

Christmas Mince Pies with a Marzipan Centre

Ma put marzipan into the middle of her mince pies, and that is a good thing. However, she did buy the pastry and the jar of mincemeat, and who can blame her, there is enough going on at Christmas time. However, I make the mincemeat and the pastry, and so I'm giving you my recipe. In fact, the mincemeat recipe was given to me by Grant's mother, Margaret, and the pastry from my good friend Emma, and I just put them together, so I can't really claim them as mine. (jojo)

Pastry

This short crust pastry is incredibly short. It is extremely buttery and fabulously delicious. Make sure you hand out plates to catch any crumbs. You will require a food processor to make it.

This quantity of pastry will make 20 mince pies.

Ingredients

250g butter, fridge cold
2 cups plain white flour
1 tblsp white castor sugar

Method

Put all the ingredients in the food processor and process until it comes together in a ball. Rest, in the fridge, covered, for 20 minutes (that's the pastry not you).

Mincemeat

I double the recipe and then always have left overs which I keep in a sealed jar, in the fridge until the following year, which then always tastes amazing.

Ingredients

2 small apples
1 cup sultanas
1 cup mixed dried fruit
½ lemon, rind and juice
Rind of ½ orange
½ cup soft brown sugar
1 teasp ground mixed spice
1 teasp ground cinnamon
½ teasp salt
¼ teasp ground cloves
¼ cup of brandy, whiskey, rum, cointreau, amaretto or any other spirit you like

Method

Using the food processor, first chop up the thinly peeled orange and lemon rind with the sugar, then add the chunks of unpeeled apple and process with the metal chopping blade into pieces the size of sultanas. Add the dried fruit and process until chopped as finely as desired. Add the remaining ingredients and process briefly to mix. Spoon in to sterilised jars, pour extra spirits over the surface, cover tightly and store in a cool place for up to 3 months (or a year if you are me).

Jo's Mince Pies

Ingredients

Margaret's Mincemeat

Emma's Short crust pastry

Milk to glaze

Butter to grease the trays

1 packet of marzipan (which you are going to buy or look up a recipe elsewhere



Method

Preheat your oven to 180°C

Your pastry is now in the fridge resting. Your mincemeat was made several weeks ago, if not months, go find it.

Gather up the marzipan, butter and milk, a rolling pin, mincemeat tart oven trays, pastry cutters (one large and one small or as you can see in the photo, I like a star on the top) and a pastry brush.

Butter the oven trays.

Now as I said the pastry is very short, so just roll out pieces of it at a time, on a floured board. If you try to roll out the whole thing at once, it just becomes a bit of a nightmare. (If you are using this pastry to make a base for 1 large tart, be it mincemeat or other, which I thoroughly recommend, because everyone loves it, cut slices off your ball of pastry, about ½ cm thick, and press them into a butter flan dish, to form a pastry base.)

For the pastry rounds, on the bottom of the tarts, they need to be reasonably thick, so they don't break when you take them out of the tin, about 4mm. The top crust can be thinner.

Cut rounds out of the rolled pastry pieces using your larger pastry cutter. (I'm hoping you've already measured that it is the right size for your tin, slightly larger than the hole for the tart.) Place the pastry rounds in the holes for the tarts, but no need to push it down too much, they'll sort themselves out in the oven. Put 1 level teaspoon of mincemeat on the pastry base and then a small ball of marzipan, on that. Cover with another level teaspoon of mincemeat. Do not over fill the tart case. Then either cut rounds of pastry with your smaller cutter and place on the top, using a little milk around the edge of the underside of the top pastry circle to stick the two together, or like me, just place a star on top. Brush the pastry with a little milk.

Bake in the oven for 15 minutes or until golden and delicious looking.

Dust with icing sugar, just before serving.

Top Tip Wait 10 to 15 minutes before taking them out of the tin. Too hot and they will just break, too cold and the butter lining the tin will hold them firm and they will just break. 😊

