

Maria's Strawberry Mascarpone Tart



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Ingredients:

For the pastry;

175 g plain flour
25 g icing sugar
100 g cold butter
1 egg yolk
A little cold water to mix

For the filling;

1 x 250 g tub mascarpone cheese
25 g icing sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla essence
A little milk if needed
300 – 400 g fresh strawberries

Variations:

Use any combination of fresh soft fruit e.g. raspberries, blueberries, apricots, stoned cherries etc.

Method:

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C.
2. Lightly grease a 20 cm flan tin – ideally loose bottomed.
3. Sift the flour and icing sugar into a bowl. Cut the butter into small cubes and add to the flour.
4. Rub the butter into the flour using your fingertips until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs.
5. Using a table knife, stir in the egg yolk and enough cold water until the pastry comes together into a firm dough.
6. Knead the pastry lightly until it is smooth then roll out on a floured board to a circle large enough to line the prepared tin.
7. Chill in the fridge for at least 30 minutes if possible.
8. Fill the centre of the pastry case with a 'scrunched' piece of foil or a piece of greaseproof paper filled with baking beans. Place the tin on a baking tray and bake blind for 12 – 15 minutes until the pastry is golden brown around the edges.
9. Remove the foil or greaseproof paper and baking beans from the pastry base and leave to return to the oven for a further 5 – 10 minutes until the pastry is completely dry in the middle.
10. Remove the pastry case from the oven and leave to cool completely.
11. Meanwhile wash and hull the strawberries.
12. Place the mascarpone cheese in a mixing bowl sieve the 25g icing sugar over it and beat well with a wooden spoon until it is smooth. Stir in the vanilla essence and add a little milk if the mixture is too stiff – it should be a creamy spreadable consistency, although still firm enough to be sliced.
13. If you are using a loose bottomed tin remove the pastry case from the tin and place carefully onto a serving plate.
14. Carefully spread the filling into the pastry case.
15. Slice the strawberries and arrange neatly over the filling then serve with some pouring cream or lashings of Cornish clotted!