

Recipe – Tudor tarts

Follow these instructions to make sweet tarts called ‘maids of honour’ that were popular in Tudor times, during the reign of King Henry VIII.



Ingredients

- 500g plain flour
- 250g butter
- Cold water to mix
- 200g curd cheese (or cottage cheese)
- 50g caster sugar
- A lemon
- 50g plain flour
- 2 eggs
- 2 tablespoons of lemon curd or raspberry jam
- Icing sugar to dust

Equipment

- Scales
- Two large mixing bowls
- Wooden spoon
- Jug
- Sieve
- Rolling pin

Recipe – Tudor tarts

Equipment (continued)

- Circular pastry cutter
- Palette knife
- Grater
- Teaspoon and dessert spoons
- Two non-stick bun tins
- Oven

Method

For the pastry:

1. Sift flour into a bowl.
2. Add the butter, straight from the fridge if possible, cut into cubes.
3. With very clean fingertips, rub the butter into the flour to form a breadcrumb consistency. This takes a while, so share the job out.
4. Add enough water to form a firm dough, using a large wooden spoon to begin mixing and then your hands once the mixture starts to form a ball of dough. Add a little water at a time, as you can always add more if it is too dry.
5. Cover the dough with clingfilm and place it in a cool place for at least 30 minutes. This makes it easier to handle.

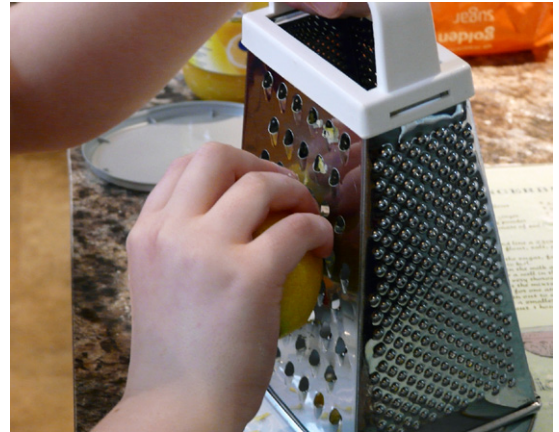


For the filling:

6. Place the curd cheese, sugar and flour into a bowl.
7. Crack the eggs into the bowl one at a time and carefully mix into the flour sugar and cheese.

Recipe – Tudor tarts

8. Meanwhile, grate the zest of the lemon using the fine side of the grater. Make sure you don't grate any of the white pith.
9. Mix the zest into the cheesy mixture and beat until smooth.



For the tarts:

10. Place the pastry on a floured board and roll it out to 5 mm thick.
11. Cut out circles using the cutter and place them carefully into the bun tin, using the palette knife to lift them.
12. Place a teaspoonful of lemon curd or jam in the bottom of each pastry tart.
13. Spoon the cheesy lemon mixture on top of the curd or jam, making sure that it is not too full. It should be just below the pastry case.
14. Ask an adult to place them in an oven (Gas mark 6, 200°C) for 20-25 minutes to bake. They should rise up and turn pale brown.
15. Allow them to cool for a few minutes and then remove from the tin using a palette knife.
16. Sprinkle with sifted icing sugar to serve.

Did you know? 'Maids of honour' tarts are said to have been named by Henry VIII after Anne Boleyn, who was one of Catherine of Aragon's maids of honour – although later Anne became Henry's second wife! The tarts were eaten at Henry's palace in Richmond, where people say that he kept the original recipe a secret for many years. Bakers tried to copy the recipe so now there are lots of different versions of the tart recipe.