

Berry Tarts



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Yields 4 small tarts

Prep time: 35min + dough chilling time

Cook time: 35min

Total time: 1h 10min

Difficulty: Intermediate

Category: Pies & tarts

I love combining summer berries with delicate buttery pastry to create interest and contrasting textures. They work so well together. Feel free to use a combination of berries you like the most. The element of surprise here is basil sugar in the filling. You won't really taste the basil much, but it creates another layer of flavor and makes the tarts more interesting and fresh. You could replace the berries with stone fruit and make thyme sugar to go with it. If you don't have any basil, use regular caster sugar. These tarts are especially good when served with a scoop of vanilla ice cream.

For the crust:

Ingredients

150g flour
pinch of salt
1 tbsp sugar
80g butter, diced
2-3 tbsp cold water
1 tbsp milk + 1 tsp sugar (to brush the crust before baking)

Directions

In the bowl of a food processor, combine flour, salt and sugar and pulse to combine. Add butter, and pulse until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Add 2 tablespoons of water and process just until dough holds together without being wet or sticky. Do not process more than 30 seconds. If it is still too crumbly, add a bit more water. Turn out the dough onto a clean work surface, divide it in half and shape each half into a flattened disk. Wrap in plastic, and refrigerate for 30 minutes.

For the berry filling:

Ingredients

260g fresh berries (raspberries, blueberries and blackberries)
2 heaped tbsp basil sugar (recipe below)
1/2 tsp lemon zest

Directions

Toss the berries, basil sugar and lemon zest together in a bowl and let it marinate for 20 minutes.

Butter four 10cm tart rings. Preheat the oven to 180°C.

Take one half of the chilled dough and roll it out. Cut out circles slightly bigger than your tart rings, transfer and press the dough gently with your fingers into the bottom and sides of the tart rings. Scrape the remaining dough, knead it until it comes together, roll out and repeat the process.

Spoon the filling, including any accumulated juices, in an even layer into bottom of tart shells.

Roll out the other half of the dough. To make a lattice-top, cut the dough into 5-6mm wide strips. Arrange every other strip across your pie filling in one direction, spacing the strips evenly. Fold back every other strip gently on itself and start adding the remaining strips in the other direction. Fold the strips back down, repeat with the other strips until a full lattice-top is formed. Trim the lattice's overhang to the diameter of tart rings. Brush the top with milk and sprinkle with sugar. Bake for 30-35 minutes, or until golden brown.

Let the tarts cool before taking them out of tart rings. Sprinkle with some powdered sugar and fresh berries. Vanilla ice-cream would be great, too.

For the basil sugar:

Ingredients

1 handful fresh basil leaves

150g caster sugar

Directions

Wash the basil leaves and pat them dry. Put them in your food processor and pulse until very fine. Add sugar and pulse until well incorporated. Transfer to a jar with a lid and use in your baking. You could also freeze it.