

## GRAPE TARTS

This recipe makes 10 tarts in 9 cm tart tins and you need around 3 hours in total to make these guys. They are time-consuming, but truly worth the effort. A delicious, light afternoon tea or dessert treat.

### SWEET SHORTCRUST PASTRY

1 ½ cups (225g) plain flour (I use Spelt flour)  
¼ cup icing sugar  
125 grams chilled unsalted butter  
Pinch of salt  
2 egg yolks  
1 tablespoon cold water



Process the flour, icing sugar salt and butter in a food processor until it resembles breadcrumbs. Add the egg yolks and water and process until it all only just comes together in a smooth ball. Shape it into a flat disc and refrigerate for at least an hour.

Prepare tins while pastry chills. Butter tins, then shake a little flour over the butter. Then cut circles of cooking paper the size of the base of the tins and lay inside. This hopefully ensures the pastry comes out of the tin easily.

Roll pastry out to about 4mm thick. Cut circles about 5 cms more than the outer diameter of the tin and carefully place pastry into the tins. Trim off any excess pastry. Refrigerate again for another 30 minutes.

The reason we have to refrigerate the pastry so much is to let it rest after we've worked it. If we don't let it rest, it's like rolling elastic – it will stretch out then pull straight back again. If you try cooking it at this point, it will shrink down into a puddle in the bottom of your tin.

Heat oven to 180 degrees Celsius, and cook pastries straight from the fridge for 20 minutes.

During this time (or earlier) you can make the pastry cream.

### PASTRY CREAM

5 egg yolks, room temperature  
¾ cup sugar  
3 tablespoons cornflour  
1 ½ cups hot milk  
1 teaspoon vanilla essence  
1 tablespoon unsalted butter

Beat the egg yolks and sugar on medium-high speed for 4 minutes, or until very thick. Reduce to low speed, and add the cornstarch.

With the mixer still on low, slowly pour the hot milk into the egg mixture.

Pour the mixture into a saucepan and cook over low heat, vigorously whisking until the mixture thickens (5-7 minutes). The custard will come together quickly and become very thick, like pudding. As soon as the pastry cream reaches this stage, remove the pan from the heat and stir in the vanilla essence and the butter. Transfer the pastry cream to a bowl, place a piece of plastic wrap directly on the surface to prevent a skin from forming, and refrigerate until cold.

#### TOPPING

Large bunch of grapes, halved

1/3 jar apricot jam

Carefully remove pastries from their tins and place on a flat surface or serving plate. Spoon in a generous amount of the pastry cream.

Arrange halved grapes artistically on top.

Heat apricot jam in a pot till almost boiling. Sieve it into another container and with a pastry brush, apply sieved jam to the top of the grapes to glaze.

Voila!