

Village Life Recipes

CHINESE EGG TARTS

INGREDIENTS

2 cups all purpose flour, sifted
1/8 teaspoon salt
12 tbsp unsalted butter, softened
2 tbsp of cold water
½ cup caster sugar
1 cup hot water
1/2 cup evaporated milk, room temperature
3 large eggs, room temperature
1 teaspoon vanilla extract



METHOD

1. In a bowl, combine the flour and salt. The butter should be just soft enough that it gives when you press it, but not so soft that it collapses. Basically, you want it to be soft enough to break up with your fingers, but it shouldn't immediately form a paste with the flour.
2. Cut the butter into small cubes, and add it to the flour and salt. Working quickly, break it up roughly with your fingers until it resembles coarse crumbs with some pea-sized chunks of butter still in the mixture.
3. Add 2 tablespoons of cold water, and bring the dough together with your hands. Add a little more water if necessary (start with 1/2 teaspoon), no more than 3 teaspoons. At this point, the dough will be scraggly and dry. You need to rest the dough in the refrigerator to allow the flour in the dough to continue to absorb moisture. Wrap the dough tightly in plastic or a reusable bag, and refrigerate for 20 minutes.
4. On a lightly floured surface, roll the dough into a roughly 6x15 inch rectangle. Work quickly to avoid overworking it. Fold the top third of the dough down to the center, then the bottom third up and over that. Give the dough a quarter turn (left or right) and roll out again to a 6x15 inch rectangle. Fold the same way as before, cover, and chill for 1 hour.
5. While the dough is resting, make the filling. Dissolve the sugar into 1 cup of hot water, and allow the mixture to cool to room temperature. Whisk evaporated milk, eggs, and vanilla together, and then thoroughly whisk in the sugar water. Strain through a fine meshed strainer into a large measuring cup or pitcher (something with a pour spout). You should have about 2 to 2 1/4 cups of custard.
6. Preheat the oven to 375° F/190°C, and position a rack in the lower third of your oven. Roll out the dough 0.2 inch/5mm thick, and cut into 4-inch circles to fit either mini tart tins or a shallow non-stick standard muffin pan, leaving a lip going over the top of the cup (the tart shells will shrink as they bake, so you want ample clearance). Take the excess dough, re-roll it, and cut more circles until you have around 16 of them.
7. Evenly fill the tart shells about three quarters full. If you have an ample lip of dough at the top, you can fill it just until you reach the part where the dough curves outward. Once filled, immediately (but very slowly and carefully) transfer the pan to the oven. Immediately reduce the heat to 350°F/180°C, and bake for 26-29 minutes, until filling is just set (if a toothpick can stand up in it, it's done). Allow the tarts to cool for at least 10 minutes before enjoying.

SLOW-COOKED LAMB WITH COUSCOUS

INGREDIENTS

- 1.6-1.8kg lamb shoulder
- 1 onion peeled, halved and sliced
- 1 tbs pomegranate molasses, plus more to serve
- 300g couscous
- 1 tbs butter
- 1 tbs harissa
- Salt & pepper to season
- 1 bunch of mint, roughly chopped
- 1 pomegranate, arils removed

METHOD

1. Heat the oven to 190 degrees fan-forced.
2. Put the lamb in a roasting pan, fatty side up, with the onion scattered around. Score the lamb with a sharp knife and rub all over with the molasses. Season well.
3. Add 2 cups of water to the pan, cover tightly with foil and cook for 4 hours.
4. Rest the lamb for 15 minutes before pulling off the bone into chunks using two forks.
5. Meanwhile, put the couscous, butter, harissa and seasoning into a bowl and add enough boiling water to just cover it. Cover and leave for 5 minutes, then fluff the grains gently with a fork.
6. Place the couscous onto a platter. Put the lamb on top, along with some of the pan juices, plus a little more molasses. Serve with the mint leaves and pomegranate.



UNICORN PANCAKES

INGREDIENTS

200g organic plain flour
1 tsp baking powder
¼ tsp bicarb soda
¼ tsp pink lake salt
280g natural yoghurt
2 large free-range eggs
2 tbs organic rice malt syrup
40g unsalted butter or dairy free spread, melted
75ml milk of choice
2 tsp organic pink pitaya powder
½ tsp blue spirulina powder
Extra butter, for cooking



METHOD

1. In a large bowl, combine the flour, baking powder, bicarb soda and salt. Whisk together the yoghurt, eggs and syrup. Add wet mixture to the flour mixture. Stir to combine. Stir in melted butter, adding extra milk as required to reach pancake batter consistency. Pour half this mixture back into the medium bowl ready to be coloured.
2. To colour the batters, mix the pink pitaya powder with a little milk and add to one batch. Repeat for the blue spirulina and add to the other batch. For purple pancakes, combine a portion from each.
3. Heat butter in a large frying pan over medium-high heat. Spoon coloured batter into pan, cook until bubbles form on the surface, then flip the pancakes and cook through. Repeat with remaining batter and serve with your favourite toppings.

HOT CROSS BUN PUDDING

INGREDIENTS

6 chocolate hot cross buns
30g unsalted butter, softened
1 cup frozen berries
1 vanilla bean, split, seeds scraped
600ml thin cream
600ml thickened cream
Zest of 1 orange
4 eggs
170g caster sugar



METHOD

1. Split the hot cross buns and butter each half. Lay the bases in a 2-litre (8-cup) baking dish, sprinkle with the chopped dark chocolate, then place the bun tops on the bases.
2. Place the vanilla pod and seeds in a saucepan with the creams and zest, and heat over low heat until just simmering. Remove from the heat.
3. Beat the eggs, sugar and brandy until just combined, then pour into the warm cream, stirring continuously. Strain the custard evenly over the buns and set the pudding aside for 30 minutes for the buns to soak up some of the custard. (The pudding can be prepared to this stage several hours in advance and refrigerated - just bring to room temperature before baking.)
4. When ready to cook, preheat the oven to 170°C.
5. Place the pudding dish in a large roasting pan and pour enough boiling water into the roasting pan to come halfway up the sides of the pudding dish. Place in the oven for about 45 minutes or until the custard is set. Dust with icing sugar and serve with extra cream if desired.

MIXED BERRY CRUMBLE PIE

INGREDIENTS

2-1/2 cups all-purpose flour

1/4 teaspoon salt

1 cup cold butter, cubed

6 to 8 tablespoons ice water

filling:

1 cup sugar

1/4 cup cornstarch

Dash salt

1/3 cup water

1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon, optional

1 cup fresh blueberries

1 cup fresh raspberries

1 cup halved fresh strawberries

3/4 cup fresh blackberries

1 tablespoon lemon juice

2 tablespoons butter



METHOD

1. In a large bowl, mix flour and salt; cut in butter until crumbly. Gradually add ice water, tossing with a fork until dough holds together when pressed. Divide dough into 2 portions so that 1 is slightly larger than the other. Shape each into a disk. Cover and refrigerate 1 hour or overnight.
2. For filling, in a large saucepan, whisk sugar, cornstarch, salt, water and, if desired, cinnamon until smooth; add blueberries. Bring to a boil; cook and stir 2 minutes or until thickened. Cool slightly.
3. Preheat oven to 400°. Gently fold raspberries, strawberries, blackberries and lemon juice into blueberry mixture. On a lightly floured surface, roll out larger portion of dough to a 1/8-in.-thick circle; transfer to a 9-in. pie plate. Trim crust to 1/2 in. beyond rim of plate. Add filling; dot with butter.
4. Roll remaining dough to a 1/8-in.-thick circle; lay over the top of the pie. Crimp the edges between your thumb and fingers to seal and score deeply to allow steam to escape. Bake 10 minutes.
5. Reduce oven setting to 350°; bake 45-50 minutes or until crust is golden brown and filling is bubbly. Cool on a wire rack.