

THE RECIPE

Ricotta and cherry tart

CULTURE

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RICOTTA AND CHERRY TART

The "classic" recipe for this cake is based on Visciola cherries (a variety of sour, fragrant cherry, sister of the Amarena cherry). But we will take a "poetic licence" and replace them with regular cherries, in homage to our painting by Barocci.

This exquisite preparation is one of the treasures of Roman Jewish gastronomy. In the 18th century, its name was changed to "Torta papale" or "Papalina" after an edict in which Pope Pius VI forbade Jews from selling dairy products to Christians (*L'Editto sopra gli Ebrei*, 1775). To escape the control of the Pope's guards, the Ghetto bakers hid the ricotta and Visciola cherry filling between two layers of soft shortcrust pastry.

Ingredients (serves 6):

For the shortcrust pastry

200g 00 flour

65g caster sugar

45g melted butter

1 whole egg + 1 yolk

1 teaspoon baking powder

1 pinch of salt

The zest of half a lemon

For the filling

500g ricotta cheese

150g caster sugar

400g extra Visciola cherry (or Amarena cherry or regular cherry) jam

For the garnish

20g icing sugar

Preparation

Prepare the base by melting the butter in a saucepan and letting it cool. In a bowl, beat the egg and the yolk with the sugar; add the yeast, the melted butter, the lemon zest and a pinch of salt. Gradually add the flour, stirring with a fork. You should obtain a mixture that comes away from the sides but does not stick to your hands (if it is too soft and sticky, add a little flour, if it is too dry, add a drop of milk).

Transfer onto a floured surface and knead briefly. Shape into a ball, wrap in cling film and leave to rest in the fridge for 2 hours.

Take the shortcrust pastry, roll out about 2/3 of it and put it in the mould lined with baking paper; the sides of the mould must be covered with shortcrust pastry.

Pour the jam on the base and level it out.

Prepare the filling: in a bowl, quickly mix the ricotta cheese with the sugar using a fork, and pour it over the jam.

Roll out the remaining shortcrust pastry into a smaller disk to completely cover the filling; fold in the edges.

Bake in a preheated oven at 180°C for about 50 minutes or until the surface is coloured.

Before serving, dust with icing sugar.

(Liana Marabini)