

SUMMER TOMATO TART

RECIPE AND PHOTO
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As one of Central Virginia's most bountiful – and arguably best – warm-weather crops, the cherry tomato may as well be the summer season's official piece of produce. Loved for their cute size, multitude of colors, and sweet yet tangy flavor, cherry tomatoes are also prized for their culinary versatility. However, whether freshly sliced in summer salads for a pop of color or punctuating patterns of proteins and veggies for grilled kebabs, the cherry tomato is too often employed as an edible accessory rather than a dinner party cynosure.

As pretty as it is tasty, my Summer Tomato Tart gives the cherry tomato the spotlight it deserves. Tossed in Herbes de Provence and oven-roasted, the tiny tomatoes offer big flavor with few distractions in this simple tart. Crumbles of creamy goat cheese and a sprinkling of fresh basil on top lend a bright zippiness, contrasting nicely with the buttery crust and savory tomato filling. Use a tart pan with a fluted edge for added, yet effortless, elegance and make this delicious and easy dish the centerpiece of your next summer gathering.



SERVES: 6 | TIME: 2 hours, including chilling and baking

INGREDIENTS:

FOR THE SAVORY PASTRY CRUST:

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- 2 sticks cold butter, diced
- 5-6 tablespoons ice cold water

FOR THE TOMATO FILLING:

- 2 cups cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 2 tablespoons Herbes de Provence
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 4 ounces goat cheese, crumbled
- 1 bunch basil, thinly sliced

DIRECTIONS:

1. To make the savory pastry crust, whisk the flour, salt, and pepper together in a large bowl. Add the cubed butter and rub it into the flour mixture using your hands. To ensure your pastry is extra flaky, you want to flatten the flour-coated butter between your fingers.
2. When all the butter is broken up and incorporated into the flour, add the water a few tablespoons at a time while mixing by hand. Keep adding water until the pastry starts to come together.
3. Turn the dough out onto a floured surface and pat into a disc. Wrap in plastic and place in the fridge to chill for an hour.
4. After an hour, return the chilled dough to a well-floured surface and roll out into a circle that is a quarter of an inch in thickness and at least an inch larger than your tart pan on all sides.
5. Gently press the dough into the tart pan, remove any excess dough and prick it all over the bottom with a fork. Keep the tart shell in the fridge while you make the filling and preheat your oven to 350°F.
6. Place the halved tomatoes, salt, olive oil and Herbes de Provence in a large bowl and toss to combine.
7. Fill the unbaked tart shell with the tomatoes and transfer to the preheated oven.
8. Bake until the crust is lightly browned and the tomatoes are bubbling. This will take about an hour.
9. Cool the tart completely before topping with crumbled goat cheese and thinly sliced basil. Serve at room temperature. *PH*