

KATIE STEWART's PLUM TART RECIPE from the book - The Sociable Cook. Copyright permission given by Andrew Leask.

I use my mother's old-fashioned enamel pie plate here. You may well find that you have one lurking in the kitchen cupboard. If not, you can shape this plum tart directly on a baking tray.

Ingredients

- 175g (6oz) plain flour
- 75g (3oz) butter
- Milk and granulated sugar, for decorating
- Icing sugar, for dusting
- **For the filling**
- 50g (2oz) skinned hazelnuts
- 1kg (2 1/4lb) red or purple plums
- 2-3 tablespoons caster sugar
- 1 tablespoon cornflour
- Grated nutmeg
- 15g (1/2oz) butter in flakes

1. Sift the flour into a mixing bowl. Add the butter in pieces and rub in gently using only the fingertips. Sprinkle over 2 tablespoons of cold water and stir to moisten the mix. With floured fingers, draw the ingredients together to form a dough. Turn the dough out on to a floured work surface and knead gently for a moment. Cover and chill the dough for 30 minutes.
2. Toast the skinned hazelnuts, then whiz in a blender to make fine crumbs. Cut the plums in half, along the natural line and twist the halves in opposite directions to separate. Remove the stones and slice the plums into a mixing bowl. Combine the caster sugar, cornflour and a seasoning of nutmeg. Sprinkle over the fruits and toss to mix.
3. Roll the pastry to a circle large enough to line a 23cm (9 in) buttered pie plate with 5cm (2 in) to spare all round. Trim the pastry if uneven. Transfer the pastry to the pie plate, allowing the excess to hang overhang the edge.
4. Spread the ground hazelnuts over the tart base – the nuts will absorb excess fruit juices and keep the base crust dry. Pile on the plums with flakes of butter and spread out evenly. Fold the pastry edges inwards around the rim, leaving the centre of the tart uncovered.
5. Heat the oven to 200 C/400 F/Gas Mark 6. Brush the pastry with milk and sprinkle with granulated sugar. Set the tart in the heated oven and bake for 40-45 minutes. Cool slightly, then dust the pastry rim with icing sugar.