

treacle tart

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Treacle Tart

Golden syrup, breadcrumbs and lemon in a shortcrust shell, latticed on top. It is a Victorian recipe and a direct consequence of an industrial one: Abram Lyle began selling golden syrup in 1885 as a by-product of sugar refining, and within a generation English cooks had built a tart around it.

There is no treacle in it, in the modern sense. Golden syrup was called treacle at the time.

What makes it work

- **Breadcrumbs are the whole structure.** They absorb the syrup and set it into something sliceable. Fresh white crumbs give a soft, cakey tart; dry crumbs give a firmer one. About 200 g of crumbs to 400 g of syrup.
- **Lemon zest and juice, generously.** Golden syrup alone is unbearably sweet; the acid is what makes the tart edible rather than merely sugary. Zest of two lemons at least.
- **Warm the syrup to pour it,** and weigh it in the pan on the scales rather than trying to measure it out of the tin.
- **A little cream or an egg** gives a set closer to a custard, which many modern versions prefer.
- **Blind bake the shell** — this is a wet filling.
- **Bake until barely set.** It firms considerably as it cools.

Ingredients

One 23 cm tart. Serves 10.

- 1 blind-baked shell — [all-butter pie crust](#) or [pate sucree](#), with offcuts kept for the lattice
- 400 g golden syrup
- 200 g fresh white breadcrumbs
- zest of 2 [lemons](#) and 3 tbsp juice
- 100 ml double cream
- 1 [egg](#), beaten
- 3 g fine salt
- 2 g ground [ginger](#), optional

Method

Blind bake the shell. Reduce the oven to **180 °C / 350 °F**.

Warm the golden syrup gently in a pan until it flows easily — do not boil it.

Off the heat, stir in the breadcrumbs, zest, juice, cream, egg, salt and ginger. Leave it five minutes; the crumbs swell and the mixture thickens.

Pour into the shell and level. Cut the pastry offcuts into strips and lay a lattice over the top.

Bake **30–35 minutes**, until the filling is set at the edges, gently domed, and still slightly soft in the middle.

Cool at least an hour. Serve warm or at room temperature with cream or custard.

Notes

- **Stale bread is the right bread.** Two-day-old white loaf, crusts off, blitzed. See [bread](#).
- A spoonful of black treacle in with the golden syrup darkens it and adds a bitter edge that suits the tart; see [Molasses](#).
- **Keeps four days** at room temperature and reheats well.

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