



JOAN NATHAN'S ZWETSCHGENKUCHEN

SEND FOR ME by Lauren Fox is the perfect book club book and we're excited to share a dish you can serve alongside your discussion.

Fox set much of her novel at a German bakery, so we're pairing it here with a German tart recipe from the one and only Joan Nathan.

As Lauren said, "This zwetschgenkuchen looks exactly like my grandma's—we called it pflaumenkuchen. Just looking at a picture, I can practically taste it."



A Recipe for Joan Nathan's Zwetschgenkuchen

This tart is served traditionally at the high holidays in early fall, when small blue Italian plums are in season. In southern Germany and Alsace the pie was made from zwetsche, a local variety of these plums. My aunt Lisl always used to make a murbeteig crust (a short-crust butter cookie dough) for this tart, and sliced each Italian plum into four crescent shapes. She lined the tart with breadcrumbs and then apricot preserves, which protected the dough during baking, leading to a crispy crust. She went light on the cinnamon, a spice she felt was overused in this country. (I agree with her.) My aunt's results, simple to prepare, were simply delicious.

Yield: Makes 6 to 8 servings

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INGREDIENTS:

1 cup unbleached all-purpose flour	2 teaspoons dried breadcrumbs
Dash of salt	$\frac{1}{3}$ cup apricot preserves
$\frac{1}{4}$ cup sugar	1 tablespoon brandy
$\frac{1}{2}$ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter or parve margarine	2 pounds Italian plums
1 large egg yolk	$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon cinnamon
	Confectioners' sugar

METHOD:

1. To make the crust using a food processor fitted with a metal blade, pulse the flour, salt, and 1 tablespoon of the sugar together. Cut the butter or margarine into small pieces, add to the bowl, and process until crumbly. Add the egg yolk and process until a ball is formed, adding more flour if necessary.
2. To make the dough by hand, use your fingers or a pastry blender to work the butter or margarine into the flour, salt, and 1 tablespoon sugar until the mixture resembles coarse breadcrumbs. Add the egg yolk and work the dough into a ball.
3. Remove the dough from the bowl, dust with flour, and pat into a flattened circle. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least a half hour. When you are ready to make the crust, dust your hands and the dough with flour. Place the dough in the center of a 9-inch pie plate and with your fingers gently pat in out to cover the bottom and go up the sides.
4. Preheat the oven to 400°F.
5. Prick the crust with the tines of a fork in several places and prebake the crust on the middle rack for 10 minutes. Remove the crust from the oven and let it cool slightly. Turn the oven down to 350°F.
6. Pit and cut the plums into fourths. Sprinkle the breadcrumbs on the dough, then spoon the apricot preserves on top and drizzle with the brandy. Place the plum quarters on the crust in a circle so that each overlaps the next and they eventually form a spiral into the center. Sprinkle with cinnamon and the remaining sugar. (At this point, if you wish, you can wrap and freeze the tart, to bake it later. Just remove the pie from the freezer one hour before baking.)
7. Place the tart in the oven and bake about 30 to 40 minutes or until the crust is golden brown and the plums are juicy. Remove from the oven. Just before serving, sprinkle with confectioners' sugar.