

RECIPE

**French Apple Tart**

SERVES 8



**Crust**

1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour  
1/2 cup granulated sugar  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1/2 cup unsalted butter, melted

**Filling**

5 Golden Delicious apples (8 ounces each), peeled, cored  
1/2 cup unsalted butter  
1/2 cup water  
1 cup apricot preserves  
1/2 teaspoon salt

**For the crust:** Heat oven to 375°F. Whisk flour, sugar and salt together. Add melted butter and mix until dough forms. Using your hands, press dough evenly into bottom and sides of 9-inch tart pan with removable bottom. Place pan on wire rack set in rimmed baking sheet; bake on lowest rack, until crust is deep golden brown, about 35 minutes, rotating pan halfway through baking. Set aside.

**For the filling:** Cut 5 apples lengthwise into quarters, and cut each quarter lengthwise into 4 slices. Melt 1/2 cup butter in skillet over medium heat. Add apple slices and water, and toss to combine. Cover and cook, stirring occasionally, until apples begin to turn translucent and are slightly tender, 3 to 5 minutes. Transfer apples to large plate; set aside.

Heat microwave apricot preserves until fluid, about 30 seconds. Strain through fine-mesh strainer, removing solids. Set aside 3 tablespoons strained preserves.

Cut 5 apples into 1/2-inch-thick slices. Melt 2 tablespoons butter in skillet over medium heat. Add remaining apricot preserves, reserved apricot solids, raw apples and salt. Cover and cook, stirring occasionally, until apples are very tender, about 10 minutes.

Combine apple mixture with potato starch. Cook, stirring occasionally, until reduced to 2 cups, about 5 minutes.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 67)

# Have a Little Faith

*How getting older deepened my belief in goodness ... and in myself* **By ANNE LAMOTT**

**I** was hanging out at the library with two old friends, comparing notes on our lives. All three of us had experienced the usual losses that time brings, yet all of us felt more blessed than we had when we first met. Yes, sometimes the safety-deposit

drawers at the memory bank get jammed. Our backs ache, and nothing has become higher, or firmer, in the past few decades. But we were all so grateful for how our lives had turned out that we laughed until the cranky young librarian glared at us.

Age had deepened and widened our sense of faith—and by “faith,” I don’t necessarily mean religious conviction. I’m talking partly about belief in the existence of a divine intelligence but also about faith in goodness, in life, in things mostly working out. And let’s not forget faith in ourselves—the conviction that we are loved and chosen—which is such a component of the spiritual life.

The theologian Paul Tillich famously said that the opposite of faith is not doubt but certainty. And I can vouch for that—I think. Getting older has given me more comfort in not knowing the answers. I throw up my hands more often now; I shake my head in wonder at how inscrutable life is. I have finally figured out that

“Figure it out” is not a great slogan. My new slogan is “Who knows?”—which leads quite easily to “Who cares? But isn’t it something?” The God of the Old Testament says, “Be still, and know that I am God,” i.e., “Put a sock in it—you are in charge of very little. You could help the dogs at mealtime, as they have no opposable thumbs. But you’re going to have to trust Me with the big things.”

Sometimes faith looks like myopia: I don’t see everyone’s faults so clearly as I used to, let alone my own. The God of my later years is not interested in my pores, or cellulite,

and hopes that I will stop noticing yours. My vision has blessedly blurred. This is a great advantage when you’re trying to live more spiritually, more expansively, more like Zorba the Greek and less like the Church Lady. For instance, when I sit on my bed now writing on my iPad, the top roll of tummy sometimes creeps over onto the screen and starts typing away. In the old days, upon noticing this unsought collaboration, I would have

decided to start a new diet, or to end it all. Now I think, “Who knows? Maybe it’s got something interesting to add.”

I finally have faith that no matter what happens to me, I will never be beyond help, because I have seen parents, friends and acquaintances live with catastrophe and illness. They were beautifully cared for



**“Sometimes faith looks like myopia: I don’t see faults so clearly as I used to.”**

—ANNE LAMOTT





## It's time to create your estate plan. Just in case.

You maintain “just in case” insurance plans for your life, health, and property—and you rarely update them when circumstances change. An estate plan is another kind of insurance—one that protects the assets you’ve worked so hard to accumulate. Isn’t it time to create one? We can help you take the first step.

**AARP Foundation**, AARP’s affiliated charity, is pleased to make available the **Confidential Organizer**. This special guide helps you collect and organize your planning information. This simplifies the process resulting in documents that put you in control.

**Call 1-888-711-1882**  
request your free copy today.



## PersonalBest/My American Life

by those who most loved them. Twenty-nine years in a tiny church has proved to me that when two or more are gathered who believe in Goodness, they will take care of those in their community who are suffering, scared, lonely. So what are my closest people going to do when my time comes? Will they say, “Sorry. We draw the line at horrible Annie. She’s on her own”? No, they will show up, keep me clean, fed, calm, with reruns of *The Good Wife*, M&Ms, the latest copies of the *New Yorker* and *People*. They will help me come through to whatever awaits. I’ve learned that, unless we’re all swept away by hot lava, as my grandson frequently imagines, we can bank on this. Graciousness almost always bats last.

I thought when I was younger that faith was about the confidence to say the great Yes to my own deepest desires, and that is true, as far as it goes. But a deepening faith has also shown me that it’s OK to say No. Plus, it has shown me that the word “No” is a complete sentence. This realization led to the single most important life lesson of all: No one over age 55 ever needs to help anyone move again if they don’t want to. Our job now is to help younger movers, with their strong backs and SUVs, by bringing over sandwiches and Cokes. Period.

One of the most important gifts of spiritual faith is forgiveness, and I have grudgingly tugged this gift open over many years, and many hurts, until empathy for the other person has become almost a reflex. I have also grown better at recognizing when I’m the one in need of forgiveness. Most surprisingly, though, I have finally

learned to forgive myself for most of my disappointing character traits and ill-fated decisions. I know now that I am never going to be a gym rat or an eater of cottage cheese. This side of the grave, I will be absentminded. I always was, and menopause did not bring with it enhanced acuity. Only a few weeks ago, a friend stopped by to borrow a jacket just as I’d started my car. So I ran into the house and got the jacket. Then she asked to use the bathroom. Of course! I thought about turning off the engine, but instead I started to pick up the living room. You know the rest. She came out, we said goodbye, and I went back to straightening up the coffee table.

An hour later, the neighbor’s gardener knocked on the door to see if I knew my engine had been running all that time. You can’t really make that seem like something you meant to do. But God knows I tried.

I wrote years ago that laughter is carbonated holiness, and I still believe it to be true. Laughter leads to more loving feelings. And as we age, we laugh at ourselves more sweetly. Yesterday, for instance, my left eye suddenly began to hurt for no reason. I instantly assumed I had inherited my mother’s glaucoma, or ocular shingles, and that it most certainly would lead to a glass eye and a guide dog. And this was all in the 40 seconds before my eye just as suddenly stopped hurting. I sighed. Then I patted myself gently, as I would a friend, and said, “There, there,” and went to make myself a cup of tea.

*Anne Lamott lives in California. Her latest book is Small Victories: Spotting Improbable Moments of Grace.*

### Richard,

Looking for a great gift? Try RealPad. Offered by AARP and powered by Intel, RealPad is a Wi-Fi tablet that lets you video chat with family, read books, play games and educate yourself. Plus, enjoy free 24/7 customer service with unlimited access to remote help whenever you need it. Learn more or buy at [www.aarp.org/realpad4](http://www.aarp.org/realpad4).