

Strawberry Portuguese Custard Tarts

Makes 12

Ingredients

- 1 vanilla pod
- 100ml double cream
- 100ml whole milk
- 1 tbsp cornflour
- 2 egg yolks
- 50g caster sugar
- 200g block all-butter puff pastry, chilled
- Icing sugar for dusting, strawberry jam for brushing
- Grated zest of ½ lemon
- Pinch of ground cinnamon
- 3 small strawberries, sliced lengthways

Method

Split the vanilla pod lengthways and scrape out the seeds. Add to a frying pan along with the pod and the cream, then whisk. Place the pan over a medium heat and bring to just under boiling. Remove from the heat and strain. Mix a little of the hot strained cream into the cornflour. Whisk this into the rest of the hot cream.

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Method continued

Whisk the egg yolks with the sugar until pale and frothy. Pour the hot cream over the eggs, whisking vigorously. Return the custard to the pan over a low heat and stir until thick. But don't let the eggs scramble. It should become thicker than you'd usually like. Take off the heat, cover with cling film touching the custard, and chill.

Preheat the oven to 200C./gas mark 6. Roll out the pastry to 5mm thick. Roll it up lengthways like a Swiss roll. Slice into 12 circles 1cm. Roll out each circle with a sprinkling of icing sugar to 10cm diameter then press into a 12-hole cupcake tin. Brush with the strawberry jam, then place in the freezer for 5 minutes.

Stir the lemon zest and cinnamon into the custard. Fill the chilled pastry-lined tins to two-thirds full. Top with a slice of strawberry, then sprinkle lightly with icing sugar. Bake for 20 minutes, until golden brown.

Remove from the oven to cool slightly, demould, then dust with icing sugar to serve.