

Strawberry Tarts

Recipe courtesy of: *The London Ritz Book of Afternoon Tea: the Art and Pleasures of Taking Tea by Helen Simpson*

Makes 8 tarts

Ingredients:

Crust

¾ cup unbleached flour
Pinch of salt
¼ cup superfine sugar
4 tablespoons (1/2 stick) butter
2 egg yolks

Filling

1 medium egg
4 tablespoons sugar
2 tablespoons unbleached flour
2/3 cup milk
2/3 cup heavy cream
1 lb strawberries
4 tablespoons seedless strawberry jelly
¼ cup water
1 tbsp shredded coconut

Directions:

To make the crust:

Part one:

- Grease eight (8) – 3.5 inch shallow patty tins, or an inverted muffin pan
- Sift the flour and salt together onto a working surface.
- Make a well in the center and add the sugar, butter and egg yolks.
- Pinch and work the mixture together, gradually working in all the flour. (If the mixture is too dry, add a few drops of water.)
- Knead until smooth, then wrap in foil and leave to rest in the refrigerator for 1 hour.

Part Two

- Pre-heat the oven to 375 degrees.
- Take out of the refrigerator. Roll the dough out on a lightly floured surface.
- Cut out eight 3.5 inch circles. Arrange one circle in each patty tin or mold over the inverted muffin tins.
- With the back of a fork, press the dough on the inside surfaces against the sides of each tin hollow.
- Bake for 20 minutes, until pale gold.
- Turn out to cool.

To make the filling:

- Cream the egg and sugar, sift in the flour and stir to a paste with a few drops of the cold milk.
- Warm the rest of the milk, then SLOWLY stir into the egg mixture (don't make the milk too hot, or dump in the milk all at once - it will curdle the egg).

- Heat the mixture slowly until it reaches a boiling point, then cook it for a few more minutes.
- Remove mixture from heat and allow to cool.

To assemble the tarts:

- Whip the cream until stiff, then beat it into the cooled mixture you just made.
- Pipe a generous amount of the combined mixture into the pastry shells. (This two-part cream filling prevents the pastry from becoming soggy, which happens very fast if whipped cream alone is used.)
- On each mound of the cream mixture, place a whole hulled strawberry in the middle, point upwards.
- Hull and halve the rest of the strawberries.
- For each tart, arrange these halves around the main, whole strawberry – covering the cream completely.

Final touches

- Heat the jam with the water.
- Take the mixture and with a pastry brush, “paint” the strawberries.
- Sprinkle coconut over the top of the tarts to coat the strawberries.