

TARTA DE SANTIAGO / ST. JAMES' ALMOND TART

from Viviana Carballo

This classic tart hails from Galicia, in the North West of Spain, above Portugal, where my father's ancestors come from, and indeed there is a small city in that area by the name of Carballo. This tart was a very special treat of my childhood, but it was never made at home, it was purchased from a specialty restaurant. So I don't claim a family recipe, far from it. This is my version of a combination of different recipes as there are many, many ways of making it. Mine is simplified, of course! The classic design on the tart is the silhouette of either the shell or the cross associated with St. James and the pilgrimage to his city.

4 large eggs
pinch of salt
1 cup superfine sugar
1 ½ cups ground almonds (about 8 ounces weigh)
4 ounces softened sweet butter
½ cup freshly ground bread crumbs
grated zest of 2 lemons (with absolutely no pith)
1/4 cup powdered sugar

Pre heat oven to 400 degrees F

Place the eggs in a medium large bowl with a pinch of salt. Mix with electric mixer until loose. Add sugar and mix until very fluffy and light yellow, about 4 minutes.

Add ground almonds and mix thoroughly, add the softened butter and continue to mix. The batter will be fairly loose at this point. Add the fresh bread crumbs and the grated lemon zest and continue to mix until well blended.

Pour into a tart pan with a removable bottom and place on a baking sheet. Place the baking sheet on the bottom of the oven, not the bottom rack, the bottom, for exactly 10 minutes or until it begins to color.

Lower oven's temperature to 375 F and transfer baking sheet to middle rack. Bake for another 15 minutes or until tart is golden brown and when tested with a toothpick, it comes out dry.

Place on a rack to cool. When ready to serve, place a shell over the tart, to make a silhouette when dusted with powdered sugar using flour sifter or strainer.