

Quince and Almond Crostata

Serves 6-8

Preparation Time: 40 minutes

Cooking Time: 40 minutes (plus 4 hours to cook quinces)

1 litre water
2 cups brown sugar
3 large quinces, cut into quarters, peeled and cored
1 cinnamon stick
8 cloves
4 star anise, optional
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
2 cups plain flour
200g ground almonds (or 125g grated dark chocolate)
125g chilled unsalted butter, cubed
2-3 tablespoons cold water
2 eggs, separated
1/3 cup caster sugar
1 tablespoon raw sugar, for sprinkling
double cream, for serving

Combine water and brown sugar in a large ovenproof saucepan and bring to the boil, stirring until sugar dissolves. Add quince, spices and vanilla and simmer covered for 4 hours over low heat or in a slow oven (160°C) until quince is soft and ruby red in colour. Allow to cool.

Place flour and ¼ cup ground almonds in a food processor, add butter and blend until mixture resembles breadcrumbs. Add water, pulsing as necessary, until pastry just comes together. Remove and roll out onto a floured surface to a circle approximately 40cm in diameter. Use to line a large flan dish or pizza tray 30cm in diameter, allowing the edges of the pastry to overhang and prick the base with a fork. Combine remaining almonds, egg whites and caster sugar and spread over base of pastry. Cut quince pieces into slices and arrange decoratively over almond paste, spooning a little cooking syrup on top.

Turn the overhanging pastry in, covering the edge of the quince, and crimp decoratively. Brush pastry with egg yolk and sprinkle with raw sugar.

Bake at 200°C for 30-40 minutes until pastry is golden. Brush exposed quince with remaining cooking syrup and serve warm or cold with double cream. Note: Cooking syrup may be simmered until slightly thickened for serving.