baking).

Pre-heat the oven to 180 degrees. Put the four pastry cases on to a baking sheet. Cover the pastry with grease proof paper and fill with baking beans. Bake in the oven for 10 to 15 minutes until the edges of the pastry are a pale golden colour. Remove from the oven, take out the paper and beans and set aside.

Melt a little butter in a frying pan over a medium heat. Add the shredded leeks and cook until softened but don't allow them to colour. Divide the leeks equally between the pastry cases. Beat together the eggs and cream and pour into the pastry cases. Crumble the Roquefort into the tarts and lick your fingers! Pop the tarts back into the oven and cook for about ten minutes until the cheese has melted and the egg has just set. Remove from the oven and set aside to cool.

Core the apples and leaving the skin on, cut them into quarters then divide the quarters again. This will give you four thick wedges for each serving. Melt a little more butter in your frying pan. Add 2 tsp of sugar and heat gently until it melts. Add the apple wedges and cook until they begin to soften and take on a little colour.

To make the dressing, put all the remaining ingredients into a jam jar and shake to combine.

To serve. Place a tart in the centre of each plate. Arrange the apple wedges around the tart (use your imagination) and spoon around the dressing. Garnish the tart with some torn Basil leaves.