

Recipes excerpted from ***Tarts, Sweet and Savory*** by Maxine Clark. Published by Ryland, Peters & Small. New York, NY. Copyright 2007. Reprinted with permission of the publisher. All rights reserved.

I make these for special teatime treats in the summer when Scottish strawberries are in season. They beat anything you can buy at the baker or supermarket. Brushing the inside of the pie crusts with chocolate keeps the crust crisp and adds a new dimension to the traditional strawberry tart.

Strawberry Chocolate Tarts

(Makes 12 small deep tarts)

1 recipe Sweet Rich Shortcrust Pastry Dough (see below)
8 oz. bittersweet chocolate, to make swirls and brush the pie crusts

Mascarpone Filling

8 oz. mascarpone cheese (1 cup)
2 tablespoons sugar
8 oz. *fromage frais* or cream cheese, (such as Philadelphia), 1 cup
rose water or Grand Marnier, to taste

Strawberry Topping

12 large, ripe strawberries
red currant jelly, for brushing

a cookie cutter, 4 inches diameter
12 deep fluted tart or brioche pans, 3 inches diameter
nonstick parchment paper

Bring the dough to room temperature. Preheat the oven to 375°F.

Roll out the dough as thinly as possible on a lightly floured work surface, then cut out 12 circles with the cookie cutter, Use these to line 6 of the tart or brioche pans.

Trim the edges and prick the bases. Then set another pan inside each one – this will weigh down the dough while it is baking. Chill or freeze for 15 minutes. Bake blind for 10-12 minutes until golden and set. Remove the inner pans and return to the oven to dry out for 5 minutes. Cool, then remove from the outer pans. Repeat with the remaining dough to make another 6.

Melt the chocolate and sprinkle spoonfuls randomly from a height onto nonstick parchment paper. Let cool until set. Use the remaining chocolate to brush the insides of the tarts, making sure they are completely covered. Let cool and set.

To make the filling, put the mascarpone and sugar into a bowl and beat until creamy, then beat in the *fromage frais* or cream cheese. Add rosewater or Grand Marnier to taste.

Strawberry and Chocolate Tarts (continued)

Spoon this mixture into the tartlets, filling well, then set a nice fat strawberry on top. Melt the red currant jelly, cool slightly, then brush over the strawberries and the exposed mascarpone surface. Set aside in a cool place to set.

To serve, break up the set chocolate swirls and push a shard into each tart. Serve immediately.

Rich Shortcrust Pastry Dough

This is a wonderfully light and crumbly crust. It is made the same way as Basic Shortcrust Pastry dough but is enriched with egg and made with butter only. It is best used for richer pies and tarts, or where the crust is more than just a carrier for the filling and the taste of the crust is important. It can be made in a food processor, or the classic way, directly on the work surface. The food processor method is quicker and easier, and there is no sticky mess to clear up. But the classic method gives a slightly lighter result – and besides, there is something satisfying about making dough by hand.

2 cups all-purpose flour, plus extra for dusting
1/2 teaspoon salt
9 tablespoons butter, chilled and diced
2 large egg yolks
2 tablespoons ice water

Makes about 14 oz. pastry dough, enough to line the base of a 10-inch tart pan or make a double crust for a deep, 8-inch pie plate.

1. Sift the flour and salt together into a bowl, then rub in the butter. *Note:* For a Sweet Shortcrust Pastry Dough, sift 2 tablespoons confectioner's sugar with the flour and salt.
2. Mix the egg yolks with the 2 tablespoons ice water. Add to the flour, mixing lightly with a knife. *Note:* The dough must have some water in it or it will be too difficult to handle. If it is still too dry, add a little more water, sprinkling it over the flour mixture 1 tablespoon at a time.
3. Invert the mixture onto a lightly floured work surface.
4. Knead lightly with your hands until smooth.
5. Form the dough into a ball.
6. Flatten slightly wrap in plastic wrap, and chill for at least 30 minutes before rolling out.