

CLEO'S MINI TARTE TATINS

Upside-Down Caramel Apple Tarts

Text and photos (c) by Alice Alfonsi who writes
[The Coffeehouse Mysteries](#) as [Cleo Coyle](#)
with her husband, Marc Cerasini.

Tarte Tatins are as common in France as our apple pie; but when this upside-down French apple tart bakes, it creates its own delectable caramel sauce. I'm sharing a *mini* version of the more traditional single, large Tatin. These mini upside-down caramel apple tarts are close to foolproof and great for impressing guests. Because they're individual servings, the recipe works for small dinner parties as well as large family gatherings. Best of all, the tarts can be prepared in advance. Simply cover your ramekins with plastic wrap and store them in the fridge for up to two days before baking and serving. Just be sure you follow the recipe and toss the apple slices with lemon, which prevents them from turning brown! May you eat with joy! ~ Cleo

Makes 6 Tarts

Filling ingredients:

- 3 Golden Delicious apples
- 1-1/2 teaspoons lemon juice
- 1-1/2 teaspoons flour

Caramel ingredients:

- 3 Tablespoons butter
- 6 Tablespoons white sugar
- 6 Tablespoons dark brown sugar

You will also need:

- 1 package frozen puff pastry shells
(I use *Pepperidge Farms*)
- 1 egg white (to brush puff pastry)
- 6 ramekins (7 to 8-oz size)
(greased well with butter)
- 6 dessert plates



*Cleo Coyle's Mini Tarte Tatins
(Caramel Apple Tarts)*

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Page 1 of 7
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Apple note: The Golden Delicious variety is my favorite for this recipe because it holds its shape during baking and won't turn to apple sauce when you plate the dessert. Granny Smith and Jonathan will work, as well.

Step 1 - Prepare the filling: Peel and core 3 Golden Delicious apples. Cut apples into relatively thin, even slices, about ½ inch thick. Toss the slices in a bowl with the lemon juice first, then the flour, coating them lightly. Note: The lemon prevents the apples from turning brown and the flour will absorb excess liquid released by the apples. If you skip the flour, your tarts may be watery.

Step 2 - Prepare the caramel: Grease the bottom and sides of your ramekins with butter. In a small saucepan, melt the 3 tablespoons of butter. Add the white and brown sugars and stir over low heat with a rubber spatula (to prevent sticking) until the sugars dissolve completely in the butter. The mixture will become thick. While still warm, divide the sugar mixture evenly among your 6 ramekins. Use that handy rubber spatula to even the mixture out at the bottom of each ramekin. (The mixture will harden as it cools, and that's fine. In the oven, it will melt again into a sweet, buttery caramel glaze for your apples.)



Step 3 - Prepare for baking: Divide your apple slices among the ramekins, layering them on their sides. You can bake the ramekins immediately at this point or store them by covering each ramekin with plastic wrap and placing in the fridge. (I have stored mine as long as 2 days, and they still came out beautifully.)

Step 4 - Begin baking: When ready to bake, preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Remove plastic wrap, place ramekins on a baking sheet, and bake for 20 minutes. (**You are halfway through the baking process here...**)

Step 5 - Add the pastry: Remove your baking sheet of ramekins from oven and (remembering the ramekins are hot!) carefully set a fully FROZEN puff pastry shell on top of the layered apple slices of each ramekin. Brush the top of the frozen pastry with egg white. This will protect the delicate pastry and also help it turn golden brown.





Step 6 – Finish baking: Return ramekins to oven for another 20 to 25 minutes. Pastry is done when dough puffs up and turns golden brown and the apples are cooked through. (You can test the softness of apples with the tip of a sharp knife.) Remove ramekins from oven and set on a cool surface. Let rest for five minutes.

Note: The resting is important because your caramel will be boiling hot and you need to let it settle down.

Step 7 - Time to plate: Remembering that the ramekins are still HOT, use oven mitts to place a dessert plate over a ramekin and carefully flip it (like pineapple upside down cake). After you flip the tart, the flaky puff pastry will be on the bottom of the plate and the buttery sweet caramel will drip down over the entire tart and pool around it on the dessert plate as if a pastry chef sauced it. If slices of apples stick to the ramekin simply use clean fingers to replace it prettily over the tart. Serve warm as is or with whipped or ice cream.

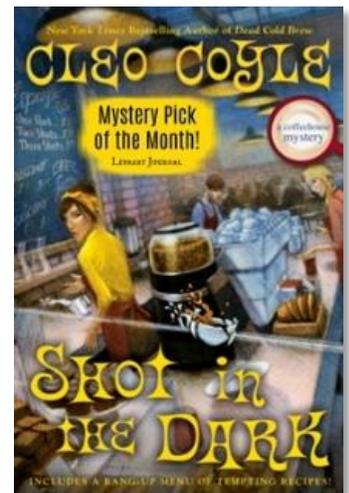
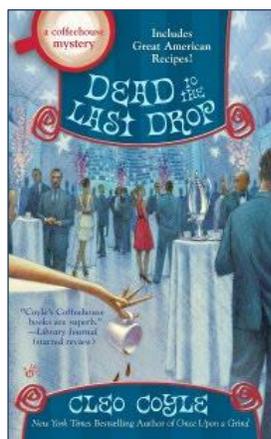
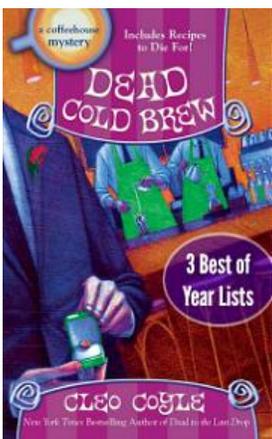
NOTE: Please remember that you are working with HOT ramekins at the stage of placing pastry over the apples and again when you flip the ramekin for plating. Be careful!

NO PUFF CRUST: If you'd like to try a version with homemade sweet pastry crust (instead of frozen puff pastry), then [click here](#) for my sweet pastry crust recipe. For the six tarts, you'll need to halve my sweet crust recipe, roll out the dough, cut out circles to fit the top of your ramekins and tuck them in, sealing the dough against the sides of the ramekin. Be sure to make a small slice with a knife in the top of each crust for venting steam; and DO NOT brush homemade dough with egg white (only the frozen puff pastry dough will benefit from that step).



Eat with joy! —Cleo

The [Coffeehouse Mysteries](#) are bestselling culinary mysteries, set in a landmark Greenwich Village coffeehouse. Each includes the added bonus of recipes. To learn more and see more recipes, visit Cleo Coyle's online coffeehouse at www.CoffeehouseMystery.com And her recipe blog at www.CleoCoyleRecipes.com



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