

Spiced banana tarte Tatin

Vivek Singh, *The Cinnamon Club*, London

Serves 4–6

Here is a modern dessert in the 'fusion' style. It is basically French, but with Indian flavours. Vivek recommends using the very small, stubby bananas available in Asian stores, but any will do. His favourite accompaniment is vanilla ice cream dusted with ground cinnamon.

For the caramel
150g (5½oz) caster sugar
15g (½oz) unsalted butter

For the tarte Tatin
a little cooking oil
4 bananas
½ tsp pink peppercorns,
coarsely crushed, plus more
to garnish (optional)
200g (7oz) ready-rolled puff
pastry, preferably all-butter

Grease a 25 centimetre (10 inch) tart tin with some cooking oil. Preheat the oven to 170°C/340°F/gas mark 3½.

Put a small, heavy-based pan, 15 centimetres (6 inches) in diameter, over a medium heat. Pour in half the sugar. Heat and, as it starts to melt, add the remaining sugar in batches, stirring to mix the liquid sugar with the solid. Cook until all the sugar is liquid and light brown. Add the butter, stir and remove from the heat. The sugar will continue to cook and turn a nutty brown colour. Pour the caramel into the tart tin and tilt to spread it out evenly. Allow to cool.

Peel and slice the bananas evenly, on the diagonal, about ½ centimetre (¼ inch) thick. Arrange them in overlapping circles over the set caramel, covering it completely. Sprinkle the crushed peppercorns on top. Lay the puff pastry over the tart tin and cut to fit generously over the bananas. Gently push it down with a blunt knife between the rim of the tin and the bananas to create a snug fit.

Place the tart on the middle shelf of the hot oven. Bake for about 20 minutes, or until the pastry puffs up and turns a golden brown. Remove from the oven.

Run a knife around the edge of the tart tin, then cover the tin with a plate and invert. Prise out and carefully replace any stray pieces of banana that stick to the tin. Garnish with extra pink peppercorns to taste, if you like. Serve hot, or warm, with ice cream.