



Strawberry Tarte

The first strawberries harvested from my garden are so sweet and delicious I refuse to eat them any way other than on their own. A good product will speak for itself – simply. But, end of season, some varieties and indeed many mass produced strawberries do taste better with a little help – black pepper with some excellent balsamic vinegar, cream, ice cream, custard. It's a matter of personal preference.

Family and friends adore the pudding below. I've used small tarte tins here, but for a party I use a big flan dish.

I recall this recipe is a version of one used by Nanette Newman at dinner parties – I have changed it over the years to suit my own preference.

Dish

Furnish yourself with a dish roughly 305mm diameter, 42mm deep (if its porcelain I don't grease or flour it but if its tin I do), that's 12" x 1.5" in old money. If you use one a bit smaller the recipe will have plenty over to make some small tarts for another day.

Rich Sweet Shortcrust Pastry

I use a rich shortcrust recipe which contains sugar and egg – but use any shortcrust pastry recipe you're happy with. A dish this size needs around 12 oz of flour, and if you're left with any it will freeze for another time.

Fan oven to 180c

Roll out pastry on floured surface until 3 – 4 mm thick. Line dish with pastry and neaten edges with a sharp knife. Prick base slightly. Then line that with baking parchment and beans to blind bake for 10 minutes, then turn oven down to 150c, remove parchment and beans and bake at 150c for further 10 mins or until turning golden. Allow to cool.

Crème Patisserie

3/4 pint milk in a pan (I use skimmed but full fat with a pot of cream will work fine)

1 vanilla pod split with a knife and put into milk. Bring to boil then leave to cool 1 hour.

In a bowl:-

- 1 egg and 1 egg yolk
- 2 oz castor sugar
- 1/2 ounce flour
- 1 tspn vanilla essence

Whisk until pale and thick, bring milk back to boil, remove pod, pour milk into bowl whisking all the while, then pour all back into the pan and stir on a low heat until thickened. Leave to cool.

Almost half fill the pastry with the crème patisserie.

Strawberries

At least 500g – I use 750g and munch on the left overs. (One of the healthiest snacks going).

You really don't want to be rushing out half way through to buy more when you realise some are bruised/mouldy – you know it happens... Halve the fruit then arrange around the dish on the crème, starting outside working inwards, overlaying a little as you go.

Glaze

A glass of rose or white wine (sweet is fine)

- 1 tblspn of redcurrant jelly (the sort you'd use with lamb)
- 4 cubes blackcurrant jelly, cut up into smaller pieces

Put all in a pan and dissolve the jellies. You can put in more jam or perhaps some cassis – the main thrust of this is get it dissolved and bubbling like a jam, reduce until you have roughly 8 tblspn in the pan, then leave to cool until its almost 'on the turn' to start setting. Do not be tempted to spoon over until that point, it goes through to make the pastry soggy, making a bit of a mess, frankly. So hang fire then spoon over the strawberries. Refridgerate.

Take out of fridge about an hour prior to serving.

I try to make this a day or so in advance to let the flavours blend better but same day is fine. **Enjoy!**