

SZARLOTKA (Poland's famous apple cake)

INGREDIENTS (for a 10" diameter cake)

8 ozs unsalted butter

6 ozs caster sugar

2 eggs

2 tsp vanilla essence

1 lb self-raising flour

6 medium apples (or, better still, 3 very large cooking apples)

Sugar to taste

Maximum 2 small handfuls of sultanas (optional)

1 dessertsp. of cinnamon

METHOD

Do the apples first so they can cool while you do the pastry.

Peel core and cut into segments and slice into pieces no more than a quarter inch thick, that are then put into water in a pan. Drain the water, cover the pan and then heat for a few minutes on high then about 30 minutes on very low heat. Add sugar to taste more for cooking apples and less for eating apples. Stir in optional handfuls of sultanas.

For the pastry. Soften the butter and put it in a mixing bowl and stir with a wooden spoon until fairly soft. Gradually introduce the castor sugar working it in and, when done, add the two eggs and the vanilla essence. Finally, start introducing the flour, stirring constantly, before finishing off with your hands.

By now it should be possible to shape it into one single lump of pastry mix (this may require a bit more flour). Lightly grease the baking dish, Roll the pastry into golf balls then flatten out and line the dish. Add the apples and finally sprinkle cinnamon, before topping off with more pastry. Any leftover pastry can be scooped raw or made into biscuits/cookies. Bake at 150°C for 45 minutes.

