

LEMON MERINGUE TARTS

Ingredients

For the crust:

- 1 3/4 cup all purpose flour
- 2/3 cup powdered sugar
- 1/4 cup almond meal
- 10 tablespoons unsalted butter, cold and thinly sliced
- 3 tablespoons ice water or as needed

For the filling:

- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 4 tablespoons cornstarch
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup water
- 6 yolks
- 1/2 cup lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter

For the meringue:

- 1/2 teaspoon cream of tartar
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 4 egg whites
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

Directions

Crust

In a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, mix together the flour, powdered sugar, and almond meal until combined. On medium speed, add the cold butter and mix until it starts to form a ball of dough. If it looks dry, add some ice water to bring it together. Wrap with plastic wrap and place it into the refrigerator for 30 - 40 minutes or until firm. Preheat the oven to 350F.

Place the dough onto a lightly floured surface. Roll out the dough to 1/4" thick. If you want to create mini tarts, punch out the dough large enough to fit your mold. Transfer the dough to your mold and gently press in the dough at the edges. Trim off the excess. Prick a few holes with a fork on the base to prevent the dough from puffing up. Bake for 15-20 minutes until golden brown. Let cool.

Filling

In a saucepan, combine together the sugar, cornstarch, salt, and water. Mix until combined. Place over medium heat and bring to a boil for one minute. Remove from the heat and slowly temper the yolks with the sugar mixture. Return it back to the medium heat. Whisk and bring to a boil for about one minute until it's thick. Add the lemon juice and butter. Stir to combine. Cover with plastic wrap and let it cool.

Meringue

In a stand mixer fitted with a whisk attachment, add your egg whites and whisk on medium speed until foamy. Add the cream of tartar, vanilla extract, and sugar on medium speed until you get stiff peaks.

Pour the filling into the shell and spread the meringue on top. With a spoon, create some peaks to the top with the meringue. Bake the meringue for about 10 minutes or until lightly brown.

PISTACIO-CARDAMOM CUPCAKES

Ingredients

For the cake:

- 1/4 cup shelled raw pistachios
- 2/3 cup all purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cardamom
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, room temperature
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 1 large egg, room temperature
- 1/2 cup milk, room temperature
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/4 teaspoon almond extract

For the frosting:

- 1 cup whipping cream, really cold
- 1/4 cup powdered sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cardamom

Directions

Heat your oven to 350 F and place a rack in the middle. Line 8 wells of a muffin pan with papers and set aside - OR - grease and flour an 8" cake pan.

Put the pistachios in a mini chopper and pulse until very finely ground. Be careful not to turn it into a paste! Transfer the ground nuts into a small bowl and set aside 2 tablespoons for topping the cupcakes.

Sift the flour, baking powder, salt, and cardamom into a medium bowl and set aside.

Add the butter and sugar to the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and cream on medium speed until very light and fluffy, about three minutes.

Scrape down the sides of the bowl, add the egg, and beat on medium speed until the mixture is uniformly smooth, about 30 seconds.

Scrape down the sides of the bowl and add half of the flour mixture. Mix on low speed until just combined.

Scrape down the sides of the bowl. Add the milk, vanilla extract, and almond extract and mix on medium-low speed until the mixture is uniformly smooth, about 15 seconds.

Scrape down the sides of the bowl (can you tell I'm very particular about this) and add the remaining flour mixture. Mix on low speed until barely combined - it's ok if there is still some flour on the sides of the bowl.

Remove the bowl from the mixer. Add the ground pistachios (except for the reserved 2 tablespoons) and mix gently to

combine.

Divide the batter among the lined muffin cups (or pour it all into a cake pan). Bake until the tops spring back lightly when pressed and a toothpick comes out clean, about 16 minutes. (An 8" layer will take 22-25 minutes.)

Cool the cupcakes in the pan set on a rack for 10 minute, then transfer to the rack to cool completely. (Similarly for the cake, let it cool in the pan for 20 minutes, then flip it out onto a rack to cool completely.)

For the frosting

Whisk the whipping cream until stiff peaks form. Stir in the powdered sugar and cardamom.

Top the cooled cupcakes and sprinkle with leftover ground pistachios and/or honey!

WHITE CHOCOLATE CARAMEL CORN WITH CASHEWS

Ingredients

- 12 cups popped popcorn (from 1/2 cup kernels)
- 1 1/2 cups roughly chopped cashews
- 10 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1/3 cup light corn syrup
- 1 1/4 cup packed light brown sugar
- 1 1/2 teaspoons salt
- 1/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 5 ounces white chocolate, chopped

Directions

Preheat oven to 250 degrees. Place popcorn and nuts in a large bowl. Melt butter in a heavy-bottomed saucepan over medium heat. Stir in corn syrup, sugar, and 1/2 tsp salt, and cook until sugar dissolves, stirring once or twice. Raise heat to high, and bring to a boil (do not stir). Boil, without stirring, until a candy thermometer registers 248 degrees, 2 to 4 minutes. Remove from heat, and stir in baking soda.

Pour caramel over popcorn mixture, stirring to coat thoroughly. Transfer to 2 rimmed baking sheets, spreading in a single layer. Bake 45 minutes, stirring twice. Test doneness by removing a few pieces of popcorn from oven; if they crisp within 1 minute, popcorn is ready. Remove from oven, and immediately sprinkle with remaining salt. Let cool completely.

Place chocolate in a heatproof bowl set over a pan of barely simmering water. Stir until melted and completely smooth. Fill a small re-sealable plastic bag with chocolate, and snip a tiny hole in 1 corner. Drizzle chocolate over caramel corn. Refrigerate until chocolate is set, about 10 minutes, before breaking up.

LAURA MOON'S CHILI RECIPE

Ingredients

- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1 onion, diced
- 1 lb. ground lean beef
- 2 15 oz. cans kidney beans
- 28 oz. can crushed tomatoes (fire roasted are best)
- 6 medium carrots, diced
- 1 bottle dark beer
- 2 freshly sliced hot peppers
- 1/2 cup red wine
- 1/2 Tbs. lemon juice
- 1 tsp. fresh dill, chopped fine
- assorted chili powders, to taste
- salt, to taste
- 1 tsp. cumin
- pinch of turmeric
- 1/2 tsp. cayenne pepper
- 1 tsp. unsweetened cocoa

Directions

Cook over medium heat for at least an hour. As with most stews and soups, the chili is much better the next day.

ELVEN LEMBAS BREAD

Ingredients

- 12 tablespoons butter, soften
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1/3 cup honey
- 2 large eggs
- 1 tablespoon orange blossom water
- 2 cups all purpose flour
- 1/2 cup almond meal
- 1 lemon zest
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 1/3 cup sliced almonds
- 6 banana leaves, large

Directions

Preheat oven to 360 degrees F. Cream together the softened butter, sugar, and honey.

Add your orange blossom water, vanilla extract, and lemon zest. Mix to combine. Add one egg at a time and scrape the batter in between each addition. Add your flour and almond meal in two to three additions. Scrape in between each addition. Add almond slices and mix to combine.

Wrap the dough in plastic wrap. Keep the dough 1/2" thick and square to make it easier to cut later. Refrigerate for 30-40 minutes.

Once the dough is firm, cut it into 2"x3" rectangles, or sized to fit in your banana leaves.

Lightly grease your baking pan. You can keep the lembas fairly close together since these are not going to spread. Bake for 20-30 minutes. It should be firm and light golden brown. Let these cool before wrapping.

PEAR TEA SANDWICHES

Ingredients

- 1 cup dried pears
- 1/4 cup spreadable cream cheese
- 2 tablespoons maple syrup
- 1/3 cup chopped walnuts, toasted
- 8 slices cinnamon-raisin bread, toasted and crusts removed

Directions

Place pears in a small bowl. Cover with boiling water; let stand for 5 minutes. Cool slightly; chop pears.

In a small bowl, combine cream cheese and syrup. Stir in pears and nuts.

Spread over four slices of toast; top with remaining toast. Cut each sandwich into triangles.

GOAT CHEESE & ROASTED PEPPER TEA SANDWICHES

Ingredients

- 2 thick slices whole wheat bread, toasted
- 1 1/2 ounces goat cheese, room temperature
- 1/2 tablespoon finely chopped fresh herbs, such as tarragon, parsley, or chives
- 1/3 or 1/2 large grilled or roasted red pepper

Directions

In a bowl, mash goat cheese with a fork or spoon and stir in chopped herbs.

Spread equal amounts of goat cheese on each slice of bread. Top the bottom half with roasted pepper and cover with the other slice of bread. Cut in half. Keeps well for 2 days.



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